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Leading learning and skills

East of England Equality and Diversity Action Plan

February 2008

Of interest to all LSC employees and all
providers in the East of England

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the East of England Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2008 – 2010, to support the LSC *Single Equality Scheme (SES)* and *Agenda for Change*.

In November 2007 we published our Statement of Priorities which sets out our priorities and actions for 2008/09 to 2010/11. Equality and diversity commitments and activity are embedded within that Statement but in this regional action plan we explain how this work will be taken forward at regional and local area level.

We have placed equality and diversity at the heart of our work since the inception of the LSC, responding to new legislation with a wide range of initiatives and developments. In this region we have already taken significant steps towards tackling past disadvantage and exclusion through our regional implementation of the strategy for learners with learning disabilities and/or disabilities, *Learning for*

Living and Work, with significant investment to support it. This action plan shows how we intend to go further, making sure that our equality and diversity policy and practice is fully inclusive and supports the FE Sector's action to eliminate discrimination.

I am clear that our future success including addressing the Leitch Review (2006) depends upon the continued commitment and energy of partners and providers. In 2007 we established an East of England Equality and Diversity Advisory Board to complement the regional equality and diversity forums. We intend to maximise the wealth of expertise that exists within this region. I would therefore urge partners across different sectors and agencies to get involved and work with us on the delivery of this significant action plan. I hope you will play your part in making it happen.

Caroline Neville
Regional Director
LSC East of England

1. Introduction

The East of England LSC Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2008 responds to the national LSC's *Single Equality Scheme* [\[link\]](#). The plan sets out how we will meet our race equality, disability equality and gender duties within the region, implementing these in an inclusive way which takes account of religion and/or belief, sexual orientation and age. The action plan includes our regional priorities in the equality and diversity context, and explains how we will work with providers and other partners and communicate our progress. The action plan shows what we will do between 2008 and 2010 to achieve our equality and diversity ambitions in the region.

2. Regional Equality and Diversity Priorities

The LSC's national equality and diversity priorities are set out in the *Single Equality Scheme (SES)*.

We will use our regional Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) to drive progress. These will be used by LSC partnership teams to consider their area's equality and diversity priorities and to support providers in setting their own EDIMs.

The East of England LSC Regional EDIMs from 2008 to 2010 are as follows.

Participation

- Where there are concentrations of BME groups within the region we will increase the participation

of these adults in learning to better reflect the local demographics.

- We will raise participation for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including mental health problems, as set forward in the East of England Strategic Implementation Framework for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities 2007-2010 [\[link\]](#)
- In Work Based Learning, we will increase participation from BME learners to better reflect the local demographics. We will also increase the participation of learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
- In Work Based Learning, we will increase the representation of female apprentices in traditionally male sectors such as construction and engineering, and male apprentices in traditionally female sectors such as child care.

Success rates

- We will work with providers to raise the overall FE success rate for young people aged 16-18 in the East of England whatever their ethnicity, disability or gender to 78 per cent by 2010. In particular, we will raise the success rates of the following groups - Black other, Black Caribbean and mixed ethnicity females

- Any other ethnicity, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean, Black other, mixed ethnicity, Other Asian and Pakistani males
Overall success rates for 16-18 year olds in FE who have declared a disability are generally the same or better than average. We will research and monitor the success rates of learners who declare a disability and review our EDIMs accordingly.

- We will work with providers to raise the full Level 2 FE success rate for young people aged 16-18 in the East of England whatever their ethnicity, disability or gender to 72 per cent by 2010. In particular, we will raise the success rates of the following groups
 - Black other, Black Caribbean and Other Asian females
 - Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Black other, Indian, Mixed ethnicity, Other Asian, Pakistani males and White males

Full Level 2 success rates for 16-18 year olds in FE who have declared a disability are generally the same or better than average. We will research and monitor the success rates of learners who declare a disability and review our EDIMs accordingly.

- We will work with providers to raise the full Level 3 FE success rate for young

people aged 16-18 in the East of England whatever their ethnicity, disability or gender to 69 per cent by 2010. In particular, we will raise the success rates of the following groups

- Pakistani females
- Any other ethnicity, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean, Mixed ethnicity, Pakistani males and White males

Full Level 3 success rates for 16-18 year olds in FE who have declared a disability are generally the same or better than average. We will research and monitor the success rates of learners who declare a disability and review our EDIMs accordingly.

- In Work Based Learning, we will monitor the success rate of groups by disability, gender and age to ensure that the success rate for each group is in line with success rates overall.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. LSC Funded Providers

We expect providers to meet their responsibilities under equality and diversity legislation. We will support and challenge them to build on legal compliance and optimise positive change. We will expect providers to have a Single Equality Scheme in place or separate Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes, and to undertake Equality Impact Assessments. These plans should reflect LSC regional priorities and show how

provider strategies and activity will contribute to these priorities. Providers will need to set EDIMs which are proportional and relevant and based on analysis of local data. Providers should also take into account any other relevant targets such as those within Local Area Agreements and wider equality and diversity priorities in order to make a real difference to learners and local communities.

3.2 Partners and Stakeholders

We will work strategically with key partners and stakeholders in the region to share expertise and to make sure we have a coherent approach to equality and diversity issues. This will include working with Strategic Partnerships on Local Area Agreements to take forward the local equality and diversity agenda.

3.3. Regional LSC

The Regional Director for the East of England LSC has lead responsibility for implementing the SES in each region, delegated to each operational area as appropriate. The East of England LSC Regional Equality and Diversity Manager leads on monitoring, reviewing and updating the SES actions in partnership with designated colleagues and key external partners. The Equality and Diversity Manager will develop a robust approach to make sure that equality and diversity issues are addressed within the LSC Business Cycle, including the funding for necessary resources.

3.4. LSC Area Partnership Teams

LSC partnership teams will support and challenge providers to set EDIMS and help them to identify issues which can be taken forward through Equality Impact Assessments. Through their dialogue with providers, partnership teams will contribute to their regional LSC SES assurance process in respect of learning and skills provision and services. Partnership teams will also encourage providers to promote best practice and achieve a consistent, effective approach to equality and diversity. This will support the achievement of SES targets and lead to tangible benefits for local communities.

4. Communication

We will consult and involve our stakeholders on equality and diversity issues through the East of England Equality and Diversity Regional Advisory Board, and through our existing networks as well as through a regional needs identification and analysis. We will also raise the profile of equality and diversity issues and celebrate successes, both in partnership with other agencies, and using the resources at our disposal, such as the LSC Magazine, newsletters and website.

Within the regional LSC, we will measure the impact of our work on participation and success rates for target groups by making equality and diversity an integral part of our business cycle, using the regional half-yearly reviews to report on progress. The regional Equality and Diversity Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

5. Action Plan 2008-2010

This action plan builds on the work done previously in the region, laying out the actions needed for the LSC East of England to meet its statutory duties and influence others as laid out in the National LSC's "Single Equality Scheme".

Previous equality and diversity development work in the region has made a lasting impact. This includes, the Dido Suffolk project that gave women the information and opportunity to explore working in non-traditional areas such as engineering or lorry driving and left a legacy of effective information and advice as well as an increase of women in targeted occupations. In Essex, work with consortia has ensured that the probation learning offer is consistent across the area. Equality training in Cambridgeshire for young offenders and in Peterborough for street wardens has increased understanding of fears and stereotyping, tackling

The following action plan is broken down into four areas:

- Learning and Skills
- Performance of the system
- Impact measures and impact assessment
- Governance

subjects such as ex-offending, young parenthood, racism, disability. This resulted in an increase in learner retention. The approach to the "Improving Choices" pathfinder for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities in Norfolk means that four FE colleges in the area have developed a more learner centred approach in conjunction with other support agencies. This has led to a 50% reduction in the number of learners who have had to travel and access learning and accommodation outside of Norfolk. In Bedfordshire and Luton, a provider development group is raising awareness of equality and diversity issues, generating debate, sharing provider expertise and building partnerships. In Hertfordshire, the LSC has worked in partnership with Connexions to develop timelines which mean that full assessment of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities who have complex needs can take place in a timely and effective way.

1. Learning and Skills

- Aim**
- raise the quality and improve the choice of learning opportunities for all young people in the East of England to equip them with the skills for employment, further or higher learning and wider social and community engagement
 - raise the skills of the region, giving employers and individuals the skills they need to improve productivity, employability and social cohesion
 - raise our contribution to economic development locally and regionally through partnership working.

Note
 The groups to which these actions refer are young people and adults, by ethnicity, disability, including mental health problems and/or learning difficulty, and gender. Information and data will be interrogated to reveal differential patterns of under-representation or achievement in specific sub-groups; the effects of multiple disadvantage; variations in participation between the different components of the FE system; cross-cutting issues (for example occupational segregation by gender or differential performance within skills sectors or geographical areas) so as to enable improvement targets to be set to narrow gaps

Action	How	When	Outcomes and output	Impact
a) Analyse baselines for levels and patterns of participation, retention and success for relevant groups and set improvement targets linked to the LSC Business Cycle	Implement through annual LSC Business Cycle	Ongoing	Robust data informs Regional Commissioning Plans (RCP) and enables annual targets to be set in consultation with regional partners	Equality and Diversity integrated in to our business cycle

Action	How	When	Outcomes and output	Impact
a) Continued: Analyse baselines for levels and patterns of participation, retention and success for relevant groups and set improvement targets linked to the LSC Business Cycle	Make sure that E&D is clearly linked to priorities and targets in the LSC Regional Commissioning Plan	Feb 08	Regional Commissioning Plan sets targets related to E&D issues	Procurement and commissioning targets areas of E&D need
	Establish data baseline to include participation, achievement and success across all types of provision, those Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) and other measures such as Minimum Levels of Performance. Identify data gaps e.g. offenders, and plan where possible how these will be addressed	Feb 08	Baseline shows areas of need in the region and informs regional Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)	E&D benchmarks are clear to all and impact on decision making in the region
	Cross sector regional research project to identify needs, barriers and best practice via interviews with learners, providers and employers, adding a qualitative dimension to baseline with reference to other needs analysis undertaken such as Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) needs analysis, and Sector Skills Agreements	March 08	Report lays out areas of need in region to inform our regional priorities	E&D benchmarks are clear to all and impact on decision making in the region

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
a) Continued	E&D data embedded into reporting, i.e. Local Needs Analysis, part of quality assurance information	Feb 08	Evidenced in Local Needs Analysis and quality assurance information	Equality and Diversity integrated in to our business cycle
b) Maximise the opportunities of those NEET in the light of equality and diversity issues, linking with Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) <i>NEET Strategy 2007</i>	Analyse data and research available on those NEET by ethnicity, disability and gender. Consider impact of religion, sexuality, immigration/asylum status, offenders, carers for adult/child dependents, looked after children and deprivation	March 08 Ongoing	Disseminate good practice with partners, in particular around engagement Disseminate good practice with partners, in particular around engagement	Reduction in the numbers of those NEET in target groups
	Equality and diversity needs are addressed through high quality IAG directing potential learners to a range of choices, and flexible provision	Ongoing	Wide use of DCSF quality standards for IAG	
c) Challenge and change current participation trends in work-based learning	Analyse apprenticeship activity by ethnicity and gender against demographics, making links to those NEET Identify participation needs and actions in dialogue with providers	April 08 On-going	Regional impact measures for participation in LSC response to Work Based Learning Action Plan, around gender, disability and ethnicity.	Increase the representation of ethnic minorities in apprenticeships by engaging more BME employers

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
c) Continued: Challenge and change current participation trends in work-based learning	Make sure that provider marketing targets Black and Minority Ethnic potential learners and employers within the region	On-going	Regional impact measures for participation in LSC response to Work Based Learning Action Plan, around gender, disability and ethnicity	Improve the balance of female apprentices in some sectors, e.g., construction and engineering, and male apprentices in other sectors, for example care and child care.
d) Invest in more high-quality provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and increase the number of opportunities to study locally	Implement <i>Learning for Living and Work</i> through annual business cycle	Ongoing	<p>Draw on LLDD Needs Analysis to commission more high-quality provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including more vocational training.</p> <p>Increase in holistic educational packages available in mainstream provision</p> <p>Plan for Investment to Change funds 2007</p>	<p>LLDD learners take up more local learning opportunities to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>Increased participation and achievement, leading to employment</p> <p>As above</p>

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
e) Work strategically with public and private partners to promote equality and diversity	<p>Inclusion of relevant targets across the spectrum of activities through the Local Area Agreements/Multi Area Agreements</p> <p>Establish strategic links with appropriate organisations in order to influence E&D agenda, e.g. EESCP, Inspire East.</p> <p>Regional skills partnerships, including Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and Local Employer Partnerships to work with employers to realise benefits of a diverse workforce</p>	<p>Feb 08</p> <p>March 08</p> <p>March 08</p>	<p>Targets linked to LAA performance measures.</p> <p>Joint protocols created establishing shared vision and targets for the region</p> <p>Each LSC/JCP <i>Welfare to Workforce</i> area joint plans have specific E&D actions</p>	<p>Holistic approach to E&D across wider public and private partnerships.</p>
f) Help develop sustainable communities: work with partners to increase the skills and economic inclusion of all groups, including migrant workers	<p>Regional Skills Partnerships, Local Area Agreements, Skills for Jobs and Sector Qualification Strategies implemented in the Eastern Region</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>LSC priorities aligned with those of key partners LSC targets for Skills for Life and Level 2 show synergy with local authority area agreement targets</p>	<p>Evidence of increased economic inclusion for underrepresented groups</p>

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
f) Continued: Help develop sustainable communities: work with partners to increase the skills and economic inclusion of all groups, including migrant workers	European Social Fund (ESF) specification refers to key areas of E&D need in region	Ongoing	As above	Evidence of increased economic inclusion for underrepresented groups
	Work in partnership with East of England Development Agency (EEDA) on migrant worker strategy	Ongoing	ESOL Strategy for region produced	As above
	Work with partnership organisations to promote access to ESOL provision given eligibility criteria parameters	Ongoing	Evidence in action plans	As above
	Work with Next Step providers to ensure that information advice and guidance for adults reflects nationally agreed targets	Ongoing	Evidence in action plans	As above
g) Train to Gain identifies and addresses equality and diversity needs	Train to Gain participation and achievement reflects working age population, within Level 2 remit. Action to address any gaps is implemented	March 08	Train to Gain included in LSC needs analysis report	Areas of need identified

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
g) Continued: Train to Gain identifies and addresses equality and diversity needs	Training for Train to Gain brokers includes equality and diversity drawing on best practice from LSC nationally	March 08	Train to Gain E&D training strategy agreed	Brokers identify and address equality and diversity needs, leading to increase participation and attainment
h) Ensure that HR function in regional LSC supports E&D agenda and SES	<p>Action plan to ensure that the LSC staff profile reflects the population of regional community, e.g. how vacancies will be advertised widely to reach underrepresented groups.</p> <p>To identify and address LSC staff training needs re: E&D.</p>	<p>Feb 08</p> <p>Feb 08</p>	<p>HR produces E&D action plan, including key E&D targets. Training package includes E&D issues integrated into current provision as well as discrete courses.</p> <p>Consultation with staff to identify support needs. All new staff to complete e-workbook on Equality and Diversity as part of induction.</p>	<p>Profile of LSC staff reflects population of regional community</p> <p>LSC staff understand what is expected of them to drive forward equality and diversity, and are supported to put this into practice</p>

2. Performance of the system				
Aim				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise the performance of a world-class system that is responsive, provides choice and is valued and recognised for excellence. 				
Action	How	When	Outcomes and output	Impact
a) LSC assured of provider delivery against LSC E&D priorities	E&D issues are driven forward as part of the quality agenda using provider dialogue	Annually	E&D data available for Partnership Teams as part of quality supporting guidance	Providers carry out specific actions to address E&D issues
	SES Support Programme with National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) supports provider dialogue by LSC staff and works with providers to address E&D within plans	Jun 08	Providers planning reflects priorities of RCP and local needs analysis and sets out actions to deliver these	
	Feedback system from partnership teams to region agreed and implemented	From March 08	E&D issues explicit in provider dialogue	

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
<p>b) LSC assured that providers comply with statutory requirements in respect of their provision and services</p>	<p>Providers' self-assessment and plans</p>	<p>Feb 08</p>	<p>Providers' self-assessment includes evidence; plans include relevant action</p>	<p>E&D issues embedded in providers' business cycle</p>
	<p>Applications for approved supplier status</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Appropriate weight given to equality and diversity in awarding approved supplier status</p>	<p>E&D issues reflected in approved supplier status</p>
	<p>In partnership with other agencies such as Association for Colleges in the Eastern Region, establish need for benchmarking in sector for providers' E&D policies</p>	<p>March 08</p>	<p>Need for benchmarking project established</p>	<p>All providers in the region have effective E&D policies which improve the opportunities of all learners</p>

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
c) Build providers' capacity for equality and diversity activity through partnership with agencies such as ACER and the QIA Improvement Advisory Service	National Single Equality Scheme Provider Support Programme implemented in the region	Feb 08	Action learning sets lead dissemination of good practice	Good practice is spread and improves participation, achievement and learning experience of target groups
	Implementation of the Framework for Excellence and EDIMS narrow performance gaps and improve success	On-going	Providers' schemes aligned to development plans, LSC organisational priorities, and self-assessment procedures	As above
	Implement the Regional Action Plan for learners with mental health difficulties	March 08	Providers' plans refer address needs of people with mental health difficulties	Improved participation and success for people with mental health difficulties
	Use peer review to embed SES into quality assurance and raise profile of Excellence Gateway as a resource for providers	Feb 08	8 providers work with consultant via peer review process to focus on E&D issues.	E&D quality champions act as exemplars in the region, increasing capacity of providers to address E&D issues

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
d) Support colleges and providers in developing high-quality provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with mental health problems	<p>Implementing <i>Learning for Living and Work</i> workforce development priorities</p> <p>Influencing the continuing professional development of FE staff through groups such as East of England Centre for Teacher Training (EECETT) , Regional Quality Improvement Partnerships (RQIPs) , LLUK and QIA etc</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Fully qualified FE workforce by 2010, with all staff with knowledge and skills to work inclusively</p> <p>Training pathways in place for specialist teaching and support staff</p>	<p>Increased and better quality learning opportunities within Eastern Region for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with mental health problems, to reach their potential</p>
e) Promote achievement of <i>Race Equality in Employment Standard</i> (REES)	<p>Regional investment in promoting and disseminating REES through workshops events and specialist consultancy</p>	<p>March 08</p>	<p>More providers complete the REES to stage 5</p> <p>.</p>	<p>More diverse workforce, with impact on learner profile</p>

Action	How	When	Outcomes and outputs	Impact
f) Monitor FE System workforce by gender, ethnicity, disability and age	LSC National Office analysis of data by Lifelong Learning UK	March 08	Accurate profile of workforce enabling targets for improvement to be set	More diverse workforce, with impact on learner profile
g) Develop the capacity of voluntary and community sector (VCS), particularly those representative of underrepresented groups, to enable them to enter and compete in the provider market	<p>Implement <i>Working Together</i> strategy, including support for the development of local consortia that involves all relevant organisations, raising the profile of E&D issues</p> <p>Procurement process</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual cycle</p>	<p>Consortia membership reflects local community</p> <p>Engagement of consortia in bidding for new funds</p>	VCS engages with diverse range of learners, pushing up participation and success rates

3. Impact Measurements and Impact Assessment				
Aim: To provide measures that will enable overall progress to be judged				
Action	How	Timescale	Outcomes and output	Impact
a) Set regional EDIMs	Research using latest data	Reviewed annually	Measures in place to measure impact against PSA targets	Clear regional priorities show way forward and assist providers in setting their own EDIMs
b) Implement framework for regional and local impact measures	Commissioned work from LSC National Office	April 08	Improved capacity to measure impact in relation to regional and local priorities	Higher profile of EDIMs and wider understanding of achievements and needs
c) Draw on LSC National Office evidence of the benefits of action for equality and diversity	LSC Business Cycle reporting, commissioned research from LSC National Office	Annually	Show how national evidence is reflected in region and use in publicity	Builds the business case for equality and diversity, spreads good practice.
d) Identify and impact assess policies specific to region or implementation plans which substantially differ from National LSC policies	Agree a strategy within the region for equality assessment	March 08	Relevant policies and implementation plans are impact assessed	Regional policies and implementation plans do not impact negatively on the equality and diversity agenda.

4. Governance				
Aim Make promoting equality and diversity an integral part of how the East of England LSC is led and governed.				
Action	How	When	Outcomes and output	Impact
a) Achieve a diverse membership of LSC Regional Council	Identification and appointment procedure Develop guidance for Chair of Regional Council	July 08	Diverse membership	Range of experiences, expertise and perspectives are brought to bear on decision making
b) Appoint champions for equality and diversity on the LSC Regional Council	Agreed Action by Regional Council	Dec 08	Champions appointed and working procedures established	Equality and Diversity (E&D) issues highlighted and effective actions agreed

Related documents

National LSC Single Equality Scheme, April 2007

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-singleequalityscheme-30apr07.pdf>

East of England LSC Strategic Implementation Framework for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, August 2007

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/LSC/EastofEngland/LLDDImplementationframeworkFINALdraftAUG07.doc>

Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF)

NEET Strategy 2007

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/documents/NEET%20%20Strategy.pdf>

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