



**An aspect report on provision in Scotland's colleges by  
HM Inspectors on behalf of the  
Scottish Funding Council**



**Equality and diversity  
17 September 2010**



**Scottish Funding Council**  
Promoting further and higher education

**HMIe**  
improving Scottish education  
leasachadh foghlam na h-Alba

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## 1. Background

In 1999, the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) established together a Joint Task Group on Widening Participation, with the following remit:

*To consider how the Councils can act together to promote and secure equality of opportunity for all who can benefit, especially under-represented groups, to realise their full potential through high quality further and higher education<sup>1</sup>.*

In the ensuing years, the Council made further funds available to colleges specifically to enable growth in social inclusion and widening access activities. For colleges which served rural areas and areas of social deprivation, and asylum seeker and refugee communities, this was welcomed. It enabled them to expand support services, internally and through meaningful partnerships, for the most disadvantaged learners, and to take initial steps towards mainstreaming programmes for their more hard-to-reach (geographically and socially) learners. For colleges which were not so familiar with working with such groups, whether through strategic choice or otherwise, this was a challenge. Over time, in some colleges, a perception emerged that there existed a potential incompatibility between the need to widen access to disadvantaged learners' and colleges' efforts to achieve high performance indicator (PI) values. The journey from these early days of inclusion has been complex and challenging for colleges. It has required them to change their organisational cultures; to become truly learner centred and learner driven in relation to support services and programme design; and to understand the value of wider achievement and how to encourage and measure it. Equally, colleges have had to realise that disadvantaged learners can succeed if college programmes are well designed and at the appropriate level.

Almost ten years ago, the government introduced legislation which impacted upon the culture, the daily operation and the strategic vision of all public sector organisations. The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 required managers and staff to think very differently about the policies they wrote and implemented, the services they provided and the partners with whom they worked. It required even the most inclusive organisations to reflect on their practice. Prior to the introduction of the Race Equality Duty and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), equality legislation was mainly concerned with addressing issues of discrimination and harassment after they had occurred. Organisations tackled individual cases, as opposed to adopting an organisational approach and ethos. The duty placed firmly the obligation to promote equality positively on public sector organisations. This included Scotland's colleges and necessitated race equality to be embedded at the heart of all decision making and policy writing. Thereafter, the duty on public sector organisations was extended to disability (the Disability Equality Duty) in 2006 and to gender (the Gender Equality Duty) in 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> SFEFC Circular Letter No FE 56/2000

Scotland's colleges were well placed to respond to the introduction of public sector duties. Nevertheless, the new duties challenged them to extend their thinking and practices on inclusion. They had to:

- consider the wider requirements of embedding the promotion of equality in every aspect of their strategies and operations;
- ensure that every member of staff understood and carried out their obligations under the duties;
- celebrate diversity; and
- consider and consult on the potential impact of their arrangements and activities on under-represented groups of learners and staff.

They had to understand that inclusion is part of equality and not a synonym for it. They were obliged to learn that equality of opportunity is not the same as equality of achievement and success.

In preparation for the introduction of the Equality Act 2006, colleges revised their arrangements for equality, access and inclusion. Colleges already had arrangements in place to meet the general and specific duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) and the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and they had taken account of the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004). They began to work towards supporting and enhancing their inclusion provision and activities through further legislative compliance.

The legislative landscape of equality continues to evolve with the new Equality Act of April 2010. The Act plans for a new public sector equality duty. Different aspects of the Act are scheduled to come into force in Scotland from October 2010, covering: age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, religion and belief, sexual orientation, and pregnancy and maternity. The aim of the Act is to declutter the legislation by bringing together the existing duties and extending cover to include the new strands as full duties. In addition, a White Paper launched in January 2009, *New opportunities: fair chances for the future*<sup>2</sup>, proposed the introduction of a further public sector duty. The proposed duty aims to address socio-economic disadvantage, narrowing gaps in outcomes between people from different backgrounds. At this time, there is no clarity on whether or when this proposal will come into force in Scotland.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.government-news.co.uk/.../new-opportunities-white-paper-fair-chances-for-the-future.asp](http://www.government-news.co.uk/.../new-opportunities-white-paper-fair-chances-for-the-future.asp)

## 2. Introduction

### Scope and methodology

This report evaluates the extent to which Scotland's colleges have developed and embedded a culture of promoting equality and diversity effectively for all learners and staff. It considers how effectively colleges have mainstreamed equality and diversity in all aspects of their operations. The report does not examine in detail the extent to which colleges have complied with statutory Public Sector Duties, as this responsibility rests with the *Equality and Human Rights Commission* (EHRC). However, in order to report on how well colleges are ensuring that they provide a learning and working environment for learners and staff respectively, which is founded on principles of equality and fairness, it is necessary to take account of the legislative background, as described in section 1.

The fieldwork for this report has been informed by evidence from external reviews of Scotland's colleges, carried out between January 2009 and March 2010. It also draws upon evidence from college reviews which took place in the review year 2007 to 2008, under HM Inspectorate of Education's (HMIE) previous arrangements for external review<sup>3</sup>. This evidence enables conclusions to be drawn about early challenges addressed by colleges, emerging from the Equality Act 2006. HM Inspectors conducted fieldwork in 13 colleges<sup>4</sup>, which serve very different communities, are geographically diverse, and which have faced different equality issues, arising from and dependent upon these factors. A further 23 colleges responded to a wider questionnaire<sup>5</sup>, providing detailed and helpful information. All colleges visited were invited to discuss identified themes<sup>6</sup> pertaining to a range of aspects of equality and diversity. The wider questionnaire addressed the same themes.

Inspectors found examples of illustrative and notable activities and arrangements which promote equality and diversity very effectively. These examples appear in italics within the report within the relevant section.

The report describes the extent of practices and aspects of equality and diversity by using the HMIE quantitative descriptions of *all, almost all (over 90%), most (75%-90%), the majority (50%-74%), more than a few (15%-49%), a few (up to 15)*. It should be noted that these quantifications refer to the sample of 36 colleges, which participated in the task through fieldwork visits or through responding to the questionnaire. They do not refer to the totality of Scotland's 43 colleges. Where references relate to those colleges involved in fieldwork visits, this is stated.

### Support for Scotland's colleges

Colleges have been supported well in their efforts to mainstream inclusion and equality. As well as ongoing funding from SFC, external agencies and partners have provided specialist advice and support. With dedicated funding from SFC, *Equality Forward* was established in 2006 to work with colleges to build upon their existing

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<sup>3</sup> Standards and quality in Scottish Further Education: quality framework for Scottish FE colleges: May 2004

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 2 - Colleges involved in fieldwork visits

<sup>5</sup> Appendix 2 – Colleges responding to questionnaire

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 3 – Themes addressed during fieldwork visits and through questionnaire.

practice and implement arrangements to enable them to fulfil the new statutory Public Sector Duties. Colleges received further advice and support from *Scotland's Colleges* and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

SFC continues to fund other projects which focus on equality and diversity, such as *Beattie Resources for Inclusiveness in Technology and Education* (BRITE), and the *Joint Information Systems Committee* (JISC) *TechDIS* service. The Council also makes funds available for improvements to college estates, related to accessibility.

Following the cessation of funding for *Equality Forward* in 2009, SFC has well-advanced plans for continued support of colleges and universities. As a result of the consultation with colleges and universities of July 2009, the Council has ring-fenced funds to take forward its strategy for equality and diversity across the college and university sectors.

### 3. Summary of key findings

#### Strengths

- Overall, leadership for and management of equality and diversity in colleges across the sector is effective. Most teaching and support staff have a high level of awareness of their responsibilities under current equality legislation. In most colleges, managers have created a culture and ethos of equality and diversity which is shared and promoted by learners and staff. Cross-college committees and sub-committees which have a remit to inform strategic direction for equality and diversity work well. However, the extent to which they monitor equality and diversity effectively varies across the sector. All colleges have produced policies, schemes and action plans as appropriate for each equality strand.
- All colleges have provided teaching and support staff with continuing professional development (CPD) to enable them to take individual and collective responsibility for the promotion of equality and diversity. There are good examples of colleges providing tailored, and, in a few cases, highly specialised CPD to support all staff in addressing equality and diversity issues which are specific to their college's community and context. Colleges have a strong and well-established provision of CPD in wider inclusion-related activities, such as the use of assistive technologies or dyslexia training.
- The work of Human Resources (HR) managers and their teams to ensure equality and diversity in their practices is well-embedded and very effective. In almost all colleges, HR managers work closely with other members of the *Equality and Diversity Committee* or equivalent to provide expert advice and support, and to direct CPD at cross-college, team and individual levels.
- Colleges plan their curricular portfolios well. Managers often take decisions to provide resource-intensive programmes for the hardest-to-reach and most excluded learners. They choose to run these programmes in order to ensure equality of access to education and training for the most hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups in their communities. Overall, they ensure that programme design is realistic and appropriate to learners' contexts, in order to provide the best chance of success. These planning processes link well with colleges' visions and strategic aims, self-evaluation and CPD arrangements.
- Colleges have very strong and effective partnership-working arrangements with a wide range of external partners to promote equality and diversity. They are well represented in community planning partnerships and other local agencies. Colleges work successfully with their partners to identify and design programmes to meet the needs of hard-to-reach or vulnerable learners. Most colleges involve external partners in their strategic planning and a few include external representation on their *Equality and Diversity Committees* or equivalent, in order to inform operational decisions.
- Colleges have made good progress in developing learners' understanding of their college's position regarding both equality and diversity. Overall, they have good arrangements for the involvement of learners in the promotion of equality and diversity in the life and work of the college, through a wide range of appropriate events and activities. Often, these activities are initiated by or

involve student associations. Most colleges have taken steps to involve or consult with learners in the development of equalities schemes/policies.

- Almost all colleges recognise the need to ensure promotion of equality and diversity through curriculum materials. However, colleges across the sector are at different stages in terms of the effectiveness of their arrangements.
- Overall, colleges proactively and effectively promote equality and diversity to learners and staff. They have in place appropriate policies and procedures which are generally well understood by staff. Learners are generally aware of the college's values in terms of equality and diversity, although this awareness is not consistent across the sector. Often, colleges are required to address difficult issues, such as social prejudices, which are specific to their catchment area and locality. They do this well. The use of ongoing, often innovative, campaigns and promotions such as *Respect Me* is increasing across the sector and is becoming well-embedded in colleges. Overall, learners and staff with disabilities benefit from well-planned college estates, which provide equality of access and opportunity through their facilities.
- Marketing teams work well with teaching staff to identify and provide for hard-to-reach groups, overall. In all colleges, marketing and information materials are available in different formats to ensure accessibility. While most colleges actively promote non-traditional programme choices to males and females to militate against occupational segregation, not all colleges address other aspects of diversity, such as age, sufficiently.
- All colleges provide effective support to learners whose chances of participation and success may be at risk because of their individual circumstances. Specialist support staff within and outwith colleges work well with teaching staff to ensure that the best possible support measures are made available to learners. Overall, staff and learners monitor learner progress well through *personal learning plans* and *personal learning support plans*. Colleges have succeeded in providing non-threatening and non-stigmatised areas in which learners discuss their specific needs with specialist staff.

### **Areas for development**

- The pace of response to obligations under the Public Sector Duties in more than a few colleges.
- The development of more systematic and structured post-initial training for staff in equality and diversity.
- The monitoring of participation by staff in online equalities training.
- Learners' awareness of their opportunities and entitlements to influence issues of equality and diversity at programme level.
- The consistent and effective monitoring of the curriculum for the promotion of equality and diversity by teaching staff, and their individual professional reflection on equality and diversity in teaching practice.



- The promotion of diversity issues to learners and staff by colleges which do not have direct contact with a wider range of minority groups.
- The sharing of information and practice with colleagues; by teaching staff from programmes where the promotion of equality and diversity is part of their curriculum.
- The monitoring of learners' retention, attainment and progression rates by race, disability and gender in order to plan for equality in learner progress effectively.

## 4. Equality and diversity in Scotland's colleges

### Leadership for equality and diversity

#### *Planning for equality and diversity*

Almost all of Scotland's colleges express their commitment to the promotion and embedding of a culture of equality and diversity in their mission, vision and values statements. The fulfilment of their commitment is communicated through one or more of their strategic aims.

Leadership for equality and diversity is most effective when all staff understand, accept and fulfil their role and responsibility in the creation of such a culture and ethos. This must be evident through their planning of activities, their day-to-day interaction with learners and fellow staff members, and their enthusiasm for relevant CPD. The extent to which colleges have achieved this varies across the sector. Colleges have each established broadly similar arrangements to translate into reality their vision and strategic aims for equality and diversity at operational and individual levels. These arrangements are then adjusted to take account of each college's geographic location, the specific profile of equality issues with which it deals, its size and its culture.

In all colleges' planning processes, the Board of Management, Board of Governors, or governing body (hereafter the Board) works successfully with senior managers to set strategic aims. These aims are agreed in response to national and local drivers and stakeholders, as well as international imperatives in some cases. The majority of colleges involve staff in the setting of strategic aims through all-staff planning events. Where the college's commitment to equality and diversity is stated in its strategic aims, staff understanding of its nature and significance is greater. In all colleges which express strategic aims for equality and diversity, these aims are reflected in college operational plans and team plans. Teams therefore identify and prioritise the ways in which their support function or teaching team will contribute to the achievement of the strategic aim through the development of their own targets.

*Forth Valley College expresses its strategic objectives for equality and diversity in its corporate plan, as well the college's Mission, Vision and Values statements. The corporate plan is the key driver for departmental operational plans and therefore objectives relating to equality and diversity are routinely included therein. Departmental operational plans shape personal development targets for individual staff members. This enables equalities objectives to be implemented from strategic to individual level. This, or similar practice is found in almost all colleges.*

#### *Managing equality and diversity*

As well as including objectives and targets in operational and team plans, most colleges have assigned the monitoring of equality and diversity issues to a cross-college committee, such as an *Equality and Diversity Committee*, or an *Equal Opportunities Committee*. In almost all cases, these committees report to the Board and inform strategic direction. They also have responsibility for advising college managers and the Board on equality matters, including access and inclusion relating to learners and staff, development of the curriculum portfolio, learner and staff support arrangements, statistical analyses and reports, learner and staff engagement in equality and diversity, and legislative compliance. In all colleges

which have such a committee, the membership includes learner representation and managers and staff from support and teaching teams. Some colleges include a Board member on the committee. Committee members work well together across college teams to promote equality and diversity for learners and staff. A few colleges include external partners in their committees. The majority of these committees fulfil their remit well and members are highly motivated. However, in one-third of colleges, these committees have only recently been established and therefore it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of their work. The majority of colleges have created sub-committees to inform further the equality committee. These sub-committees have responsibility for the promotion of one or more of the equality strands amongst learners and staff.

*In Glasgow College of Nautical Studies, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and relevant working groups help to articulate the college's direction for equality and diversity. Staff and learners from across the college are engaged in progressing the college equality schemes for Race, Disability and Gender. Regular events celebrating diversity ensure that the commitment to equality of opportunity is widely promoted. The staff magazine Horizon regularly features articles promoting equality and updating staff on the work carried out by the EDI committee.*

In all colleges, responsibility for equality and diversity is allocated to one or more senior managers. Generally, the senior manager with responsibility for HR manages issues relating to staff, while a senior manager responsible for learners or, in some cases the curriculum, has responsibility for issues concerning learners. Management of equality and diversity is most effective in colleges where these individuals work closely together outwith the college's equality committee, as well as in work specifically related to the committee. Where this is the case, the college's approach is more cohesive and equality and diversity are well embedded in the college's culture. HR managers are well experienced in monitoring statistics and procedures for instances of potential or existing inequality or discrimination in staffing issues and they are well accustomed to ensuring legal compliance. In most colleges, HR managers share this expertise with their fellow senior manager. More than a few colleges have, at some point, employed external consultants to initiate their revision of equality and diversity arrangements. A few colleges still retain external experts on temporary contracts, although this is largely to support the college in the development of a Single Equality Scheme, or to advise on equality impact assessments. In a few colleges, equality and diversity is a standing agenda item on the weekly senior management team (SMT) meeting,

All of the colleges visited in the fieldwork for this report implement arrangements to ensure staff understanding and ownership of the college's vision and strategy for equality and diversity. Although most teaching and support staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities in relation to college's values, there are a few examples of staff being unaware of their responsibilities under specific equality duties. In a minority of cases, staff regard the promotion of equality and diversity as the responsibility of the college's equality committee and its members, or of senior managers, where the college did not have such a committee.

### **Legislative compliance**

More than a few colleges have made slow progress in addressing legislative requirements and two remote colleges have made particularly slow progress. Generally, there is a lack of understanding of the extent of monitoring, reporting and

publication of the results of monitoring that is required by each of the equality strands<sup>7</sup>. Although all colleges have produced policies, schemes and action plans as appropriate for each equality strand, more than a few have made slow progress in assessing the impact of their schemes and other college procedures and processes. There is a correlation between the remoteness of colleges and their local population, and the extent to which equality and diversity is promoted and embedded in the college culture. For example, where there are few or no people from black and minority ethnic groups in the local community, or few or no people from non-Christian faiths, there is no perceived need in the college to raise awareness of these issues. All colleges participating in this task have already devised or are making progress towards the development of a Single Equality Scheme, in preparation for the forthcoming legislation. Several colleges identified recent and imminent legislation as the main driver for their equalities activities.

## ***Conclusions***

Leadership for and management of equality and diversity in colleges across the sector is effective overall. Most teaching and support staff have a high level of awareness of their responsibilities under current equality legislation. In most colleges, managers have created a culture and ethos of equality and diversity, which is shared and promoted by learners and staff. It is important to note that some colleges which have made slow progress with their response to equalities legislation nonetheless have a healthy culture of equality. In most instances, insufficient pace of response to Public Sector Duties is not in any way synonymous with the absence of an equitable and diverse college culture. Nevertheless, it is not in learners' current and future interest for these colleges to progress slowly in terms of legislative issues. The sustainability of equality and diversity can only be assured when colleges meet or go beyond legislative requirements. Cross-college committees and sub-committees which have a remit to inform strategic direction for equality and diversity work well. However, the extent to which they monitor effectively equality and diversity varies across the sector.

## **Staffing issues relating to equality and diversity**

### ***Continuing professional development***

Since the enforcement of the Equalities Act 2006, all colleges have provided varied and systematic CPD in equality, diversity and related issues for teaching and support staff, Boards, and, in some cases, external partners. In all colleges, awareness raising training is delivered during the induction of new full and part-time staff. This training is mandatory in almost all colleges. This is followed up, in most colleges, with an annual programme of online bite-sized training, supported by inputs from key college staff and/or external experts. Almost all colleges have taken advantage of relevant CPD provided by *Scotland's Colleges*. The majority of colleges monitor participation in online training to ensure that staff avail themselves of this opportunity.

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<sup>7</sup> See section 4, page 26 '*Monitoring of learners' retention, attainment and progression*'

**Aberdeen College** provides a mandatory course on Equality and Diversity for all staff, which covers all equality strands. It also provides additional training on Disability Discrimination. These courses are also available on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Attendance by staff is monitored and reported to the Board and monitored every two months.

Teaching staff undertaking the *Teaching Qualification (Further Education) (TQFE)* or the associated *Professional Development Award (PDA)* take part in equality and diversity training as part of their awards.

Many colleges use the staff intranet to make resources available which enable staff to raise their awareness of the barriers to learning experienced by a diverse range of learners. The wider CPD provided by colleges, which does not relate solely to legislative requirements, tends to cover issues which are associated with their local catchment areas and communities. For example, colleges with potential problems around sectarianism offer supportive CPD inputs. Colleges serving areas which have received asylum seekers and refugees offer appropriate training in order to help staff understand learners' cultures, as well as the circumstances under which people have been forced to seek asylum. Typically, in these colleges, great care is taken to enable staff to gain an understanding of some of the social and domestic circumstances of their learners. In areas where drug, alcohol and substance abuse is a serious social factor, awareness training is delivered to staff.

**Dumfries and Galloway College** serves a disparate community across the south-west of Scotland, comprised of the main town of Dumfries and numerous smaller towns and villages. Local discrimination between towns and villages exists, which has been entrenched over generations. This 'local geographical discrimination' does not exist in schools, but emerges when young people from schools across the area come together in college. The college has taken successful steps to make staff aware of these issues and to work with learners to widen their awareness and understanding.

Colleges across the sector offer a wide range of CPD to enable staff to understand the issues facing their existing and potential learners. For example, many colleges offer inputs on some or all of the following topics:

- visual/hearing impairment; dyslexia; mental health;
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues (LGBT);
- using assistive technology;
- using the *Quality and Equality in Learning and Teaching Materials (QELTM)* tool;
- cultural awareness; and
- BRITE training and others.

There are very good examples of college and school staff sharing CPD in order to enhance their understanding of each other's work and the differences in their respective learners' behaviours and learning styles.

**John Wheatley College** provides access to a wide range of equality-related CPD for individual; staff and groups of staff. Examples include: *Discrimination Master Class* (seminars provided by the Scottish Discrimination Law Association); *British Sign Language* training; training related to understanding the impact of violence against

women; and working with disengaged and challenging young people. The college's 2008-09 Equality and Diversity report records training in 38 different equality-related topics being undertaken by staff in that session. The college's priorities for session 2010-11 include mental health and wellbeing, and challenging homophobia. The college's Board of Management undergoes systematic induction, which includes reference to the college's ethos and approach to equality and diversity. Board members also undertake an annual staff development programme which has included equalities and diversity-related topics.

In most of colleges visited, staff commented upon the impact of their CPD. They report that it has significantly increased their awareness of a wide range of issues. It has caused them to reflect on their professional practice and question their own prejudices. The successful contribution of CPD to positive ethos and culture was very evident in these colleges. There are many examples of staff amending practices and procedures, such as admissions procedures and arrangements for selection of learners, to ensure that they are equitable and free from potential and unintentional discrimination or bias. Furthermore, teaching staff in these colleges now scrutinise their delivery in the context of equality and diversity. They also report that their work with central support teams on the provision of additional support for learners is more effective as a result of their increased awareness and understanding.

**South Lanarkshire College** delivers mandatory QELTM training to support services teams, as well as teaching teams. Members of support teams report that this training has raised their awareness significantly of the work of teaching staff in ensuring that teaching materials promote diversity through their content and delivery approaches, as well as being made available in accessible formats for learners with additional needs. The training has also helped support managers and staff to examine further their own procedures. As a result, teaching and support teams work together very effectively to promote equality and diversity in all of their activities.

In **Coatbridge College**, additional online training in equality, diversity and impact assessing is delivered to all staff and the Board of Management. This has led to increased awareness by all of their legal responsibilities and their own perceptions of bias and prejudice. Staff feel better equipped to address equality issues and to challenge learners about their prejudices and behaviours.

Continuing staff development for equality and diversity is clearly linked to planning processes and equalities action plans in almost all colleges. In many cases, HR managers identify college-wide training, such as mandatory awareness raising training or QELTM training. There are also good examples of centrally-devised annual programmes of CPD relating to equality and diversity. In most cases, HR managers do this through the *Equalities and Diversity Committee*, or equivalent. At team level, individual staff members often identify further CPD which they wish to undertake in order to enhance their understanding of wider equality issues. This may be to further their knowledge about an issue which is specific to the environment and context of their college, such as sectarianism or understanding Islam, or it may be related to a wider issue, such as mental health or using assistive technologies to support learners. More than a few colleges have included equality and diversity objectives in *annual staff development and career reviews*, or equivalent. Generally, those who do not currently include these objectives plan to do so over the next session. However, in a few colleges, staff are left to opt into further CPD through online programmes provided by the college. Participation in these

programmes is not monitored systematically in these colleges. Therefore, those staff who are not proactively interested in equality and diversity issues may undertake initial mandatory awareness training, but fail to participate in further related CPD. Colleges which belong to the UHI Millennium Institute (UHIMI) benefit from equality and diversity training provided by their university partners.

### ***Equality and diversity in staffing arrangements***

Human Resources managers and their teams have long-established and effective procedures to promote equality in all college staffing arrangements. Typically, across the sector, they scrutinise their procedures systematically for staff recruitment, selection and career progression. On a continuous basis, they review application forms to ensure that there is no inherent or potential bias. Furthermore, they have trained managers across their colleges in fair and equitable interviewing techniques. All colleges visited commit to interviewing all candidates with disabilities who meet selection criteria. In all cases, they make use of separate, anonymous equal opportunities monitoring forms and analyse this information when monitoring their statistics. Similarly, almost all colleges anonymise application forms prior to sending them to the managers who are compiling short-lists for interview and most have attained the *double-tick – Positive about Disabled People* standard. All HR managers reported a year-on-year increase in the number of staff declaring disabilities. They judge this to be a result of the higher profile of equalities issues in the college culture, and the general openness that now exists in cross-college discussions about equality. All colleges operate flexible working practices to allow staff to meet the needs of their domestic circumstances, such as caring for dependents. Most colleges have published policies to ensure that all staff are treated fairly and equally. These include family-friendly arrangements, maternity and paternity arrangements, flexible working arrangements, and special/extraordinary leave arrangements, amongst others. However, this is better established and embedded in some colleges than others.

### ***Conclusions***

The provision of CPD for equality and diversity in Scotland's colleges is a developing picture. Understandably, in most colleges, aspects of CPD have been legislation-led. There are good examples of colleges providing tailored, and in a few cases highly specialised, CPD to support all staff in addressing issues which are specific to their college's community and context. Colleges have a strong and well-established provision of CPD in wider inclusion-related activities, such as the use of assistive technologies or dyslexia training. However, in some colleges, participation in online equalities training should be monitored to ensure participation by all staff. The work of HR managers and their teams to ensure equality and diversity in their practices is well-embedded and very effective. In almost all colleges, HR managers work closely with other members of the *Equalities and Diversity Committee* or equivalent to lend their expertise and ensure that an appropriate range of CPD at cross-college, team and individual levels is being offered.

## Planning for equality of opportunity in the curriculum portfolio

### ***The wider curriculum***

All colleges have strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity through their curriculum portfolio. Through their annual curriculum planning processes, they scrutinise their provision to ensure that their portfolio is sufficiently broad in terms of level of programme and mode of delivery. They plan and build the curriculum to provide progression routes for learners, with the aim of moving learners from specially-targeted provision into mainstream programmes. Overall, colleges provide appropriate access/introductory level programmes to enable learners to commence their studies at levels which will ensure their comfort and aim to build their confidence. Some colleges serve multi-cultural communities. They plan their curriculum to meet the needs of learners from such diverse backgrounds.

***Langside College*** is a community college which serves a multi-cultural community. Its curriculum portfolio reflects this with a significant emphasis on adult literacy and numeracy, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) to give learners the building blocks they need for progression. The portfolio reflects the needs of learners, employers, schools and the local community, as well as using labour market information to ensure the curriculum provision is fit for purpose.

Colleges' rigorous curriculum planning processes are linked to financial analyses of their provision. They include consideration of programme PIs and self-evaluation activities, as well as the extent to which programmes meet the needs of the communities, partners and stakeholders the college serves. This is an extremely challenging exercise, which requires complex decision-making by senior managers. In an environment where activity levels are limited by available funding, college managers allocate resources in ways which allow colleges to fulfil their mission and strategic aims, but also ensure that they strive for continued financial security. It is often the case that the areas of the curriculum portfolio which meet the needs of a diverse range of learners well are those areas which provide the most challenge for colleges in terms of key indicators, such as cost and PIs.

All colleges take great care to ensure that they provide a balanced portfolio. Portfolio planning processes are very effective and linked well to strategic and operational planning processes, self-evaluation activities and CPD. Colleges further ensure equality and diversity in their provision through the programme approval procedures, almost all of which have an equality and diversity criterion. All colleges plan for provision to meet a wide range of hard-to-reach groups, appropriate to the context of their college, as well as national agendas.

***Angus College*** undertakes a rolling longer-term curriculum review and planning process, designed to ensure that the curriculum meets all appropriate requirements. The college has very close links with a wide range of external stakeholders and service providers and uses these links to inform curriculum needs and opportunities, and to ensure that portfolio provision meets local equality and diversity requirements.

*Portfolio developments are considered annually, with the portfolio itself subject to impact assessment. Equality and diversity requirements are incorporated within course approvals process and are considered in detail as part of scrutiny process.*

***Inverness College*** is committed to meeting the needs of learners from travelling families who are living temporarily in the college's catchment area. The college has



*designed a bespoke programme in order to engage the learners and provide them with personal learning skills and skills for employability. Staff and learners have developed trusting relationships. As a result, the families have remained in the area longer than they had planned.*

### **Programme level**

In their self-evaluation processes, most colleges further ensure equality of opportunity in their curriculum through reflection on learner participation in programmes. Many colleges have taken steps to mitigate gender imbalance in particular programmes, such as females in engineering or construction, and males in care or complementary therapies. Staff in a few colleges visit local schools to challenge gender-occupational stereotyping, yet there is no evidence of this type of activity for the other equality strands.

### **Conclusions**

Colleges plan their curricular portfolios well. Allocating resources skilfully, they often take decisions to resource programmes which do not necessarily result in the most positive indicators. However, they choose to run these programmes in order to ensure equality of access to education and training for the most hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups in their communities. These planning processes link well with colleges' visions and strategic aims, self-evaluation and CPD arrangements.

### **Working with partnerships and external agencies to inform and contribute to equality and diversity**

Scotland's colleges have a well-recognised history of working with external partners to fulfil their commitments to access and inclusion. As a result, all colleges work very effectively with external organisations and partners to inform, promote and embed equality and diversity in their planning, or in their daily activities. Most colleges involve external partners in their planning for equality and diversity, while all work with their partners to identify and design programmes to enhance access to college for under-represented and vulnerable groups of learners. Principals and senior managers from almost all colleges are active and influential members of their *local community planning partnerships*, with whom they work very effectively to maximise opportunities for learners through the provision of tailored programmes. There are many examples across Scotland of colleges working effectively in local partnerships with agencies such as the local council, the police, the local authority social work department, the NHS trust, local black and minority ethnic groups such as the *Glasgow Anti-racist Alliance (GARA)*, Deaf Connections, the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), *DisabledGo*<sup>8</sup> and LGBT groups amongst many others.

**Cumbernauld College** *participates in community learning and development planning to promote education and training opportunities to a diverse range of individuals and employers. It also engages with Scotland's Colleges to ensure awareness of sectoral developments in this area. The college is committed to working in direct partnership with both North Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnerships, and works to ensure that support networks exist for learners. The Chair of the college Inclusion Group meets on a regular basis with East Dunbartonshire's Senior Policy Officer with responsibility for Equalities to*

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.disabledgo.com>

*exchange ideas and share good practice. The college has also made a commitment to work in partnership with DisabledGo, an organisation which aims to empower disabled people to make informed decisions with regard to the suitability of premises, based on individual access requirements.*

Often, colleges work together with external partners to design programmes, capitalising on their expertise and knowledge of learners' circumstances and specific challenges.

**Anniesland College** works in partnership with Glasgow Social Work Department and Refugee Integration Forum to provide specific provision for young unaccompanied asylum seekers. This has contributed to the diversity of the learning experience at the college for all learners. The college has had 388 enrolments from 29 different nationalities over the last six years.

All colleges have very good links with local schools for the delivery of vocational programmes to young people, as well as *Skills for work* programmes. More than a few colleges work with two or three local authorities. In the majority of colleges, there are good examples of the development of learners' essential skills through projects with external partners. This is particularly significant for learners whose progress towards attainment of certificated qualifications may be slow. Achievement of essential skills enables them to develop confidence and increases their chances of vocational attainment.

**Ayr College** runs an *Essential Skills Development* programme in which learners work in partnership with a variety of external agencies to raise funds. For example, they work with *Guide Dogs for the Blind*, *Cancer Research* and *Clic Sargent*, amongst others. External partner agencies are also represented on the *Equality and Diversity* sub groups of the Board of Management to inform diversity practice in the college.

## **Conclusions**

Colleges have very strong and effective partnership-working arrangements with a wide range of external partners to promote equality and diversity. They are well represented in *community planning partnerships* and other local agencies. Colleges work successfully with their partners to identify and design programmes to meet the needs of hard-to-reach or vulnerable learners. Most colleges involve external partners in their strategic planning and a few include external representation on their *Equality and Diversity Committees* or equivalent, in order to inform operational decisions.

## **Learner engagement in the promotion of equality and diversity**

There are examples of effective practice in the engagement of learners in the promotion of equality and diversity through wider college activities. In many colleges, learners are aware of their college's direction regarding equality and diversity. Most colleges have taken steps to involve or consult with learners in the development of equalities schemes/policies. However, the response from learners has been very low, with the exception of the *Disability Equality Scheme*. During the fieldwork visits for this report, Inspectors met with groups of learners, which were representative of the learner population. Most of those learners consider their

college to be a fair college. Almost all colleges include an input on equality and diversity in learners' induction programmes.

### ***At programme and individual levels***

In all colleges, learners report that they feel comfortable and confident about expressing their views at *programme team* meetings, or equivalent. There are many good examples of learners raising timetable issues, which have been promptly addressed by staff, in order to enable learners to meet the needs of their dependants. However, at programme level, *programme team* meetings do not systematically encourage learners to provide feedback on equality and diversity. For example, while they are generally encouraged to comment on curricular materials or learning and teaching approaches, there is no systematic focus on seeking their feedback from an equality and diversity viewpoint. Only a small minority of colleges have equality and diversity on *programme team* meeting agendas. As a result, *programme teams* are missing opportunities to promote equality and diversity, as well as to ensure that learners do not feel discriminated against. However, individual learners frequently provide feedback on additional support arrangements which the college has put in place for them. They are aware of their entitlements to additional support and contribute well to sessions in which their arrangements are reviewed. In many cases, class members have learned about disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation issues from their peers, and are often involved in providing informal support.

*In Coatbridge College, a visually-impaired learner developed very good massage skills. Fellow class members noted the learner's skills and, consequently, wore blindfolds when practising their own massage skills. As a result, they appreciated the challenges faced by their peer, and they enhanced their own skills.*

### ***At wider college level***

The Students' Association, or equivalent, is active in contributing to equality and diversity initiatives in most colleges. Almost all Student Associations have an Equalities and Diversity Officer, or equivalent. Many have additional officers who contribute to equality and diversity, for example, an International Students' Officer; LGBT Officer; Disabled Students' Officer; and Women's Officer, amongst others. Generally, Student Associations have created officer posts which represent the needs of their student body. Overall, Equalities Officers are enthusiastic, and are often from an under-represented or minority group themselves. However, while they have been trained as class representatives, they have not always received specific training in issues related to equalities and diversity. Most colleges make use of cross-college learner focus groups to seek learner feedback and opinion. Again, these seldom focus on equality and diversity issues. Where they do, this is largely confined to commenting on the college prospectus or website, in terms of stereotypical graphic representation, or accessibility issues.

More than a few colleges hold annual diversity events or promote college *Diversity Weeks*. Learners generally make a significant contribution to these events. They are aimed at celebrating the cultural diversity of the college's learner population and often involve the contribution of learners from curricular areas such as hospitality, and art and design, in the organisation and staging of the event.

Learners from **Stow College**'s music programmes, along with the Students' Association, organised and staged the event *Love Music, Hate Racism*. The event raised learners' awareness of equality and diversity issues, especially those relating to race.

**John Wheatley College** provides learners with regular learning activities which have equality and diversity themes, through individual and group activities, appropriate to their programme of study. These activities often link in to the college's annual *Week of Diversity*. This event showcases equality-related work undertaken by learners throughout the year, as well as allowing learners to plan and deliver specific activities for the week. Examples include a collaborative performance with contributions from learners in areas such as *Creative Industries*, and *Hairdressing and Beauty*, as well as a themed calendar with art work and text from *Art and Design* and *ESOL* learners.

**Forth Valley College** trains over 200 class representatives each year. The promotion of equality and diversity is a key feature, with representatives training as Equality and Diversity Ambassadors. They commit to promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of their college life. They have detailed knowledge of all relevant college values and procedures and advocate for their peers when required. Ambassadors participate in and organise cross-college promotional activities. This has led to increased awareness amongst learners of equality and diversity issues, as well as helping to embed these values in the college culture.

## **Conclusions**

Most colleges have made good progress in developing learners' understanding of their college's position regarding both equality and diversity. They have good arrangements for the involvement of learners in the promotion of equality and diversity in the life and work of the college, through a wide range of appropriate events and activities. Often, these activities are initiated by or involve Student Associations. However, further work is needed to ensure that learners are fully aware of their opportunities and entitlements to influence issues of equality and diversity specifically at programme level.

## **Equality and diversity in curriculum content, learning and teaching, and assessment**

All colleges, with the exception of some remote colleges, recognise the need to promote equality and diversity in learning and teaching materials and approaches, and take action. However, the effectiveness and impact of colleges' arrangements to achieve this varies considerably across the sector. This variation correlates with the length of time which colleges have had measures in place and the extent to which measures are understood and applied by teaching staff in their delivery, and programme teams in their self-evaluation processes.

## ***Learning and teaching and self-evaluation***

In order to ensure that teaching materials promote equality and diversity, and are free from bias, almost all colleges have adopted the QELTM tool. Many have devised their own version of it. Staff development for the use of QELTM or equivalent is at different stages across the sector. Therefore, meaningful use of the process and an effective impact on learning and teaching materials and delivery are variable. Although colleges are making very good progress in embedding these processes, more than a few do not systematically review teaching materials for the promotion of equality and diversity, and the avoidance of bias.

In many cases, there is a tendency for teaching staff to synonymise QELTM with the overall promotion of equality and diversity in learning and teaching. There is a need for staff to extend and embed the promotion of equality and diversity further into their delivery and teaching practices, rather than regarding QELTM as the totality of their promotional efforts. In colleges where this works well, self-evaluation at programme team level routinely includes consideration of equality and diversity. This consideration includes an evaluation of promotion across the whole programme, as well as in teaching methods and approaches. It therefore extends beyond the teaching materials alone. In a few colleges, evaluation of equality and diversity extends further into the individual professional reflection of teaching staff, which ensures good delivery, as well as increasing the individual's awareness of equality and diversity in their teaching practice. More than a few colleges include checks for equality and diversity in their *approval* and *internal verification processes*. This helps to ensure appropriate promotion through the balance of the programme content, as well as within assessment instruments.

***Dumfries and Galloway College*** has in a place a well-embedded peer observation process. As part of this process, observers review the member of staff's materials and delivery to ensure they are not discriminatory in any way. The observer receives a copy of the learning and teaching materials for two previous lessons, as well as those to be used during the identified lesson. The observer reviews the materials in relation to a number of areas, including: identification of the use of positive role models; gender bias; compliance of materials with current disability standards; and the promotion of cultural differences. During the lesson, the observer looks for evidence that the lecturer is promoting equality and diversity.

Teaching staff address equality and diversity very well in some subject areas. This is encouraged through the nature of the subjects and curriculum content. For example, programme teams for health and social care, early years and child care, and social sciences consider and promote these issues routinely as part of their curriculum. There are also very good examples of this in some hospitality, art and design, and beauty programmes. Examples noted in colleges include: teaching resources in childcare programmes which make use of dolls with disabilities, and references to same-sex parenting; hairdressing and beauty programmes focusing on the needs and preferences of different ethnic groups; and programmes in hospitality and art and design using multi-cultural themes. However, there are a few examples of teaching teams in number-based subjects, such as engineering, believing that it is unnecessary and impossible to promote equality and diversity within their subject areas. Colleges should enable teaching staff from programmes where promotion is part of their curriculum to share their awareness and methods with others.

**South Lanarkshire College** serves a population in which only 1% is from minority ethnic groups. Teaching staff from the Intermediate 1 Early Education and Childcare programme noted that, when discussing ethnic or cultural issues, learners sometimes found understanding concepts of diversity difficult, having no direct knowledge, experience or understanding through schooling or their local neighbourhood. Furthermore, younger learners hold views about diversity, religion and race which have been moulded by these limited experiences, and are often too narrow to support well-informed debate. To address this issue, teaching staff organise an annual field trip to an area in Glasgow with a highly diverse cultural base. As a result, learners quickly become aware of their limited and stereotypical understanding of other cultures and races. They are highly motivated by many of their observations relating to food and art and as a result, have developed a good understanding of cultural diversity, which supports their future learning.

Almost all colleges put in place effective measures to ensure equality of access to assessment for learners. Generally, teaching staff work well with student services teams, and in many cases external specialists, to ensure that appropriate additional assessment arrangements are in place for learners who require them. Where additional arrangements are required for either learning or assessment, there is good communication between student services experts and programme teams. As a result, teaching staff ensure that appropriate support for learners is in place in advance of learning or assessment taking place. This includes situations where learners require special arrangements on account of their observance of religious or cultural customs.

## **Conclusions**

The need to ensure promotion of equality and diversity through curriculum materials is well recognised in almost all colleges. However, colleges across the sector are at different stages in terms of the effectiveness of their arrangements. Colleges should work towards extending teaching staff's understanding of promotion of equality and diversity. In some cases, their understanding is limited to the use of the QELTM tool and does not extend into their teaching practice and delivery. Equality and diversity is best integrated in to learning, teaching and assessment in colleges where self-evaluation processes at programme team level include consideration of these issues. Where this extends to reflection by individuals on their teaching practice, their awareness and understanding is greater, and their promotion of equality and diversity in their teaching practice is more effective. Some subject areas lend themselves more easily to active promotion within teaching approaches. Almost all colleges support their learners well through the provision of additional arrangements for learning and assessment.

## **Creating a culture which promotes good relations, is free from discrimination, and preserves dignity and respect**

### ***Amongst learners and between learners and staff***

The majority of college principals address groups of new learners during their induction programmes, at the beginning of the academic session. They use these opportunities to share the college's position on equality and diversity, often referring to the relevant strategic aim. They outline in detail the diverse culture to which their college aspires and they exhort new learners to support the culture. In a few colleges, senior managers promote a *zero tolerance* initiative, or equivalent,

regarding discrimination of any form. Principals outline the meaning of and reason for such policies, and the potential consequences of contravention. In most cases, these inputs are followed up in the remainder of the induction programme, during which staff emphasise the importance of respect for and tolerance of learners' differences. Often, staff refer to differences which are particular to the college's catchment area, or the issues which arise in the culture of the locality. For example, in some colleges, staff refer to issues of sectarianism, which may be aggravated by the wearing of football colours. Generally, in these colleges, the wearing of team colours by learners and staff is not permitted. Staff are mindful of the fact that learners who have progressed to college directly from school sometimes find themselves in the position of having to work and socialise with peers from a different religious background for the first time. These learners have come from either denominational or non-denominational schools and have sometimes had confrontational rather than collaborative social experiences with people from other religious backgrounds. In one college in the north of the country, the principal and staff have had to address anti-English behaviour amongst some learners. Colleges in other areas have worked well to integrate asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants and international learners with home learners. They have encouraged the sharing of cultures to increase all learners' awareness and understanding of ethnicity and other nationalities. Often, this is done through planned cross-college events, such as *Diversity Days* or *Diversity Weeks*, and in some cases, through learning and teaching. Colleges are generally successful in their efforts to address these types of issues, but, in most cases, it requires constant reinforcement by staff.

More than half of the colleges visited reinforce their initial messages regarding equality and diversity effectively. They use a range of measures, such as the display of *Respect me* posters throughout the college, pop-ups on computers used by learners, plasma screens and regular college bulletins. Almost all colleges require learners to agree to a *Code of Conduct* or equivalent, which details the college's expectations of appropriate and respectful behaviours by learners and staff. Often, this is included in a wider *Learner Agreement*, *Charter* or *Contract*, which also describes required levels of commitment to work. Overall, colleges (including those which have benefitted from new or refurbished estates, funded or part-funded by SFC), have planned their estates well to enable the best promotion of equality and diversity. Plans have included enhanced facilities and access arrangements to the estate and to learning and teaching areas for learners and staff with disabilities, and a clean and spacious room for use by learners and staff for contemplation or the observance of religious practice. However, a very small minority of colleges have yet to provide an appropriate area for contemplation.

Most colleges engage learners effectively in the promotion of a fair and respectful culture. Typically, this is done through the Students' Association, which enhances learners' awareness of issues and their role in supporting an equal and fair culture within the college.

However, a minority of colleges stated that their mechanism for ensuring the promotion of good relations and the absence of discrimination was the college's *Complaints and Incidents Procedure*. While invoking such procedures can and should provide a recourse to fairness for learners, it does not proactively promote equality.

*Staff and learners in James Watt College held their first Learner Summit in session 2009-10. This resulted in seven published commitments by staff and learners, of*

*which the first is People are different and we commit to treating others as we and they wish to be treated To support this, the Students' Association created the RESPECT (Relate, Equality, Smile, Peace, Educate, Communicate, Trust) initiative, which is well publicised through various media within the college. Respect, understanding, and the promotion of good manners are at the heart of the campaign. Learners are aware of the high priority of this campaign and it has increased their understanding of fairness and diversity.*

*Using their experiences from involvement in the Columba 1400 initiative, staff of **Central College** created MERIT (Motivation, Endurance Respect, Integrity, Teamwork) to cascade the ethos of Columba 1400 to all learners and staff of the college. The MERIT programme is delivered to staff and learners through a series of workshops, during which participants consider the importance of each of these values. Having commenced over a year ago, the workshops provide staff with tools and techniques to use in learning and teaching, as well as ways in which to promote the core values. Staff who have participated deliver MERIT to learners through the Personal Development Planning (PDP) processes and Guidance units. The challenging behaviours and attitudes of the first group of learners to go through MERIT changed significantly and retention improved to 100%. Managers envisage that these core values will be embedded in all of the college's activities through the MERIT initiative. Members of staff from four other colleges have already participated in the programme through **Central College**, with a view to adopting it in their own establishments.*

***Kilmarnock College** uses its Ambassadors' Task Force to promote positive and respectful behaviour. Often ambassadors selected are learners whose behaviours may have been challenging in the past. Selection as an ambassador is rewarding and motivational for them. The college's monthly Making a Difference awards are presented by the principal to learners, identified by staff and peers, who, in some large or small way, have made a difference through their behaviour. This initiative also promotes the college's commitment to respectful behaviour.*

### **Amongst staff**

Generally, all values promoted by the college in terms of equality and diversity for learners are replicated for staff. In addition, all colleges have in place appropriate policies to provide staff with recourse to fairness and equality, which are typically available on staff intranets. These include policies for *Dignity at Work, Bullying and Harassment*, and *Complaints and Grievance*, amongst others.

### **Promoting diversity**

Almost all colleges aim to promote diversity and good relations through their strategic, operational and team plans. They do this well and it has become a well-embedded feature of planning in the college sector. However, a few colleges associate the meaning of diversity only with cultural diversity. This results in a lack of awareness of the equal need to promote diversity of age, gender and other characteristics, as well as cultural background.



## **Conclusions**

Overall, colleges actively promote equality and diversity to learners and staff effectively, promoting the preservation of dignity, the promotion of respect and the avoidance of bias. They have in place appropriate policies and procedures which are generally well understood by staff. While learners are aware of the college's values in terms of equality and diversity, this awareness is not consistent across the sector, nor within any specific college. Often, colleges are required to address difficult issues amongst learners, such as social prejudices, which are specific to their catchment area and locality. They do this well. The use of ongoing, often innovative, campaigns and promotions such as *Respect Me* is increasing across the sector and is becoming well embedded in colleges.

### **Promoting equality and diversity through marketing activities**

In all colleges, the work of marketing teams underpins the promotion of equality and diversity, although the extent and effectiveness of these efforts varies across the sector. Overall, marketing teams understand fully the college's commitment to equality and diversity in order to promote these values effectively.

### **Marketing, information and publicity materials**

Almost all colleges recognise the importance of challenging stereotypical thinking through the use of images, case studies and testimonials in marketing and publicity materials. They take care to ensure that all images, including those on their websites, reflect learners and staff from a range of races and ages. They incorporate images of male and female learners and staff, and include wheelchair users. The range of images depicted generally reflects the profile of their learner and local populations. Most prospectuses and websites contain broad statements of the college's values in relation to equality and diversity, as well as references and links to equality schemes, policies and action plans.

Most colleges' websites are *disabled-friendly*, and more than a few have *Priority level AA or AAA* standard badges. A small minority of colleges are listed on the *DisabledGo* website, with one college having its full portfolio and services listed on the site. Learners, sometimes including disabled learners, are often involved in focus groups to provide advice to college managers on the appeal, readability and accessibility of proposed designs. All colleges provide prospectuses and other marketing and information materials in different formats for visually and aurally impaired enquirers, if required. All colleges take steps to ensure that admissions procedures and documentation are accessible.

### **Using additional promotional methods**

Overall, colleges make good use of additional methods to promote equality and diversity. The choice of specific promotional methods is dependent on the programme or service being promoted, as well as the college's identified target audiences. For example, some colleges may advertise on radio stations serving Black Minority Ethnic (BME) audiences, or distribute promotional leaflets and posters around local community venues and libraries.

In many colleges, marketing teams make good use of local labour market and socio-economic information to identify groups which are under-represented in their

local area. They work well with teaching staff to identify and build partnerships with external groups. In the majority of colleges, there are good links between the marketing team and the manager with responsibility for equality and diversity or the *Equality Officer*. In a few colleges, the internal audit or self-evaluation of marketing functions includes equality and diversity as a criterion.

All colleges participate in external events to promote inclusion, and sometimes diversity. They attend events hosted by external partners, such as schools, community groups and local employers, to promote college programmes. In terms of diversity, colleges' main focus at such events is to challenge stereotypical thinking around gender. Colleges across the sector promote programmes such as *Women into Construction* or *Men into Childcare*. While these initiatives engage learners from the minority gender successfully into programmes, there is a need for colleges to think more widely in terms of diversity and to promote other aspects of diversity, such as age, more widely. Increasingly, colleges have begun to invite a wider range of minority groups, such as LGBT groups, to address staff at CPD events. Staff across the sector have found these interventions very helpful. However, more remote colleges have not yet engaged with such minority groups.

Almost all colleges celebrate the success of their learners in addition to standard end-of-term awards ceremonies. More than a few colleges have exceptional ceremonies to reward and motivate learners. This celebration promotes equality and diversity where learners are from disadvantaged groups.

***Anniesland College*** celebrates learner success regularly. In particular, it celebrates the success of learners who achieve national recognition in areas which challenge stereotypical thinking. The college promotes these learners as role models for the wider community.

## **Conclusions**

Overall, marketing teams work well with teaching staff to identify and provide for hard-to-reach groups. In all colleges, marketing and information materials are available in different formats to ensure accessibility. While most colleges actively promote non-traditional programme choices to males and females to militate against occupational segregation, not all colleges address other aspects of diversity, such as age, sufficiently. In addition, a minority of colleges, which do not have direct contact with a wider range of minority groups, do not provide a sufficient range of CPD opportunities for staff, or promotion of these issues to learners.

## **Providing equality of opportunity through guidance and support**

All colleges have an infrastructure which supports learners who may be at risk of not progressing or attaining. Typically, colleges provide academic, vocational, welfare, pastoral and financial guidance to all learners. They provide specialist guidance and support, sometimes through external agencies, to learners whose circumstances may present barriers to their participation or success. While the extent and nature of these services is always learner-led, it is often dependent on the socio-economic issues which prevail in the college's catchment area. In some colleges, learner support consists largely of academic and vocational guidance, and the provision of needs-led additional support. However, in a few urban colleges, the range of services provided is wide and complex. In these colleges, guidance and support staff work closely with external specialists to provide support for learners whose

barriers arise from issues such as severe deprivation, limited or no use of English, addiction, violence, or a journey out of sex-working or the justice system. Support measures provided to learners by staff in these colleges and their external partners are intensive, but effective. Often they provide equality of opportunity to learners who otherwise would have little or none, and make it possible for learners to change their lives. A few colleges operate their own crèche, providing childcare facilities for learners, enabling them to participate in their programmes. Others work in partnership with local registered childminders and nurseries, providing funding for learners to use these services. However, demand for these services often exceeds supply.

### ***Specialist support***

Most colleges have developed a system through which learners and staff reflect on learner progress through the use of *Personal Learning Plans* (PLPs) during dedicated times for guidance and support. Usually, these arrangements are in place for full-time learners only. Only a few colleges provide plans for part-time or distance learners. Learners who do not require specialist support use these plans to measure their progress and, often, the development of certain essential skills. Colleges design their own plans and therefore the aspects of progress which are measured and the way in which they are measured varies greatly across the sector. A few colleges have developed online *personal development plans* and these work well, overall. Learners requiring additional support use *personal learning support plans*, which reflect and track the appropriateness of their additional support measures with staff.

All colleges take proactive steps to identify learners' potential barriers to success as early as possible. While application forms provide the opportunity for learners to declare any disabilities or other issues which may impact on their access to or progress on their programme, not all learners declare these issues fully or, in some cases, at all. Colleges make good use of *records of need* which follow learners from school. However, support staff often identify further needs once learners are assessed in college. Overall, colleges identify learners' needs promptly and effectively. However, in a few colleges, arrangements are not put in place quickly enough to afford full benefit to learners.

Teaching and support staff work well together to implement and monitor the effectiveness of support arrangements. Generally, communication between specialist staff and teaching teams regarding special arrangements for learners is effective. Where colleges have enlisted the support of external partners, for example in the case of *care leavers*, learners on probation under the justice system, or those with complex additional support needs, these partners attend learners' review meetings.

Almost all colleges have a dedicated area where learners can use or test assistive technologies, or can meet in confidence with a specialist advisor. Colleges work hard and effectively to ensure that these areas are non-stigmatised and that learners are comfortable and confident about using them. All colleges provide specialist individual support, such as a signer or a scribe, where required. In more than a few colleges, learners benefit from further specialist support in the classroom. For example, a learner or a group of learners may be supported by a key support worker, or specialist learning advisors.

## **Conclusion**

All colleges provide effective support to learners whose chances of participation and success may be at risk because of their individual circumstances. Specialist support staff within and outwith colleges work well with teaching staff to ensure that the best possible support measures are made available to learners. However, in a few colleges, this support is not made available to learners promptly enough. As a result, learners commence their programmes without support in place. This is a period during which learners are most vulnerable and their chances of attrition are therefore increased. Overall, staff and learners monitor learner progress through PLPs and *Personal Learning Support Plans* (PLSPs) well. Colleges have succeeded in providing non-threatening and non-stigmatised areas in which learners can discuss their specific needs with specialist staff.

## **Monitoring for equality and diversity**

### ***Monitoring of schemes and action plans***

All colleges have in place arrangements to monitor actions arising from their equality schemes, associated action plans and equality impact assessments. Generally, these processes are managed by the *Equality and Diversity Committee* or equivalent group. These committees receive reports on the progress against actions. However, the links between these groups and teams responsible for carrying out the actions, such as programme teams, are not always effective. While *Equality and Diversity Committees* identify actions through their monitoring, in more than a few colleges these actions do not follow through to team action plans or other appropriate plans. The sector has made good progress with monitoring for equality and diversity, but there is further work to be done to ensure that processes are fully effective.

### ***Monitoring of learners' retention, attainment and progression***

Almost all colleges monitor learners' retention, attainment and progression by race, disability and gender, at college level. Most colleges report and publish the results of their monitoring, as required by legislation, either in their annual reports, or in separate equality reports. However, in most cases, these processes amount to simple reporting of statistics and there is a lack of analyses of the impact of the results on learners. Monitoring of statistics for staff is more robust and conclusive across all colleges.

Monitoring of these statistics at programme team level is not effective. Only a few colleges meaningfully and routinely monitor for equality in retention, attainment and progression for all learners at programme team level. While this level of information is generally available from central *Management Information System* (MIS) teams, in most colleges, it is not sorted into retention and attainment by race, disability and gender at programme level. As a result, programme teams are unable to assess whether or not retention and attainment are affected by race, disability, and gender. Therefore, they are unable to plan for equality effectively.

## **Conclusion**

Colleges have made good progress, generally, in monitoring for equality and diversity at cross-college level, through *Equality and Diversity Committees*, or

equivalent. However, processes for linking this monitoring to action planning at team level are not well developed. Most colleges monitor and report learners' retention and attainment in terms of race, disability and gender, at college level. However, this is not done effectively at programme team level. Colleges require to do further work to provide the best chances for equality in retention and attainment for all learners.

## **5. Recommendations**

### **Colleges should:**

- ensure a prompt and full response to existing and future equalities legislation;
- provide and monitor post-initial CPD for all staff, building on initial inputs;
- ensure that programmes are well suited to learners' prior experiences and attainment, in order to maximise participation and success;
- develop and implement arrangements to enable learners to promote equality and diversity within their programmes of study;
- develop and implement arrangements beyond QELTM or equivalent to enable teaching staff to reflect on the promotion of equality and diversity within their professional practice;
- ensure that teaching approaches and materials in number-based and technical subjects promote equality and diversity;
- ensure that actions for equality and diversity from impact assessments and other equality action plans are systematically carried through to team plans;
- promote diversity in its widest sense to learners and staff, taking care to include groups and characteristics which may not be prevalent in the local area; and
- monitor for equality and diversity at programme level, through systematic analyses.

### **SFC should consider:**

- further steps to promote and maintain good practice in all aspects of equality and diversity across the college sector.

### **HMIE and *Scotland's Colleges* should:**

- work together to promote equality and diversity in Scotland's colleges through sharing good practice.

### **HMIE and SFC should consider:**

- scoping a further aspect task as a longitudinal evaluation of the impact of Scotland's colleges' arrangements for equality and diversity.

**Glossary of terms**

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| BME     | Black Minority Ethnic                                       |
| BRITE   | Beattie Resources for Inclusion in Technology and Education |
| CPD     | Continuing professional development.                        |
| EDI     | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion                           |
| EHRC    | Equality and Human Rights Commission                        |
| ESOL    | English for Speakers of Other Languages                     |
| GARA    | Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance                                |
| HMIE    | HM Inspectorate of Education                                |
| HR      | Human Resources   |
| JISC    | Joint Information Systems Committee                         |
| LGBT    | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender                      |
| MERIT   | Motivation, Endurance Respect, Integrity, Teamwork          |
| MIS     | Management Information Systems                              |
| NHS     | National Health Service                                     |
| PDA     | Professional Development Award                              |
| PDP     | Personal Development Planning                               |
| PI      | Performance Indicator                                       |
| PLP     | Personal Learning Plan                                      |
| PLSP    | Personal Learning Support Plan                              |
| QELTM   | Quality and Equality in Learning and Teaching Materials     |
| RESPECT | Relate, Equality, Smile, Peace, Educate, Communicate, Trust |
| RNIB    | Royal National Institute for the Blind                      |
| SA      | Students' Association                                       |
| SFC     | Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council       |
| SMT     | Senior Management Team                                      |
| SFEFC   | Scottish Further Education Funding Council                  |
| SHEFC   | Scottish Higher Education Funding Council                   |
| TQFE    | Teaching Qualification (Further Education)                  |
| UHIMI   | UHI Millennium Institute                                    |
| VLE     | Virtual Learning Environment                                |

### **HMIE wishes to thank the following colleges who took part in field visits:**

Banff and Buchan College  
Cardonald College  
Carnegie College  
Central College  
Coatbridge College  
Dumfries and Galloway College  
Elmwood College  
Inverness College  
James Watt College of Further and Higher Education  
Sabhal Mor Ostaig  
Shetland College  
South Lanarkshire College  
West Lothian College

### **and the following colleges who provided detailed and helpful information through their responses to a questionnaire:**

Aberdeen College  
Adam Smith College  
Angus College  
Anniesland College  
Ayr College  
Borders College  
Clydebank College  
Cumbernauld College  
Dundee College  
Edinburgh's Telford College  
Forth Valley College  
Glasgow Metropolitan College  
John Wheatley College  
Kilmarnock College  
Langside College  
Lews Castle College  
Motherwell College  
Newbattle College  
North Glasgow College  
North Highland College  
Moray College  
Stevenson College  
Stow College



### **Themes addressed during fieldwork visits to colleges**

- Leadership for equality and diversity.
- The college's culture for the promotion of equality and diversity.
- Support arrangements, promotional/marketing arrangements for equality and diversity.
- Monitoring of equality and diversity in relation to recruitment.
- Equality and diversity in learning, teaching and assessment.
- Monitoring of equality and diversity in relation to learner progress.
- Learners' involvement in the promotion and mainstreaming of equality and diversity.
- Equality and diversity in staffing arrangements.

### **Themes included in questionnaire**

#### **Questions about leadership and CPD for equality and diversity**

1. How does the college articulate its direction for equality and diversity, from strategic to operational and individual levels?
2. How does the college ensure equality of opportunity through its curriculum portfolio?
3. What CPD does the college provide, relating to equality and diversity, for all staff?
4. How does the college use partnerships with external agencies to inform and contribute to equality and diversity?

#### **Questions about learner engagement in equality and diversity**

5. How does the college engage learners in the promotion and embedding of equality and diversity a) at programme level, and b) within the work and life of the college?

#### **Questions about equality and diversity in learning and teaching**

6. How does the college ensure that curriculum content, and learning, teaching and assessment materials are free from bias and actively promote equality and diversity across all curricular areas?
7. How does the college ensure that learner-staff relationships are free from discrimination, preserve dignity, and promote respect and confidence?

### **Questions about information, guidance and support**

8. How do the college's marketing activities promote equality and diversity?
9. How do the college's guidance and support services enable learners to learn and progress equally?

### **Questions about equality in learner progress and achievement**

10. How does the college monitor and plan for improvement in retention, attainment and progression rates in terms of race, disability and gender?
11. How does the college monitor and plan for improvement in achievement of essential and other skills in terms of race, disability and gender?

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Further information is available from:

HM Inspectorate of Education  
Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston  
EH54 6GA

Tel: 01506 600 200

Fax: 01506 600 337

Email: [enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk)



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