

CONTEXT

Tees Valley Collaborative Trust (the Trust) is committed to promoting equality and diversity for all staff and students/pupils. Our aims and objectives give shape to all of the Trust's activities.

Our Equality Scheme creates a framework for promoting and maintaining an inclusive environment where everyone can achieve.

The Equality Scheme is informed by both the spirit and the letter of the law. It is our response to Disability, Race and Gender Equality Duties but importantly also encompasses age, religion or belief, marriage, pregnancy & maternity, sexual orientation and transgender.

Our intention is for all TVCT settings to be recognised as outstanding and the critical factor in this is the success of all staff and all students/pupils. The Single Equality Scheme, through its implementation, will support us to achieve this success.

INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY

This Single Quality Scheme (the Scheme) describes how the Trust will fulfil its statutory duties to:

- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Avoid discrimination.
- Place the advancement of inclusion, equality and diversity at the centre of its work.
- Fulfil the requirements of its remit in a way which promotes equality.
- Ensure that the Trust operates best practice as an employer in pursuit of equality.
- Actively narrow the achievement gaps among various groups with protected characteristics.

The Scheme also sets out, as required, the Trust's equality objectives for the period 2020 - 2023 and the approach it intends to adopt to deliver them.

THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

As a public body, the Trust operates within a legislative framework. In the context of the Scheme, the legislation below has a particular bearing on the implementation of its responsibilities:

- [Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

This single Equality Act replaces the following legislation:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000: Race Equality Duty
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005: Disability Equality Duty
- Equality Act 2006: Gender Equality Duty
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

The equality legislation above provides for a number of general duties¹, which are to:

¹ Full details of each of the general duties are available on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's public sector duties webpage, www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/public-sector-providers/public-sector-equality-duty

OUR COMMITMENT

- The Trust will not tolerate any forms of less favourable treatment of individuals and/or groups, whether through direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation or segregation on the grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, gender (and transgender), race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic inequalities).
- The Trust's settings seek to avoid stereotyping and will ensure that all staff, students/pupils and other stakeholders are treated as individuals in their own right.
- The Trust's settings are committed to a proactive approach to equality of opportunity, identifying students'/pupils' needs and supporting them, to strive to narrow achievement gaps.
- The Trust strives to ensure all students/pupils achieve their potential using challenging targets, in a supportive and caring environment.
- The Trust's settings actively celebrate diversity, aiming to ensure that differences between people, groups and identities are understood, valued and respected, ensuring that any discrimination is identified and acted upon.
- The Trust's settings consult stakeholders (e.g. employees, students and parents) and takes account of relevant information, from a variety of sources, including the Student Council/Union.
- The-CEO, through the Academy Heads, ensures the policy is implemented, monitored and reported upon annually.
- The Trust seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- The Trust seeks to advance equality of opportunity.
- The Trust will take positive steps to take account of disabled people more favourably than other people. This means, as a public body, Tees Valley Collaborative Trust will take steps that go beyond treating disabled people and non-disabled people alike.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) identifies nine protected characteristics which protect individuals from discrimination. These characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

All these protected groups are taken into account within the Scheme. In addition, Equality Impact Assessments (EIA), although no longer a requirement of the current statutory framework and equality legislation, are recognised by the Trust as having great value to promote the spirit of the law.

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The [Equality Act 2010](#) harmonises and extends existing equality legislation and in addition introduces a new Public Sector Equality Duty which requires organisations like the Trust to:

- Set equality objectives with regard to the nine protected groups.
- Demonstrate how equality has been taken into account in priorities and policies.
- Demonstrate what difference/s these actions make.
- Use procurement to promote equality.
- Produce an annual plan outlining organisational aspirations.

- Demonstrate clear links between the remit, purpose, and aim of the organisation in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion; and
- Make inclusion, equality and diversity part of how the organisation thinks and behaves.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE

The accountability for meeting the statutory duties and for the delivery of the Scheme rests with the CEO, Academy Heads and Board of Trustees. In addition, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) exists to ensure, amongst other things, that Public Bodies comply with their duties.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

To comply with the spirit of the law on Equality & Diversity, the Trust will conduct EIAs to identify whether an existing or proposed policy, practice or process will have a positive or negative impact on any protected group(s).

The basic principles of EIAs are to ensure the college can answer two key questions:

- Could/does the policy or procedure have a negative impact on one or more of the groups of people covered by the protected characteristics of equality? If so, how can this be changed or modified to minimise or justify the impact?
- Could/does the policy have the potential to create a positive impact on equality by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist? If so, how can these be maximised?

EIAs will identify opportunities to improve or change policy, practice or process to advance equality.

THE SCHEME

Scoping the Scheme

In drawing up the Scheme, the Trust has taken account of other public bodies, learners and staff. The Scheme has been shaped and is underpinned by some established principles.

Principles Underpinning the Scheme

The principles derived from the views gathered at the scoping stage are that:

- The Scheme will reflect the Trust's Vision, Aims and Objectives.
- The operation of the Scheme will be open and transparent.
- The Scheme will support the Trust's Development Plan.
- The Trust will operate lawfully and within its remit.

Vision, Aim and Objectives

Our Vision

Tees Valley Collaborative Trust believes that increased collaboration across the educational phases will benefit all learners throughout their educational journey. The Trust exists to promote and facilitate collaboration between schools and the college to our mutual benefit.

The partners in our Trust accept a shared accountability for all our learners and focus on ensuring positive outcomes and progression, particularly at transition points across the key stages.

Aspiring to become an all-through provision, our innovative approach seeks to promote ambition, aspiration and provide security and the keys to success for our young people for their future and the benefit of the region.

Aim

Our Trust engenders a love of learning through an exceptional quality of educational provision in which every learner is inspired and supported to fulfil their potential, enhancing their personal development and benefitting their community.

We recruit and retain teachers and support staff and managers of the highest calibre by investing in their professional development through training and progression opportunities. Our schools and colleges will offer a friendly, caring environment with high expectations, aspirations and supporting the highest levels of achievement.

Our Trust works through partnership with employers, community groups and other agencies to make the Tees Valley a great place to live, learn and work.

Objectives

- Improve the life chances for young people in our region.
- Maximise the outcomes and opportunities for all learners.
- Remove barriers to achievement and promote the highest aspirations for all.
- Enhance progress at transition points through cross-phase working.
- Support all staff to develop their skills to become an efficient, high-performing team.
- Share good practice to further improve teaching and learning.
- Ensure positive destinations through enhanced accountability for each learner.
- Promote and enable lifelong learning and citizenship which benefits the individual and the community.
- Build partnerships within and beyond our Trust to promote economic prosperity and social well-being across our region.

Issues identified in scoping the Scheme

As part of the scoping activities with other organisations, the Trust's workforce, academies, schools, colleges and learners, there were a number of issues raised. These are summarised as follows:

Key issue	To overcome these issues, the Trust needs to:
Managing the impact of significant changes e.g. student numbers, workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure EIAs are conducted for all policies and major changes to make sure that adverse impact on specific groups is minimised. • Manage budgets to ensure the Trust is getting value for money and achieving results in the most cost-effective way.
Maintaining the momentum for increased participation and achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work jointly with academies, schools, colleges and private training providers, whilst respecting their autonomy to deliver their objectives and commitment to 'champion young people's learning' • Challenge ourselves and others to make the best use of data and analysis to eliminate barriers and access to learning.
Reducing gaps in the learner data to enhance the level of intelligent information and better inform decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the range of tools, data and performance measures to support the assessment and improvement of schools, academies, colleges and private training providers, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing fair and objective Information Advice and Guidance processes for admissions/access ○ Reviewing and using analysis of success rates and student outcomes with a focus on learner characteristics and types ○ Reviewing information about social disadvantage and how this affects access and the performance of pupils
Making the Trust workforce and Trustees/Governors more representative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a proactive approach to the recruitment and succession planning of future board members, considering alternative ways of promoting our remit amongst all areas of the communities that the Trust serves. Strive to create a board which is more reflective of equality groups, for example, by setting targets² • Through an annual data cleanse exercise, encourage its workforce to update their personal information, particularly around the nine protected groups; race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender identity, maternity and pregnancy and marriage or civil partnerships • Research how best to engage with those from protected groups to ensure that the opportunity is available for them to express their views and needs • Improve work force data analysis by the consideration of multiple dimensions, such as grade or role in the organisation and gender distribution • Consider what types of positive actions might be needed to challenge and address the identified gaps

² Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA), set the Government targets to aim for: 50% of new appointments to be women, 14% to be disabled, 11% to be from ethnic minorities

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To recruit and retain an inclusive and diverse workforce which is appropriately developed to ensure each individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Objective 2: To have in place comprehensive and transparent Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) arrangements which are integral to the business cycle and the governance structure. This will be a key aspect of monitoring proposals to inform decision making, mindful of the impact on inclusion, equality and diversity.

Objective 3: To improve the analysis and availability of data on the equality protected groups and inclusion to support the identification of gaps and challenge performance.

Objective 4: To ensure that our mechanisms for supporting students maximise the opportunities for succeeding in all of the protected groups.

Objective 5: To provide a curriculum which meets the needs of our local and wider community, maximising the opportunities for progression and economic well-being for all protected groups.

Objective 6: To ensure that any future decisions necessitated by funding changes do not adversely affect any of the protected groups.

IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME

Communications and Training

Internally

The Senior Leader with responsibility for Equality & Diversity and Safeguarding will ensure that the SLT are regularly briefed on progress against the Scheme, and that the action plan and associated reports are integrated with current business process reporting.

SLT will report on progress against the key issues on a termly basis to the CEO.

The CEO will determine how SLT will be held to account against the Scheme and key issues.

The achievement and progress gaps are to be analysed and eradicated through positive actions. The Trust and LGB to receive regular updates on narrowing these gaps across all groups and vulnerable adults. The actions should be embedded in QIPs and LGB Strategic Plans.

Externally

The Trust, as a non-departmental public body is required to produce a report on the progress of the Scheme on an annual basis. The CEO will co-ordinate this on the Trust's behalf.

In addition to an annual review of the Trust's Scheme, it is a requirement of the public sector equality duty to produce a revised Scheme on a three-year cycle, unless other priorities or directives determine that the Scheme is amended earlier.

Date of Last Approval/Revision	March 2020
Review interval (years)	3 Yearly (with an annual review)
Approval/review body	Senior Leadership Team, Trust Board
Date of next review	March 2023
Public File location	Master Policy Folder on L:/Drive and SharePoint