

## **Annual equality progress report**

A summary of progress against the Skills Funding Agency's draft Single Equality Scheme

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## **Executive Summary**

- 1     In June 2010, the Agency published a [draft Single Equality Scheme](#), and consulted widely with its staff, learners, providers and stakeholders. Respondents broadly welcomed the principles, objectives and actions set out in the draft. Many of the actions are already being taken forward, and the Agency is planning to finalise the Scheme once our change process is complete and the Government has published specific public sector equality duties. The draft objectives are to:
  - build equality into provider account management
  - build equality into our decisions and activities
  - support provider self-improvement and promote good practice, and
  - develop a fair, inclusive and diverse working environment
- 2     Each objective included a range of actions. In the first year:
  - four actions have been completed
  - sixteen have made good progress
  - seven have made some progress
  - two are at an early stage, and
  - three are now out of date, due to wider policy changes.
- 3     As part of the Single Equality Scheme we set ourselves a series of workforce equality goals which aimed at developing and maintaining a fair, inclusive and diverse working environment. We have made significant progress towards these goals, particularly in ensuring that all employees understand equality issues and all policies contribute to our equality objectives.
- 4     Progress towards our workforce goals is being delivered through a range of activities with input from stakeholders including BIS, a range of internal

### **Skills Funding Agency**

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experts, the Staff Consultative Forum and the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS).

- 5 As part of our proactive support for employees we have put in place programmes such as Employee Assist which aid and promote individual wellbeing. We have also put in place a comprehensive mandatory employee development programme entitled 'Everyone Counts' which has updated staff on legislative changes and good practice in equality and diversity.
- 6 The Agency's performance on workforce equality has also been recognised through the achievement of the two tick disability symbol which demonstrates our commitment to employ, keep and develop the abilities of disabled staff.
- 7 In 2010/11, we made substantial progress in promoting equality of opportunity in the learning we fund. In particular, we included stretching requirements in contracts with our providers; funded substantial programmes of provider-led projects; and commissioned research, resources and events for the sector.
- 8 Working in partnership with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), we funded fourteen colleges and providers to deliver projects meeting the needs of their learners and communities. The projects had a very diverse range of equality aims, and were selected for their potential to catalyse wider improvements across the sector. For example, learners at Lewisham College produced a DVD and resource pack on preventing sexual bullying and gender conflict; Amersham and Wycombe College conducted research into engaging the Pakistani community; and Hull Adult Education Service conducted research, training and promotion to improve disability declaration rates. A full set of case studies from the projects has been published on the LSIS [Excellence Gateway](#).
- 9 We are also working with the National Apprenticeship Service to fund [sixteen pilots](#) testing new ways of engaging more individuals from under-represented groups in Apprenticeships. Examples of these pilots include Rathbone, who are working in Oldham, Leicester and Bradford to encourage more black, Asian and other minority groups to become apprentices; and Zodiac Training in the North East, which is breaking down stereotypes by addressing the under-representation of men in health, social care and child care.
- 10 In 2010/11, the Agency commissioned two highly successful equality projects from the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE):
  - a set of [briefing guides](#) and events on effective practice in the delivery and co-ordination of provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and
  - a [virtual community of mental health practitioners](#), learners and service users, including resources and a discussion forum.
- 11 We also commissioned [research into the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender learners](#), in order to inform our equality objectives and provide evidence to the sector. Over four hundred learners took part. The majority of these reported that Further Education is a welcoming

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environment, although a significant minority felt that more needs to be done to address homophobia and transphobia.

- 12 Finally, we worked with LSIS to deliver a [project to improve the sector's capability to respond to the needs of deaf and hearing impaired learners](#). This included a learner voice conference, led by nine deaf learners and attended by over a hundred sector representatives; a set of effective practice case studies; and a pilot network for teachers of British Sign Language.

## Purpose

- 13 This report provides information about the Skills Funding Agency's progress against its draft Single Equality Scheme, and about how it is meeting its legal duty to pay due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## Key points

### Learner equality projects

- 14 In 2010/11, we delivered a successful programme of equality and diversity projects which are expected to have a significant long-term impact on the capacity of the sector to deliver better equality outcomes for learners.
- 15 The following key principles guided us in commissioning the projects:
- They should help the Agency to meet its duty to advance equality of opportunity in the learning it funds
  - They should further the direction of travel outlined in the draft Single Equality Scheme.
  - Where possible, they should be delivered by colleges and providers directly.
  - The focus should be on Apprenticeships and employer-responsive provision.
- 16 We created efficiency savings by:
- working in partnership wherever possible
  - devolving power to the lowest level
  - supporting projects with the potential to catalyze wider and more sustainable improvements.
- 17 Although the impacts of some of the projects- notably the Apprenticeship Diversity Pilots- are not yet measurable, three projects already stand out as being particularly successful:

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- The E&D Partnership Grants supported a large number of successful projects, with maximum provider freedom, low cost and wide impact.
- The deaf learner voice conference combined intensive learner involvement with a wide impact on a large number of providers.
- The LGB and T research is a high-quality, highly innovative piece of research with the potential to have an impact beyond the FE sector.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Key outputs/ comments</b>
Diversity in Apprenticeship pilots	NAS/ 17 providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 projects ongoing until 2012</li> </ul>
Establishing the QCF offer for learners with profound/severe learning difficulties and disabilities: Phase 1	Orchard Hill College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research into business needs and market gaps;</li> <li>• Ongoing development of 30 units;</li> <li>• Work towards Awarding Organisation recognition</li> <li>• Development of customer-facing website</li> </ul>
Equality and Diversity Partnership Grants	LSIS/ 14 providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 projects with wide range of outputs</li> <li>• Case studies and dissemination activity for each project;</li> <li>• 2 national dissemination events in June/ July</li> </ul>
Action research on engaging unemployed women in European Social Fund (ESF) provision	NIACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report being drafted;</li> <li>• Presentations made to ESF staff.</li> </ul>
Deaf and hearing impaired learners project	LSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner Voice conference attended by 133 provider staff and 9 learners.</li> <li>• 12 good practice case studies</li> <li>• 4 BSL network events attended by 87 people.</li> </ul>
Research into the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGB and T) adult learners	Babcock Research Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-quality, comprehensive report based on views of 444 LGB and T learners.</li> </ul>
Events and briefing guides on effective practice in the delivery and co-ordination of provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	NIACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 events attended by 156 providers,</li> <li>• 5 briefing guides published.</li> </ul>
Mental health 'e-community'	NIACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website with 500 members and 2,131 unique visitors;</li> <li>• 2 launch events held</li> </ul>
Equality Act workshops	YPLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 workshops attended by 201 providers</li> </ul>

Project	Key partners	Key outputs/ comments
SES Consultation with National Learner Panel	OpinionPanel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views of learners helping to shape our equality activity and future Scheme</li> </ul>
SES Consultation publication	COI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single Equality Scheme formatted and printed</li> <li>Easy-Read version produced</li> </ul>

## Diversity in Apprenticeship pilots

### Project background

18 It is well documented<sup>1</sup> that not all groups benefit equally from Apprenticeships. For example, disabled people and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are under-represented, and there is a high level of gender segregation in some sectors.

### Aims and objectives

- 19 The Diversity in Apprenticeship pilots aim to increase the number, quality and backgrounds of people applying for Apprenticeships and in particular to:
- improve the number of learners from diverse backgrounds on the Apprenticeship programme;
  - introduce mentoring support for those learners who need it;
  - provide case studies to highlight the opportunities of Apprenticeships
  - work with partner organisations to increase progression opportunities for learners.

### Pilots

- 20 Seventeen projects have been commissioned, including:
- New College Stamford, which is providing in-work support, including mentoring for apprentices with disabilities and learning difficulties, as well as working with employers to help them understand the needs of these groups
  - College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, which is delivering intensive mentoring, buddying and coaching support for those most in need
  - Newcastle UXL Ltd, which is recruiting role models from BAME and under-represented gender groups to deliver outreach activities and promote Apprenticeships in schools
  - Rathbone, which is working with BAME-led employers to increase the number of placements.

### Impact

21 It is currently too early to judge the impact of the pilots, which are ongoing until 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Institute for Employment Studies, [Research to Shape Critical Mass Pilots to Address Under-Representation in Apprenticeships](#), 2009

# **Establishing the QCF offer for learners with profound/severe learning difficulties and disabilities**

## **Project background**

- 22 As part of the implementation of the QCF, the Agency has stated its intention to focus public funding on provision from the QCF, and manage down the volume of non accredited provision. A key premise is that all learners should have their achievement recognised within a national framework.
- 23 However, there is currently a gap in provision which takes account of the particular achievement sets that learners with complex/profound/severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) may require.

## **Aims and objectives**

- 24 We therefore commissioned Orchard Hill College to:
- develop units/qualifications at Entry 1 in the QCF
  - develop a credit accumulation and transfer framework that supports learners in gaining additional credit from other units/qualifications
  - develop a sector-owned awarding capability focussed on learners with complex/ profound/ severe LDD
  - investigate a sector-led model for developing provision for learners with LDD in the QCF.

## **Outputs**

- 25 A summary of achievements includes:
- Business need intelligence activities:
    - a survey of gaps in the QCF
    - a library of products from other awarding organisations for a comparability study
    - information about other awarding organisations' customer service and centre registration
    - study of the business needs of a small awarding organisation
    - developing specifications for the web design team, and support for products and centres
    - development, quality assurance and business planning for new staff development assessment units.
  - Development work on thirty Entry 1 units
  - Work towards submission to Ofqual for Awarding Organisation recognition
  - Work to brief a web design team so that dissemination, information, support and external verification can be co-ordinated through a website.

## **Impact**

- 26 Although most impacts will not be measurable until after the completion of Phase 2, the following have been noted so far:
- positive interest from other learning organisations

- professional interest in joining expert review panels to engage in development and feedback processes

## Equality and Diversity Partnership Grants

### Project background

- 27 Following advice from the Association of Colleges that a significant proportion of the budget should be distributed directly to the sector, we agreed to support an LSIS grants programme. Providers were invited to bid for up to £25,000 each to undertake projects which meet the needs of their learners and communities.
- 28 We received a very high response of 140 project proposals. These were assessed and scored by a joint LSIS/ Agency panel and the fourteen highest scoring proposals were selected. As well as immediate impacts on the learners and communities targeted, projects were selected for their potential to catalyse wider improvements across the sector.

### Outputs

- 29 Each provider has produced a report/ case study on their project and disseminated their key findings. The case studies are published on the LSIS [Excellence Gateway](#). Representatives from the projects presented their findings at two national dissemination events in June/July 2011.

Provider	Key aims	Key outputs
Accrington & Rossendale College	Meeting the needs of LGB&T learners in Pennine Lancashire'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness training attended by 75 staff and 120 students</li> <li>• 3 focus groups</li> <li>• Online research questionnaire</li> <li>• Final research report</li> </ul>
Amersham & Wycombe College	Engaging young Pakistani individuals into college life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research paper</li> <li>• marketing strategy for Pakistani community, designed by Media students.</li> <li>• Action plan adopted into College's overall E&amp;D plan</li> </ul>
CG Partnership	Raise vulnerable students' awareness of E&D and extremism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 young people and staff engaged overall</li> <li>• 10 extremism and awareness sessions</li> <li>• Workshops delivered by CID</li> <li>• Disability awareness training</li> <li>• Lincoln City FC visit and talk</li> </ul>
Grimsby Institute Group	Research into needs of LGB and T people in North East Lincolnshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60+ attendees at Empower LGBT conference</li> <li>• 50+ attendees at E&amp;D Northern Network Event</li> <li>• 50+ focus group participants (learner and staff)</li> <li>• 200 online questionnaires completed</li> </ul>
Hartlepool College of Further	Develop skills and community payback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 offenders worked on a local allotment</li> </ul>

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Key aims</b>	<b>Key outputs</b>
Education	opportunities for offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two level 1 Awards</li> <li>• 6 Certificates and 3 diplomas in Practical Horticulture Skills and</li> <li>• All learners reported improvements in 'softer' skills</li> </ul>
Hartlepool Sixth Form College	Embedding E&D in teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 network meetings delivered across 4 colleges, attended by 72 staff</li> <li>• Set of E&amp;D teaching resources</li> </ul>
Hull Adult Education Service	Increasing declaration of learning difficulties, disabilities and support needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health awareness training delivered by MIND</li> <li>• 3 Disability Ambassadors went into groups to talk about disability and distributed questionnaires.</li> <li>• ALS workers conducted research and produced case studies</li> <li>• Promotional leaflet containing case histories of current students receiving support</li> </ul>
Kirklees Adult Learning	Develop training for learners with sensory impairments to work with voluntary, community and faith organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 learners engaged</li> <li>• 4-day accredited course in Funding and Fundraising Skills</li> <li>• 2-day course in developing a successful funding application</li> <li>• 1-day course in financial rules and procedures</li> <li>• New or specially adapted learning materials and a good practice manual</li> </ul>
Lewisham College	Help prevent sexual bullying and gender conflict from occurring in colleges, schools and youth settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DVD produced by 19 learners</li> <li>• Staff resource pack</li> <li>• Launch event attended by 50 people</li> </ul>
Myerscough College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use sports to challenge racism</li> <li>• Deliver equality impact assessment training</li> <li>• Research the impact of gender on learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Myerscough learners delivered coaching in two schools.</li> <li>• A DVD of the delivery of the project.</li> <li>• Session plans for E&amp;D tutorials.</li> <li>• 9 Curriculum Heads received training on subject-specific EIAs.</li> <li>• Improved understanding of gender achievement gap.</li> </ul>
Q Training Ltd	Embedding learning in everyday activity for disadvantaged groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 81 beneficiaries</li> <li>• 33 care workers received training in 6 residential settings.</li> <li>• 41 service-users received training delivered by those care workers.</li> </ul>

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Key aims</b>	<b>Key outputs</b>
Small Woods Association	Improve skills and reduce recidivism of female offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 learners engaged in a 12-week training programme in woodland management and greenwood craft skills</li> <li>• Learners given information about further woodland skills and employment opportunities</li> <li>• End of project celebration event for families and friends</li> </ul>
Stockton Riverside College	Improve integration and participation of the BME community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising Aspirations Event with 50 BME attendees</li> <li>• Have a Nice Day Event with approx. 100 BME women</li> <li>• Reading Group with 12 learners from ESOL and Skills for Life</li> <li>• Focus Group with 4 British Asian males</li> <li>• Respect Festival with approx. 200 learners and staff</li> <li>• Connect2Work training for 15 learners.</li> </ul>
Sussex Downs College	Improve the E&D understanding of WBL providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Case for Diversity produced and promoted to employers considering recruiting apprentices</li> <li>• Provider toolkit produced and shared across 50 WBL providers</li> <li>• Case studies incorporated into the toolkit</li> </ul>
WILD Young Parents Project	Improve access to college for young mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54 women engaged in career and course options</li> <li>• 11 attended 'Experience Days' (8 applied for courses)</li> <li>• HE Student Ambassadors gave information and advice about courses, application processes, student finance support, study skills and mentoring</li> </ul>

## Impact

30 As might be expected given the diversity of aims of the projects, the impacts are highly varied. Nevertheless, some common themes include:

- Raised awareness of E&D among learners
- Raised awareness of E&D among provider staff
- Training and IAG opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

## **Action research on engaging unemployed women in European Social Fund provision**

### **Project background**

- 31 In July 2010, a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) [Evaluation of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities within the European Social Fund](#) found that rates for engaging women are particularly low in Priority One (programmes for unemployed people): 35 per cent against a target of 51 per cent.
- 32 Through the Agency's equality and diversity research framework, we commissioned NIACE to carry out action research.

### **Aims and objectives**

- 33 The aim of the project is to build on the DWP research by identifying, catalysing and disseminating good practice in successfully engaging unemployed women in ESF programmes.
- 34 Objectives include to:
- produce high-quality case study examples of successful strategies, for dissemination across the sector
  - catalyse partnerships between providers, and voluntary and community organisations, to engage under-represented client groups; evaluate the success of this approach
  - facilitate the dissemination of good practice through networks

### **Methodology**

- 35 The research draws on:
- 121 completed questionnaires from providers
  - ten detailed case studies of good practice collected through interviews with staff, local employers and learners
  - three consultation events with providers.
- 36 A final report is expected to be published by the end of 2011.

## **Improving support for Deaf/hearing impaired learners**

### **Project background**

- 37 Following anecdotal evidence that the needs of Deaf and hearing impaired learners are not being fully met by the sector, LSIS were commissioned to develop a project which would improve the sector's capability and capacity to meet their needs.

### **Objectives**

- 38 Among the project's objectives were to:
- engage the learner voice;
  - develop effective practice resources
  - develop resources and networks for teachers of British Sign Language.

## Engaging with the Deaf learner voice

- 39 The main output from this strand was a learner voice conference held in London in March 2011. This was attended by 133 representatives from the sector, and nine learners. With support from LSIS and experts from across the sector, the learners designed and delivered the conference to raise deaf awareness.
- 40 Additionally, a DVD has been produced by deaf learners and AS Media students, which will be available on the Excellence Gateway.
- 41 92% of attendees expressed satisfaction with the event. Comments included:
- *'Excellent to hear from the learners and their points of view.'*
  - *'Gained lots of information and ideas to take back and help argue the case for improved support.'*
  - *'Very helpful to identify barriers. Have come away with some good ideas.'*
- 42 The learners themselves had an opportunity to develop their personal skills and capability to think strategically, individually and working as part of a team. Feedback from the learners suggests this has had a significant impact on their levels of confidence and capability to present their views.

## Developing good practice resources

- 43 A new [section on the Excellence Gateway](#) has now been created for resources to support improvement in deaf awareness and service provision for d/Deaf learners. The site includes twelve case studies of effective practice, plus a comprehensive list of useful links. Four of the case studies are available as British Sign Language videos.

## Resources for BSL teachers

- 44 This strand developed BSL Networks, workshops and mentoring initiatives in Yorkshire, East Midlands, London and the North West. A total of 87 BSL teachers and prospective teachers attended workshops as follows:

Area	Number attending first meeting
North West	15
Yorkshire	18
Midlands	29
London	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>

- 45 All attendees rated the events as satisfactory or very satisfactory, and feedback suggested a long-term need for continued work in this area.
- 46 A space is being developed on the Excellence Gateway to host resources for BSL teachers produced by a team at the University of Central Lancashire. The team has also produced a gap analysis of future resources which could be produced.

- 47 The project also aimed to produce guidance on service standards, although there was insufficient consensus on how such service standards should look for this objective to be achieved.

### **Impact**

- 48 Although it is too early to measure the impact of this project in depth, early feedback suggests it will have a significant positive impact on the capacity of the sector to respond to the needs of deaf and hearing impaired learners.

## **Research into the experiences of LGB and T adult learners**

### **Project background**

- 49 In contrast to the protected characteristics of sex, disability, race and age, (where the Agency has access to extensive data on participation, success and learner views) there is currently very limited evidence available on the experiences of learners with the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender identity. Therefore, we commissioned Babcock Research through the Agency's equality and diversity research framework to undertake targeted research to fill this gap.

### **Aims and objectives**

- 50 The aims of the project included to:
- Provide evidence about the experiences and views of LGB and T learners, to inform our equality objectives.
  - Provide evidence which could be helpful to other stakeholders, including colleges, providers and sector agencies.
- 51 Specific research questions included:
- What levels of discrimination, bullying and harassment do LGB and/or T learners experience within adult learning?
  - What support do they need to overcome these barriers? What are the gaps in the support currently available?
  - Would they be prepared to disclose information about their sexual orientation/trans status to their learning provider? In what other ways could evidence about equality be collected?

### **Methodology**

- 52 The research methodology comprised:
- An online survey completed by 444 current, potential and former learners
  - In-depth interviews (telephone) with 40 adult learners
  - Three focus group discussions with adult learners

### **Initial findings**

- 53 Full findings are available in the [report](#), and include:
- The majority of LGB and T learners find FE a welcoming environment.

- However, around 1 in 3 trans learners and 1 in 6 LGB learners have experienced bullying and harassment as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity
- At some providers, there is a gap between published equality policies and the perception of equality practice.
- Some learners take account of how LGB and T friendly a provider is when making choices about where to learn.

## Impact

54 The report is expected to give the provider base a much-improved evidence base on which to take action on LGB and T equality.

## Effective practice in the delivery and co-ordination of provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

### Project background

55 In September 2009, the LSC commissioned NIACE to undertake two projects on (respectively) the co-ordination and delivery of provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2010, the Skills Funding Agency commissioned NIACE to undertake further work to disseminate the findings from the report to the sector.

### Outputs

56 NIACE produced and published [five briefing guides](#) covering:

- Curriculum
- Delivery
- Information Communication Technology
- Management and Quality and
- Co-ordination of Services.

57 NIACE also delivered four events to launch the guides, attended by a total of 156 representatives from providers:

Date	Location	Number of attendees
28 February 2011	London	50
2 March 2011	Guildford	22
7 March 2011	Birmingham	39
10 March 2011	Manchester	45
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>

## Mental health 'e-community'

### Project background

58 In previous years, the LSC has funded a major partnership programme with NIACE and the National Institute of Mental Health in England (NIMHE) involving regional networks. While successful, the cost of this programme was considered unsustainable, and the Agency explored more cost-effective ways of delivering the same aims.

## Aim

- 59 The aim of the project was to design a learning and skills and mental health website to support a virtual community of practitioners, learners and service users in FE and other sectors.

## Outputs and impact

- 60 The [website](#) was launched in February 2011, and by June had attracted 500 members and 2,131 unique visitors. Membership includes access to a fortnightly e-bulletin, a virtual library, discussion forum, 'moodle' and 'webinar' on-line learning programmes, plus links to other mental health resources.
- 61 The site was promoted at events in London and Leicester, as well as at the effective practice events noted above.

## Equality Act workshops

### Project background and aims

- 62 The aim of this project is to support colleges and providers to meet their duties under the Equality Act.

### Outputs

- 63 LSIS delivered three workshops, with a total of 201 attendees. A summary of feedback below shows the workshops were extremely well received by attendees.

Date	Location	Partner	Number of attendees	% satisfied/very satisfied
7 March 2011	London	Workers' Educational Association	48	100%
23 March 2011	West Bromwich	ALP	73	97%
8 April 2011	Doncaster	Grimsby Institute	80	98%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>	

## Action plan

The right-hand columns in the table below summarise progress made so far against the draft Single Equality Scheme action plan. Of these actions:

- 4 are complete
- 16 have made good progress
- 7 have made some progress
- 2 are at an early stage, and
- 3 are now out of date.

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
<b>Objective 1: Build equality into provider account management</b>					
Ensure equality obligations in provider contracts reflect latest equality legislation	Review and update contract terms	Summer 2010	All providers understand their obligations to support Skills Funding Agency equality agenda	Completed, summer 2010	Complete
Define approach to provider assurance, and align equality and diversity with quality and health and safety	Compare approaches taken for different aspects of quality and align as appropriate	March 2011	A robust, objective approach to assuring equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E&amp;D included in work of Quality Systems team.</li> <li>• E&amp;D in Account Management task group met twice and drafted responsibilities document- work suspended, but expected to resume following Change process.</li> </ul>	Good progress
Include equality and diversity indicators within provider risk matrix	Use Ofsted grades initially; Identify other measures to be used.	March 2011	Skills Funding Agency will be alerted to equality risks in individual providers	E&D-related concerns are included as appropriate within free text fields of the Matrix.	Good progress
Ensure Account Managers understand their responsibilities in assuring provider equality	All Account Managers (along with all staff) will undergo essential equality and diversity training during the first year of operation. This training covers all of the mandatory diversity	By March 2011	Equality and diversity will be a full part of provider account management	Mandatory e-learning programme rolled out to all staff.	Good progress

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
	strands and also focuses on wider topics, for example social inclusion. They will also have access to the new Respect equality and diversity organisational toolkit.				
Implement recommendations from Equality Impact Assessment of the Framework for Excellence	Explore the potential for an educational inclusion indicator in the longer term Explore the potential for the presentation of data on social inclusion Implement recommendations from <a href="#">Testing the Case for Contextualisation</a>	To be confirmed	A more holistic assessment of provider performance; presentation of appropriate contextual information	This action is now out of date as FfE has been radically simplified and work on all additional indicators and contextualisation ceased.	Out of date
Share information and data about provider equality performance with Ofsted	Regular meetings between equality leads	Ongoing	Shared understanding of state of equality in the sector, and where the risks are	Two meetings held with Ofsted E&D lead.	Good progress
Work with Ofsted to improve how our performance assessment and performance management systems reflect provider efforts to support those learners who are hardest to help.	Regular meetings between equality leads	Ongoing	Providers will not be penalised for supporting learners who are hardest-to-help.	Ofsted socio-economic deprivation tool presented to SES Review Group in May 2011. The Group agreed that further work should be pursued, including considering the potential for using contextual information as part of MLP process.	Good progress
<b>Objective 2: Build equality into our decisions and activities</b>					
Use national and regional strategic analysis to identify which groups are under-represented and under-performing overall.	Standard reporting	Ongoing	Better information to inform policy implementation and allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft E&amp;D data report circulated internally; further work ongoing to produce a version which conforms to national data standards;</li> <li>Internal Quality Systems report includes key E&amp;D data.</li> </ul>	Good progress
In line with the Skills Investment Strategy, continue to maintain opportunities for	Maintain the current funding available for additional learning support (ALS)	2010/2011	Programmes tailored to take account of the needs of individual learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In line with Skills Investment Strategy, ALS funding has not been disproportionately reduced;</li> </ul>	Good progress

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.	Enable learners with LDD to follow the Foundation Learning Curriculum, as appropriate		Improved employability Improved independent living.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is ongoing to simplify ALS funding;</li> <li>• Orchard Hill College commissioned to develop QCF curriculum for learners with severe and multiple learning difficulties.</li> </ul>	
Focus English for Speakers of Other Languages training on the hardest to reach groups	<p>Give Local Authorities, working in partnership with community and voluntary sectors as well as Job Centre Plus, the key role in identifying priority groups for ESOL provision in a particular locality</p> <p>Make discretionary learner support available to support ESOL learners within two priority groups to meet the cost of course fees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spouses, particularly in the settled communities, that are unable to evidence their entitlement to full fee remission, or are unable to make a financial contribution to their fee costs; and</li> <li>• Low paid workers who are unable to demonstrate receipt of an income based benefit.</li> </ul>	2010/2011	ESOL provision will be more focused on the hardest to reach groups who want to make their lives here and those who are already settled but want to make a greater contribution to society	Government has set out new approach to funding ESOL, which focusses full public subsidy where it will have the greatest impact.	Out of date
Invest in learning to support offenders.	Ensure offenders remain part of Leitch ambitions around Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications and, especially, around functional literacy	2010/2011	Improved employability	New approach is to ensure that offenders have the opportunity to develop the vocational and employability skills that they need to find and keep jobs in the area in	Good progress on action, but 'how' is out of date.

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				<p>which they will be resettled.</p> <p>E&amp;D Partnership grants funded two offender-focussed projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hartlepool College was funded to develop skills and community payback opportunities on a local allotment;</li> <li>• Small Woods Association was funded to deliver a programme for female offenders in woodland management and greenwood craft skills.</li> </ul>	
Use the European Social Fund (ESF) to target the most disadvantaged communities	In partnership with regional stakeholders, develop and deliver co-financing plans in each region, including specific targets for target groups. Oversee the awarding of grants to small community organisations.	2010-2013	Sustainable economic growth and social inclusion through specifically targeted provision. Skills and support programmes to engage learners into further learning or employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement towards targets is monitored quarterly by the Skills Funding Agency ESF Implementation Group and ESF Management Group at the regional and national aggregated level. ESF targets are set at a challenging level.</li> <li>• ESF Programme delivery continues until 2015. The information below uses the data from November 2010 and is the cumulative achievement of the Skills Funding Agency delivery of the ESF Programme so far.</li> <li>• Target groups for Priority 1 and 4 ESF (targeted at unemployed people): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 22% of participants have a learning difficulty and/or disability</li> <li>○ 15% are 50 or over</li> <li>○ 21% are from a black or</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Good progress

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>minority ethnic background               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 37% are female, compared to a target of 50%. The Agency has commissioned action research to look into this.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Target groups for Priority 2 ESF (targeted at work-based learning)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 7% have a learning difficulty and/or disability.</li> <li>○ 18% are 50 or over</li> <li>○ 16% are from a black or minority ethnic background</li> <li>○ 46% are female.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>Analyse the impact of the adult advancement and careers service on the learning and employment outcomes of specified national priority groups.</p>	<p>Analyse customer destination outcome data gathered by contractors. Commission qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation.</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>	<p>Better understanding of the impact of careers and skills advice and information on priority groups to feed into ongoing improvements to service design and delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single, central CRM system has been commissioned and implemented across the Next Step service. This will improve the quality and consistency of data and aid collection and analysis.</li> <li>• An independent research organisation has been commissioned to conduct research into progression and destination outcomes of mainstream and priority customers.</li> <li>• Specification for new National Careers Service includes stronger equality requirements and the service is participating in the pilot of an equality toolkit (possibly) prior to recommending it as a resource to service providers.</li> </ul>	<p>Good progress</p>

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
Promote equality in Apprenticeships	Commission Diversity in Apprenticeships pilots	2010-2012	Increased numbers of apprentices from atypical groups	Seventeen pilots are now underway.	Good progress
Explore options for addressing under-representation and under-achievement, including funding incentives for providers.	Dependent on budgetary constraints	To be confirmed	Participation in line with national demographics; close equality gaps in outcomes	Still at exploratory stage.	Early stages
Ensure all decisions have been assessed for their impact on equality before implementation	Review and update our EIA framework; Agree a process with BIS	Autumn 2010	Meet legal duty; make better decisions; address potential impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light-touch review of EIA framework has taken place.</li> <li>• Several initial screenings have been completed.</li> <li>• Further work to align process with that of BIS is on hold until specific equality duties are published</li> </ul>	Some progress
Embed equality and diversity within the Skills Funding Agency's new Business Cycle	To be confirmed	December 2010	Colleges and learning providers will know when they can expect to be challenged on equality and diversity	Ongoing- two meetings have taken place to embed E&D within Operations Guide	Some progress
Improve the evidence base for sexual orientation, religion/belief and gender identity equalities, and act on findings	Consult on the best ways of doing this Commission qualitative research; Work with partners; involve representative groups Revise action plan based on findings.	Ongoing	An improved understanding of learners' experiences  Identification and dissemination of good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major piece of research on sexual orientation and gender identity equality undertaken, and due for publication in summer 2011.</li> <li>• Similar work on religion/ belief planned for 2011/12.</li> </ul>	Good progress
Agree an accessible communications policy	Review BIS and former LSC policies	December 2010	All communications available in accessible formats	All published documents are available in alternative formats and languages on request.	Some progress
Trial approaches to measuring socio-economic impacts	Commission analysis of learner participation and outcomes against indicators such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation	To be confirmed	Better understanding of how the services we fund meet the needs of different socio-economic groups	Ofsted socio-economic deprivation tool presented to SES Review Group in May 2011. The Group agreed that further work should be	Some progress

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
				pursued, including considering the potential for using contextual information as part of MLP process.	
Support the Learner Panel	Fund it jointly with YPLA and BIS; Consult it on important decisions	Ongoing	The FE system will be more responsive to the needs and views of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner Panel was consulted on draft SES.</li> <li>• The Agency no longer provides regular funding for the Panel, although it maintains the capacity to fund activities as required.</li> </ul>	Some progress
<b>Objective 3: Support provider self-improvement and promote good practice</b>					
Support partners' equality activities	Take an active role in cross-sector equality groups, such as the Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Post-School Education, the Workforce Equality Implementation Group and Disability Equality Implement Group.	Ongoing	Better co-ordination of activity; improved efficiency; reduced duplication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded substantial programme of E&amp;D Partnership grants for the sector</li> <li>• Funded LSIS to deliver Equality Act workshops for the sector.</li> <li>• Funded NIACE to deliver events and briefing guides on effective practice in provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities</li> <li>• Funded NIACE to develop mental health e-community.</li> <li>• Secretariat support given to Forum</li> <li>• Continued membership of cross-sector groups, including in-kind support such as reviewing publications</li> <li>• Agency representative delivered workshops at three LLUK events on the interface between sexual orientation and religion/belief equalities.</li> </ul>	Good progress
Support LSIS project on good	Join project reference group	By December	Spread good practice through	• Contribution to Q&A session at	Completed

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
practice in supporting deaf and hearing impaired learners		2010	Excellence Gateway; fill gaps in existing resources; identify issues regarding learner age transition points.	Deaf Learner Voice conference • Substantial editorial advice given on outputs and reports.	
Support Lifelong Learning UK project to develop an Equality Framework for the lifelong learning sector	Join project reference group	By March 2011	All providers have access to a clear framework showing how they can become outstanding in relation to equality.	• Equality Framework promoted at Agency-supported events, such as Equality Act workshops • Framework has now transferred to LSIS	Complete
Work with Sector Skills Councils to share and promote good practice	To be confirmed	Ongoing	Reduction in stereotyping and occupational segregation	The primary relationship with Sector Skills Councils sits with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, so this is no longer a relevant action for the Skills Funding Agency.	Out of date
Role model ourselves as a good employer	To be confirmed	Ongoing	Raised expectations of equality practices across the sector	Limited opportunities to do this in 2010/11	Early stages
<b>Objective 4: Develop a fair, inclusive and diverse working environment</b>					
Create and maintain a fair framework to pay and reward staff for organisational contribution and high performance.	Conduct and publish an annual equal pay audit analysing salaries across gender, ethnicity, part time / full time hours, disability and other areas of potential discrimination.	October 2010  Produced Jan 2011	Monitor the impact of the organisation's pay and reward scheme and identify any pay anomalies. Inform Management decisions relating to pay and reward to ensure equality.	Equal Pay Audit produced Jan 2011. Shared with stakeholders Feb 2011.	Completed
Establish a diverse workforce, at all levels, which reflects the community we serve.	Recruitment - Record, analyse and monitor recruitment diversity data from advertisement to appointment reporting to Management Teams and union representatives.	Quarterly January April July October	Monitor the impact on diversity of the organisation's approach to recruitment & selection and identify areas for improvement. Inform Management decisions relating to recruitment to	Data has been produced and shared with Management Board and PCS quarterly.	Some progress

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
	<p>Regularly review and Equality Impact Assess recruitment and selection policies, procedures and practices to support delivery of organisational E&amp;D objectives.</p> <p><b>Turnover</b> - Monitor and analyse diversity data for leavers including reasons for leaving and onward destinations.</p> <p><b>Representation</b> Encourage all employees to record personal equality and diversity data for the purposes of confidential analysis.</p> <p>Analyse and monitor the <b>diversity profile</b> of the organisation reporting to Management Teams and union representatives.</p>	<p>As appropriate</p> <p>Quarterly <b>January</b> <b>April</b> <b>July</b> <b>October</b></p> <p>As appropriate</p> <p>Annually – completed quarterly</p>	<p>ensure equality.</p> <p>Ensure our policies, procedures and practices are legally compliant and contribute to our Equality and Diversity objectives.</p> <p>Identify potential discrimination and inequality of opportunity. Inform areas for intervention or improvement.</p> <p>Maximise the data available to inform organisational decisions and equality and diversity priorities.</p> <p>Monitor our organisational profile against the community we operate in.</p>	<p>HR policy owners trained &amp; all policies impact assessed.</p> <p>The Agency achieved the two tick disability symbol in 2010.</p> <p>Stats produced quarterly. Staff have access to exit questionnaires.</p> <p>Dec 2010 – impact of VS scheme on the workforce profile assessed.</p> <p>Employees encouraged to update personal data via Bulletin articles.</p> <p>Identify data sources, agree report date and audience.</p>	
Provide and promote equality of opportunity to employees for development, performance and during employee relations case management.	<p>Record, analyse and monitor diversity data in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and Development</li> <li>• Performance Management</li> <li>• Employee Relations Case</li> </ul>	<p>Quarterly January April July October</p>	<p>Monitor the impact of the organisation's approach to equality of opportunity and identify areas for improvement. Inform Management decisions and</p>	<p>Data for all areas is available. Further work needs to be progressed to improve the quality of case management reporting.</p>	<p>Good progress</p>

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
	Management Report to Management Teams and union representatives.		interventions relating to training, performance and employee relations to ensure equality and respect for individual differences.		
Embed equality, diversity and inclusion principles and practices into all aspects of our work.  Create a management team and workforce who are confident about equality and diversity.	Deliver essential and comprehensive training and information to all staff about their responsibilities within the equality and diversity agenda.  Offer additional programmes to develop more specialist understanding and expertise for managers and staff with specific responsibilities. E.g. Equality Impact Assessment training for policy owners and management development for those who recruit or manage people.  Develop and deliver organisational behaviour programmes which support employees and managers to review their own behaviour and perspectives around equality and diversity. E.g. Dignity at Work and Respect.	From June 2010 and ongoing.	All staff receive the necessary learning and development to enable them to support, deliver and promote the organisation's E&D commitments within their own sphere of work.  Staff with specific E&D responsibilities are adequately trained to undertake their role.  Information on key activities and events is provided to staff via the intranet and Bulletin.	Mandatory annual e-learning programme introduced (Everyone Counts)  Equality Impact Assessment Training offered to policy owners	Good progress

Action	How	Timescale	Expected outcomes	Comments, June 2011	Progress summary
Engage, involve and consult with key internal stakeholders to continuously improve equality and diversity within our working environment.	<p>Develop and maintain open and constructive relationships with key internal stakeholders to share information and best practice, resolve issues and maximise use of resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PCS</li> <li>• Management Teams</li> <li>• Employee Representatives</li> </ul> <p>This will include resources such as the intranet site, regular forum discussions, reports and updates and E&amp;D champions.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Maximise contributions and resources to make faster progress towards the organisational E&amp;D objectives.</p> <p>E&amp;D issues can be understood and addressed more quickly and effectively.</p>	Regular meetings held and information provided to stakeholder groups.	Good progress
Engage, involve and consult with key external stakeholders to continuously improve equality and diversity within our working environment.	<p>Develop and maintain open and constructive relationships with key external stakeholders to share information and best practice, resolve issues and maximise use of resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIS</li> <li>• Cabinet Office</li> <li>• Civil Service / employers networks</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Maximise contributions and resources to make faster progress towards the organisational E&amp;D objectives.</p> <p>The organisation's inclusion agenda is aligned with the wider employer and civil service strategy and approach.</p>	Regular meetings held and information provided to stakeholder groups.	Some progress

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