

The Institute for Learning

Single Equality Strategy

**2009 – 2014
Annually Reviewed**

DRAFT

this document is in draft and has no
status until approved by IfL Council

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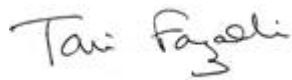
Foreword from Toni Fazaeli, Chief Executive of IfL

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and the Equalities Act 2006 all place responsibilities upon IfL, its staff and Council members to promote equality. This is a starting point, but IfL aspires to go beyond the legal requirements relating to equality and to be an organisation that provides equality of opportunity for all staff and members, regardless of their differences.

This Single Equality Strategy describes how we intend to ensure that we meet our legal duties and aspirations for equality by bringing together a range of measures and actions taken to date into one strategy. The strategy and related implementation plans help us to demonstrate that equality and diversity are at the heart of what we do, as an employer and as a membership body.

Effective leadership and positive engagement at every level in every part of IfL are needed to make the strategy a success. We all need to work proactively to reinforce the rewards of having a diverse membership and staff that helps to enrich the IfL experience, the services and benefits we offer and enhances our reputation.

I wholeheartedly want us to promote and deliver this Single Equality Strategy as a means of ensuring our work, services and position in the further education and skills landscape meet the needs of our staff and members, and in turn their students and learners, as well as other partner organisations.



Toni Fazaeli
Chief Executive

“We value difference. Through the individual life experiences of our staff and members, IfL is enriched as both an employer and a professional body. In all that we do we will endeavour to be inclusive and to provide full and open access to our activities and services for those who work for us and those who join us through membership. We will challenge discrimination on any grounds, wherever we encounter it, by striving to avoid internal organisational barriers to our staff and members and by working with our partners to achieve the same in the wider further education and skills sector.”

Lee Davies, Deputy Chief Executive (March 2009)

Introduction

1. This is the Institute for Learning's Single Equality Strategy for the five year period 2009 - 14, developed to set out our commitment to diversity and equality and to address the statutory duties to promote equality introduced by the following UK legislation:
 - 1.1. Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (RRAA)
 - 1.2. Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005 (DDA)
 - 1.3. Equality Act 2006
2. In addition we recognise that equality means more than the promotion of race, disability and gender equality. We regard the following legislation as relevant to our work and this Single Equality Strategy in promoting equality and diversity:
 - 2.1. Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA)
 - 2.2. Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
 - 2.3. Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
 - 2.4. Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA), the and the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
 - 2.5. Equal Pay Act 1970 (EPA) and the Equal Pay Act (Amendment) Regulations 2003
 - 2.6. Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
 - 2.7. Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA)
 - 2.8. Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
 - 2.9. Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
 - 2.10. Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
 - 2.11. Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
 - 2.12. Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)
 - 2.13. Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA)
3. We acknowledge that promoting equality and diversity is not only good for the people we employ and the members we serve but is good for us as a learning organisation. It enhances our business performance, enables effective recruitment of staff and members and improves employee and member satisfaction. This strategy addresses both service delivery and employment issues.
4. We believe our responsibility for equality and diversity is wider than those areas currently set out by legislation. We are committed to achieving equality for all by removing direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of:
 - 4.1. Age
 - 4.2. Gender or transgender identity
 - 4.3. Race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin
 - 4.4. Disability
 - 4.5. Religious belief or non-belief, or other beliefs
 - 4.6. Marital status, family circumstances or caring responsibilities
 - 4.7. Sexual orientation
 - 4.8. Income, employment status or housing circumstances

- 4.9. Membership or non-membership of trade unions or involvement in trade union activity
 - 4.10. Offending Status
 - 4.11. Any other grounds that cannot be shown to be justified
5. To achieve this, we will:
- 5.1. Meet all our responsibilities under relevant legislation, codes of practice and any further education and skills sector policies or strategies
 - 5.2. Mainstream equality and diversity into our everyday work
 - 5.3. Monitor our progress against equality benchmarks and targets in relation to employment, service delivery and carrying out business processes
 - 5.4. Tackle all forms of bullying, harassment and intimidation
 - 5.5. Make delivering this strategy and resulting schemes or implementation plans the responsibility of every Council member, employee and member
 - 5.6. Train and support our employees to implement this strategy
 - 5.7. Monitor the actions we take under this strategy and publicly report on progress
 - 5.8. Make our services and the buildings we deliver them from more accessible
 - 5.9. Make certain that the diversity of our workforce increasingly reflects both the communities we recruit from and the further education and skills sector
 - 5.10. Work with partners, nationally and locally, to tackle discrimination
 - 5.11. Make copies of this strategy available in a range of languages, Braille, large print and audio version and as a printed document or in an electronic format
6. The Single Equality Strategy builds on the work with Scope in 2008 resulting in a Disability Equality Scheme. Our senior leadership team recognises that disability equality is one key strand of a whole organisation approach to equality for all staff and members and that other equality schemes will come from this strategy, covering the full range of equality considerations set out above.

Setting out the vision

- 7. We are committed to valuing and promoting diversity and equality of opportunity for all staff and members. Equality is one of the underpinning values of our five-year strategy, published February 2009, which drives and gives shape to all of our activities and services.
- 8. This value in action translates into embracing equality by promoting and maintaining an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone can achieve their full potential.
- 9. This Single Equality Strategy sets out our vision of how we plan to achieve this through a range of individual equality schemes and related implementation plans. These individual equality schemes will reach beyond in our equality action plan and are described in Annex B together with an indicative timeline for delivery.
- 10. Whilst the individual equality schemes focus initially on legal requirements such as race, disability and gender, the effective practice emerging from activities will encompass all aspects of the Single Equality Strategy. Once effectively embedded, the Single Equality Strategy will be extended to include all strands of equality in such a way that the specific duties required by legislation are enhanced, not diminished.

11. We recognise that staff and member experiences are not limited to any one of their equalities dimensions (for example race, disability or gender) and we will aim to take a multi-dimensional approach to our work on equality.

Our approach

12. We have developed the Single Equality Strategy to bring together all aspects of the equalities agenda to ensure diversity and equality planning, implementation and review processes are presented in a cohesive way. We are committed to meeting our obligations under the equalities legislation and continuing to promote diversity and equality both within IfL, its staff and members, and in our relationships with our partners and external stakeholders.

13. We view the embedding of the principles outlined in the Single Equality Strategy into our governance and leadership processes as good management practice.

14. We aim to support our staff and our members in recognising and meeting the differing needs of people from diverse backgrounds within their day to day activities and to embed the principles of equality in all that they do.

15. We will review the Single Equality Strategy annually to ensure it continues to enable us to achieve our equality aims as part of our five year strategy (Jan 09). In doing so we will involve staff and members in consultation activities aimed at drawing on the extensive equalities expertise that exists across the IfL.

16. Within each individual equality scheme we will facilitate discourse with staff and members through special interest groups, focus groups and workshops.

Taking responsibility

17. The Single Equality Strategy will be led through the office of the Deputy Chief Executive, ensuring that our work on equality is clearly located within the senior leadership team. As the Single Equality Strategy applies to IfL as both an employer and a membership body, the strategic lead for implementation and review will be shared between the Deputy Chief Executive (members) and Director of Human Resources (staff).

18. All work relating to this strategy will be overseen by a strategic group drawn from staff and members. This group will own the Single Equality Strategy and its related individual equality schemes and implementation plans. The group will report to and advise the senior leadership team and, through the Chief Executive, our governing Council. The group will include staff and members with experience and expertise of all aspects of equality and diversity.

19. Once a year the Single Equality Strategy Group will conduct a review of IfL's range of work on equality, leading to an annual refresh of the strategy and the publication of our annual equality accounts, where we describe what we have done well, where we can do better and how the equality agenda impacts on our work.

Working with partners

20. We will work with the specialist equalities groups and networks that serve further education and skills. This includes the Network for Black Professionals, Lifelong Learning UK's Disability Equality Implementation Group (DEIG) and the Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Post-School Education (this list is not exhaustive). Where there are gaps or insufficient opportunities to explore issues of equality, we will host specialist equalities groups and networks and share with the sector the messages which emerge from these.

Communications

21. We will use our web site and internal intranet to disseminate this strategy and related individual equality schemes and implementation plans to our staff, our members and the further education and skills sector. We will encourage the use of online special interest groups in order to discuss and debate our work on equality and act as a focal point for providing further information.

22. We will make equality an important theme in our regular communication with staff and members. We will use the staff handbook and regular updates such as 'Team Talk' to inform staff of our work on employment aspects of equality and the members' handbook and regular publications such as InTuition and 'on the agenda' to let members know about our successes and the challenges in this area.

23. We will provide a central point of contact '*equality@ifl.ac.uk*' to give staff and members the opportunity to raise issues, address concerns or to comment on our work on equality. This point of contact will be monitored on a daily basis and correspondence forwarded to the Deputy Chief Executive (members) and Director of Human Resources (staff) for immediate action or response.

24. We will publish this strategy, individual equality schemes and implementation plans in hard copy and in a range of formats to provide access for all.

Impact assessment

25. This strategy impacts on the full range of business activities we undertake and services we provide, including (but not limited to):

25.1. The recruitment of our staff

25.2. The recruitment of our members

25.3. The way we are governed by our members

25.4. The way we train and develop our staff, Council members and others who work on our behalf

25.5. Access to the benefits and services we provide for our staff and members

25.6. The way we plan future activity and work

25.7. The services and materials we procure

25.8. The contractors, vendors and suppliers we work with

25.9. The way we work with partners and stakeholders

26. We will carry out equality surveys and monitoring in order to establish that the business activities we undertake and services we provide are open and accessible to all and do not have any adverse impact on particular groups or individuals.
27. Equality surveys and monitoring will allow us to see how different groups or individuals are affected by our business activities and services, for example:
 - 27.1. How often and why our staff and members use our services
 - 27.2. How satisfied people are with the way we behave towards them and the services we provide
 - 27.3. If our services are effective and meet the needs of our staff and members
 - 27.4. How often and why our staff and members make complaints
28. We will use a range of methods to test the impact of this strategy on the business activities we undertake and the services we provide, including (but not limited to):
 - 28.1. The statistical analysis of the data we collect from our staff and members
 - 28.2. Comparison with external benchmarks
 - 28.3. The results of satisfaction surveys we offer our staff and members
 - 28.4. Random or targeted surveys focussing on particular aspects of our work on equality
 - 28.5. Online special interest groups, focus groups and workshops
29. We will chart our progress and take positive action to accelerate our approach to equality and diversity wherever we can.

Glossary of terms

When we say:

'diversity' we mean recognising and valuing differences between individuals, groups and communities, in order to create a positive and inclusive culture for the benefit of our staff and members.

'equality' we mean a fair society in which everyone is able to participate and in which all our staff and members are given the opportunity to achieve their potential.

In addition, when we say:

'barriers' we mean the obstacles that society constructs which prevents individuals from full participation in society and restricts their opportunities.

'Council' we mean the governing body of the IfL which is comprised of elected members and representatives from national partner organisations.

'further education and skills' we mean all learning which takes place after the completion of compulsory schooling. Whilst in general terms this is taken to be learning which happens in further education colleges, sixth form colleges, specialist designated institutions, specialist colleges, work-based learning, adult and community learning, offender learning, voluntary sector, the armed services and all other Learning and Skills Council funded settings, IfL's reach extends beyond this to include professionals working in higher education and private training providers.

'individual equality scheme' we mean those separate activities we chose to undertake to focus on a particular aspect of the Single Equality Strategy such as age, gender, race, disability or sexual orientation (for example).

'Learning and Skills Council' we mean the non-departmental public body responsible for planning and funding high quality education and training for everyone in England other than those in universities and all successor bodies introduced as a result of government changes to the funding of further education and skills.

'members' we mean those people in membership of IfL, our Affiliates, Associates, Members and Fellows.

'Single Equality Strategy Group' we mean a high level group bringing together both members and staff with expertise in equality and diversity.

'senior leadership team' we mean the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Directors and other members of staff employed by IfL responsible for the strategic leadership of the organisation.

'staff' we mean the people we employ, directly and indirectly, the consultants who work for us and those who represent IfL in a paid or voluntary capacity.