

The Disability Equality Commitment

Lifelong Learning UK has set up a Disability Equality Implementation Group (DEIG) to drive forward the recommendations of the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning. The Commission launched its final and summary reports in March 2008, and recommended that lifelong learning organisations embrace fully the Disability Equality Duty.

The 11 key recommendations:

It is recommended that lifelong learning organisations: embrace fully the Disability Equality Duty, 'even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons' in order to transform the organisation for staff as well as learners, by:

1. Clearly designating a senior member of staff with responsibility for disability equality and ensuring that all senior managers and every line manager are aware of their responsibilities with disability equality policies.
2. Ensuring that disabled people are encouraged to be trustees and governors and that bodies responsible for governance include disabled people.
3. Developing appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the voices of disabled staff are involved, heard and supported, such as through disabled staff groups, equality committees, liaison/focus groups and/or affiliation to national networks.
4. Reviewing and revising policies, processes and procedures for disclosure, and removing barriers to disclosure, to create a positive and secure culture for disclosure.
5. Ensuring that disability equality policies and schemes, staff appraisal schemes and impact assessments involve disabled staff and trade union officials, reporting to governing

bodies/trustees annually, as the Disability Equality Duty requires.

6. Signing up to schemes such as the 'Mindful Employers' Charter', and the requirements of the 'Two Ticks' scheme.
7. Reviewing recruitment procedures in order to encourage applications from disabled people; guaranteeing interviews to disabled applicants meeting the job requirements; and adopting open and inclusive recruitment processes, especially for part-time and/or temporary staff.
8. Ensuring that each lifelong learning organisation sets out to achieve:
 - a. staffing which reflects the disability profile of the adult working population;
 - b. well-informed management and governance through training and appraisal programmes;
 - c. sound policies and practices on disability absence and on disclosure;
 - d. sharing good practice in supporting both disabled learners and disabled staff;
 - e. better promotion of disability equality in staff training for part-time and full-time staff;
 - f. full recognition of the need for individual responses to staff disclosure, with individual follow-up and support arrangements.
9. Financing reasonable adjustments centrally so that no section, department or faculty is disadvantaged, financially or otherwise, in meeting disability equality responsibilities;
10. Developing support for disabled staff, such as mentoring and work-shadowing, and a disability equality component in appraisal schemes – to contribute to raising the achievement of disabled staff;
11. Ensuring that disability equality good practice is shared between organisations, between staff and learners, and

including where possible contractors and agencies delivering goods and services.

