

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Human Resources Compliance Report for the Academic Year ended 31 July 2015

The Equality and Diversity Report reflects the activities and performance of Macclesfield College in 2014-15 in relation to promoting the values of equality and diversity with staff and students and compliance with the Equality Legislation. It was noted in the 2013 Ofsted Inspection report that “Equality and diversity are central to the college’s work and their promotion of it is managed very well”. For the first time this year the College has produced a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) specifically for Equality and Diversity.

The College has maintained its commitment to embed the values of equality and diversity throughout its internal and external community and has reviewed the equality and diversity objectives in 14-15:

- to support members of the College community to ensure they feel comfortable, particularly those learners with a disability and members of the lesbian, gay, black and transgender community, by developing awareness and understanding of all community members.
- to develop and review new approaches to staff recruitment to ensure any barriers to individual progression are removed.
- to promote staff awareness of different cultures and international diversity.
- to ensure attainment gaps for all ‘protected groups’ are minimised.

Local Area Background

Macclesfield College sits within an area of relatively low unemployment and low multi-ethnicity rates. Only 1.4 per cent of the working-age population of the town is out of work, which compares favourably with regional figures for the north west (2.4%) and national figures (2.2%). The proportion of Cheshire East residents who class themselves as White British is 93.6% according to Cheshire East Council 2011 Census statistics and less than 2% of the population are from minority ethnic groups.

Staffing

The College actively promotes and embeds an inclusive culture where all staff, learners and service users feel supported, valued and respected.

The collation of all staff equality and diversity information is sensitively handled by Human Resources and is sourced in accordance with best practice recommendations informed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act. Data collated is presented in an anonymous format which does not allow an individual’s personal equality and diversity information to be identified.

Throughout the academic year staff receive from Human Resources a communication informing of the College’s commitment to equality of opportunity. This seeks to encourage staff to provide their equality data within their CIPHR staff information record by informing how the anonymised data will be used by the College.

Throughout the year all College employment policies and procedures are reviewed on a continuous basis to ensure they are compliant with current employment legislation and reflect the Equality Act 2010 and any subsequent amendments. Upon a policy being reviewed/introduced an equality analysis form is completed to evidence that the College has given due regard to ensure fairness and equality for individuals who may be regarded as having a ‘protected characteristic’ under the Act.

Recruitment

All vacancies are advertised using a variety of different media to promote the College's commitment as an equal opportunity employer and to attract applicants from a diverse background. Candidates are informed at the time of application that the College is a 'Positive About Disabled People' employer. Furthermore, each advertisement advises that the College welcomes applications from all sections of the community, particularly from minority ethnic groups.

At induction the new employee is informed of the College's commitment to Equality and Diversity and provided with a copy of the Learner Equality and Diversity Wheel and the College's Strategic Overview of Equality and Diversity, which advises how equality and diversity is the responsibility of all staff. They are further advised of the requirement to complete the ACAS e-learning Equality and Diversity module. Since its introduction in March 2014, 175 staff have completed the module. This is also enforced via the Human Resources 'Buddy' scheme.

Disability

The College has been re-accredited as a 'Positive about Disabled Employer' and has been commended for its approach in advancing the five commitments of the symbol, namely:

- to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- each year to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

The College proactively communicates its commitment to being a 'Positive about Disabled Employer' during the previous academic year, the number of applicants advising at the pre-employment stage was 5 (3.2%), all of whom were academic applicants. Of the 5 applicants two were offered roles.

Currently the total number of staff that have advised of a disability is 13 (5.15%). However this figure may be higher as there may be cases where an individual does not perceive/wish to declare a disability. This may only subsequently become known to the College when either there has been a change in the health of the employee resulting in a referral to Occupational Health or the individual has triggered the absence policy.

Four staff have informed the College that they have a learning difficulty.

Pregnancy and Maternity and Paternity Leave

It is the policy of the College to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, including particular measures to protect the health and safety of staff who are pregnant, have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding.

During the academic year two female staff have taken maternity leave, whilst three male members of staff have taken paternity leave.

Flexible working for staff with parental responsibilities is available. During the academic year two applications were received from female members of staff and approved. One application was received from the College's male members of staff, this was also approved.

Ethnicity

In Cheshire East 3.72% of the population are black or minority ethnic heritage (Source: Office of National Statistics). Total staff data to inform of trends in respect of this 'protected characteristic' and gender is too small at the time of reporting.

Gender

At the end of the academic year 70% of College staff were female employees, whilst 30% were male. The higher percentage of female staff is in part attributable to part-time staff.

Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership

Data to inform of trends in respect of these 'protected characteristics' is too small at the time of reporting to inform.

Sexual orientation

The College recognises the harm that unlawful discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation has in terms of an individual's access to equality of opportunity and is pro-actively committed to engaging with internal and external stakeholders.

In recognising the difficulties in collecting and acting upon appropriate sexual orientation and gender re-assignment information the College has since the end of the academic year 2013-14 advanced its Public Sector objectives to:

- develop and review new approaches to staff and student recruitment to ensure any barriers to individual progression are removed.
- support members of the College community to ensure they feel comfortable, particularly those learners with a disability and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Black and Transgender community by working proactively to remove potential barriers which maybe preventing future employees, existing staff and learners from sharing this information with the College.

Religion/Belief

Data collated in respect of religious mainstream and minority religious faiths and beliefs does not at this time enable the College to inform accurately on trends as 50% of staff have chosen not to provide at this time this information. According to the 2011 census 59% of Macclesfield residents describe themselves as Christians and 31% chose not to disclose.

Gender Reassignment

The College recognises that this is an extremely sensitive area and individuals who have or are transitioning may not wish to disclose. For applicants applying to work at the College the College 'Safer Recruitment Policy' provides guidance on the approach to apply when applicants who have or are transitioning wish to apply to the DBS for a Disclosure Barring Check.

Flexible Working

The College Flexible Working Policy has been amended to reflect the new legislative changes introduced on 30 June 2014. This reflects the statutory right to request flexible working after 26 weeks' employment. Prior to this date the right only applied to parents of children under the age of 17 years (or 18 years if the child was disabled) and certain carers.

During the last academic year six female staff submitted flexible working requests. Of the applications received all were approved. No applications were received from male staff.

Three staff have to date advised the College that they undertake carer responsibilities. Under the Equality Act a 'carer' is defined as an individual who looks after someone who is elderly or who looks after someone who is disabled.

Disciplinary and Grievances

During the last academic year there was one disciplinary relating to one of the 'protected characteristics.' This was connected to one grievance which was resolved positively with the member of staff continuing to work at the College.