

Partner college case studies - mainstreaming equality

April 2015

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North Highland College UHI

Key area where progress has been made with regard to equality and diversity:

The key area for North Highland College UHI has been around the establishment of a student ambassadors group within the college with five students from three curricular departments; a mix of further and higher education students. The students are provided with a roles document which highlights the importance of their position, the role they have to play in the equality and diversity agenda within the college and the transferrable skills that they can gain through this role which could enhance future employment opportunities.

Action we have taken to progress this key area:

The students were recruited following discussions with programme leaders, during our fresher's fayre and as part of the first learner council. The assistant director of learning and teaching, who has responsibility for equality, acts as facilitator for the group who communicate using email and a closed Facebook page. The group meet on a four weekly basis and actions are allocated across the group including the assistant director of learning and teaching.

Measures we are using to monitor our progress:

Progress is being measured on the outcomes of the student lead project. Each year the student ambassadors identify projects that they wish to undertake and eg this year the project will allow next year's group to target specific areas of discrimination within the college so that project years will have a link across years.

Evidence of progress that has been made:

Students have met on a monthly basis and identified a piece of work they wish to carry out this academic year. They are going to run a short online questionnaire with eight full-time programmes from across the various curriculum areas as well as individual students from any of our programmes. The aim is to gain a better understanding of the students' views on discrimination and if they feel it is evident within the college. The final data gathering is taking place in April and student ambassadors will then present their findings to our learner council and also as our staff conference in August prior to next year's student ambassadors then using this data to target a project for 2015-16.

Challenges that have been faced in progressing this key area:

Most of the challenges have been external to the group; the input from busy college programme leaders in identifying suitable programmes to carry out the

questionnaire. Email correspondence has had a positive outcome in one curricular area but not in another three so a more direct approach is being utilised with student representative taking on the responsibility for assisting their peers to complete the questionnaire as well as a drop in area being identified in the centre of the college which will allow students to undertake the questionnaire during break times.

Further action we intend to take:

The analysis of the questionnaire will give next year's student ambassadors a focus to select a project that will have meaning within the college, eg if the questionnaire demonstrates equality issues for access to particular parts of the building for students with disabilities, the group may set out to carry out a survey and make recommendations to our senior management team.

Key area where progress has been made with regard to equality and diversity:

Staff continuing professional development – raising awareness of equality and diversity

Action we have taken to progress this key area:

- our equality report and mainstreaming plan 2013-17 was published on 30 April 2013, an essential tool in supporting our continued commitment and success in relation to equality and diversity
- our equality and diversity policy 2013 was published in May 2013 and has recently been reviewed
- information and guidance on good practice around equalities, equality impact assessing and reporting on equalities has been communicated through our staff conference days
- further information on equalities has been communicated to staff and students through a variety of equality and diversity events and through our special interest groups
- differentiated equalities training materials have been developed to support staff in relation to their roles and as they progress in their roles eg at Induction, through our initial teacher training programme, teaching at Perth, and up to the teaching qualification in further education
- a resource bank of equalities materials and information to support all staff has been developed and made available through our intranet
- our online training programme diversity in the workplace which is mandatory for all staff, has been updated and personalised to the college
- two further mandatory training programmes – world host disabilities and culture have been introduced for all staff
- through our special interest groups, staff have had the opportunity to hear from specialists on a variety of topics to help raise their awareness of autism, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, dyslexia etc
- Equality impact assessment training has been updated and is currently being undertaken by staff at all levels across the college
- our mandatory staff training programmes are designed and are in place to help ensure an understanding of diverse needs of people who have protected characteristics
- our voluntary training programmes have been developed to help staff to further understand the difficulties often faced by people who have a protected characteristic

Measures we are using to monitor our progress:

- Attendance at staff training events/conference day workshops
- Staff development record feedback from equality events
- Completed equality impact assessments
- Team self-evaluation documents
- Course annual reports
- Staff surveys
- Student surveys
- Student personal development planning - evidence of equality being embedded in the curriculum
- College Facebook and Twitter sites
- Operational plans

Evidence of progress that has been made:**Staff surveys**

85% of staff agree: I am aware of Perth College UHI schemes in relation to equalities (an increase of 5% from 2012)

96% of staff agree: I understand my personal responsibilities for ensuring and promoting equality at work
(an increase of 2% from 2012)

88% of staff agree: I have received effective equalities training

Staff comments:

“The equality and diversity leader for this area is very approachable and well informed”

“I feel good that the college has taken this message and worked with it”

“Perth College UHI has a very open policy”.

Student feedback:

96% of students agree “All students are treated fairly and equally

Student comments:

“My personal academic tutor helped me recognise my dyslexia and I have since sought help with this.”

“Any additional support needs are sorted out very quickly.”

World host training courses

50 staff members have completed the world host customers with disabilities training course

44 staff members have completed the world host service across cultures training course

Examples of staff responses to the question – “What are some of the most important things you learned in this workshop?”

'I feel I now have a greater understanding of different cultures.'

'I now realise that what we accept as 'norm' and 'right' is not always the case in other countries.'

'When engaging with others, regardless of their background, Ask, listen and don't assume.'

'To understand that disability is not something to be scared of.'

From September 2014, staff attending the world host training courses have been asked to disclose their ‘confidence’ levels in relation to the course subject, disability or culture, prior to and on completion of the course.

98% of staff report that their confidence levels have increased following their training

Equality impact assessment training:

13 staff teams have attended equality impact assessment face-to-face training workshops

Diversity in the workplace online training module:

72% of staff have completed the online equality and diversity module and plans are in place for the remaining 28% to undertake this training

Staff have rated the overall value of this training at 4 out of 5

Staff comments when asked what would be taken away from this training:

“ A better awareness of types and range of discrimination likely to be encountered”

“Importance of recognising our duties/duty regarding diversity in the college”

All responses said this training would be able to be applied in the workplace

Staff induction session

All new staff members are encouraged to attend an induction session which now includes an introduction on how equality and diversity impacts on job roles.

Completed evaluation forms indicate that all participants see the equality part of this session as being ‘completely’ relevant to their role.

Staff comment:

“Can we convene further meetings with the equality and diversity adviser in respect to procuring more professional advice regarding equality and diversity”

Challenges that have been faced in progressing this key area:

- Some staff do not complete the mandatory online module – though with new staff joining the college on a continual basis it is unlikely that we will ever reach 100% compliance at any one point in time.
- Staff availability/willingness to attend workshops
- Non completion of part 2 CIPHR record (staff continuous professional development record) where staff can give feedback from events

Staff survey:

85% of staff agree: I know what to do if I am concerned about an equality matter (an increase of 3% from 2012)

However, only 78% of staff agree “I am confident that equality concerns within Perth College will be dealt with promptly and appropriately (a decrease of 4% from 2013)

Staff comment:

“at the moment it seems to be about collection of equality and diversity data than about compliance, practice and culture”

Further action we intend to take:

- we have recently completed the development of an equality impact Assessment online training course which is soon to be launched. The module has also been adopted by the university with a view to offering it to all partner colleges.
- our equality and diversity adviser is working as part of an SQA team who are revising the Level 9 PDA advancing equality and diversity through Inclusiveness with a view to offering the award as staff development.
- develop a framework as a mechanism to encourage staff teams to report more fully on the equalities work that they are undertaking.
- involve staff teams in an event to share good practice around equalities

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI

<p>Key area where progress has been made with regard to equality and diversity:</p> <p>Staff training – Gaelic language</p>
<p>Action we have taken to progress this key area:</p> <p>E-module training – Marshall ACM – diversity in the workplace Gaelic staff in-house training being developed; Power-point presentation and additional notes completed and approved by senior management team. Training session scheduled.</p>
<p>Measures we are using to monitor our progress:</p> <p>Senior management team monitors/reviews staff training completion rates</p>
<p>Evidence of progress that has been made:</p> <p>Over 50% of staff have completed training</p> <p>Comments have been positive, staff members have commented on a positive learning experience and successful completion of assessment.</p>
<p>Challenges that have been faced in progressing this key area:</p> <p>Need to remind staff to complete training however this has been helped by intervention of principal and other senior staff.</p>
<p>Further action we intend to take:</p> <p>Deliver Gaelic language training Gather feedback on emodule and Gaelic language training</p>

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI

<p>Key area where progress has been made with regard to equality and diversity:</p> <p>Gathering staff protected characteristics data on application:</p> <p>Age Gender Gender at birth Sexual orientation Religion Nationality Race Marital status Ethnic origin or racial group Disability</p>
<p>Action we have taken to progress this key area:</p> <p>Application form updated</p>
<p>Measures we are using to monitor your progress:</p> <p>Information gathered as part of application form. Recorded in access database</p>
<p>Evidence of progress that has been made:</p> <p>100% of applicants disclosing No feedback as yet</p>
<p>Challenges that have been faced in progressing this key area:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Further action we intend to take:</p> <p>Gather further staff diversity information</p> <p>No measures put in place yet.</p> <p>Gather and monitor student information – what/how are you gathering currently for students?</p>

As per UCAS and University of the Highlands and Islands forms: disability, age, gender, nationality.

We do have access to student diversity information in core reports and we will report on this information and identify areas for action.

We are aware that students are asked further questions when enrolling online but we do not use this data in any way.

Shetland College UHI

Key area where progress has been made with regard to equality and diversity:

Voluntary groups and charities have been encouraged to regularly visit the college to promote their activities and engage with learners and staff.

Action you have taken to progress this key area:

At the start of 2012/13 a pilot initiative was created to encourage local support organisations to come into the college to provide information to learners.

The aims for the initiative were:

- Increase awareness of support services available within the community
- For learners to gain access to volunteer opportunities to enhance their CVs
- An awareness raising of careers within the voluntary sector

Initially a wide range of local organisations were contacted to see if they were interested in visiting the college. Following some successful visits, word spread and several groups contacted the college directly to book slots. Following positive feedback from staff, visitors and learners, it was quickly seen that the initiative was fulfilling its aims.

In addition to the visits, the college also promoted black history month in October 2013, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history month in February 2014 and 2015 and women's history month in March 2015. The college highlighted displays in the café and library, as well as having relevant resources available in the library and sharing of electronic resources via email. Plus there were various promotions on our Facebook page and college equalities webpage.

Measures you are using to monitor your progress:

The visits are managed and coordinated by the communications and student engagement assistant, who maintains a learner engagement log which records a description of the visit or activity and the number of learners that engaged in the event. This data enables to formulate and plan future activities and events.

Evidence of progress that has been made:

Since 2012-13 there has been a steady growth of evidence of engagement with visitors. When Women's Aid visited the college to promote white ribbon day, 60 staff and students signed their pledge; fourteen students made enquiries when Voluntary Action Shetland had their first stand; and four students signed up to

volunteer with the Samaritans when they visited the college as part of University of the Highlands and Islands mental health awareness day. When the NHS legal highs working group visited the college in 2014-15 they reported that around sixty students and staff interacted with their stand.

In some cases visits were planned to coincide with awareness campaigns; for example, when OPEN peer educators visited on world AIDS day, or when the NHS healthcare improvement Team visited to promote their drink aware campaign just before Up Helly Aa.



There appears to be consistent positive feedback from visitors, as they considered it a good awareness exercise - even if learners didn't engage directly with their stand.

As well as high levels of interaction, there have also been a number of indications of students seeking support. For example, Women's Aid noted that a helpline number had been torn from one of their leaflets when they were packing up after their visit in 2012-13. Similarly, when sexual abuse survivors visited the college one student specifically told them 'I've seen your ad in the paper every week, but it is so good to meet you in person.' These learners may have found it difficult to make contact with these support services had they not been invited into college.



Despite the disruption of major building works in 2013-14, we were still able to facilitate fifteen visits. Towards the start of semester one, the Royal Bank of Scotland, Shetland Islands Credit Union and The Scottish Health Council were invited to take part in the college for 'welfare week' and OPEN peer educators visited the college as part of national 'mental health awareness week.' In addition to the agencies contacted previously, representatives from the community mediation team, Shetland Islands Council environment and energy services, trading standards and Family Mediation Shetland also visited during 2013-14.



Building on these successes, a total of sixteen visits were scheduled for semester one of 2014-15. As well as returning visitors, 2014-15 has also seen visits from The Shetland Recreational Trust, Police Scotland and the NHS legal highs working group.

Challenges that have been faced in progressing this key area:

During 2013/14 the college underwent major building works in the area normally located for the information stands and activities. This meant that the college was restricted in the number of visits and activities that could be invited due to the lack of physical space.

Further action you intend to take:

In January 2015 it was decided that this successful initiative should be put forward for the student support initiative award 2015. Below are the judges' comments.

Very good planning to invite such a wide range of organisations into the institution and also to base them in a public area rather than set up a specific time for a presentation. The project was well run and could be replicated in other centres, although larger communities may have a very large number of organisations to choose from and would need to be selective!

I liked this a lot. Simple but effective way to engage students and community/support services/interest groups/voluntary sector. Well-presented and well thought through rolling programme of engagements and opportunities.'

The college now provides a regular commitment to promoting local organisations – one slot is offered per week throughout the academic year.

The college is currently looking at ways of how the curriculum provision can link in with the local agencies visits and activities. It is envisaged that there will be equality and diversity themed displays and activities undertaken by learners in the café area.

Shetland College UHI

Key area where progress has been made with regard to equality and diversity:

Learners can access an online talk box to express their suggestions to improve the learners' experience of the college

Action we have taken to progress this key area:

One of our strategic priorities is to 'enhance the approaches to learner engagement and the student voice' therefore we value the importance for suitable opportunities for learners to provide feedback. Equally important is to 'close the loop' and show learners that their feedback has been taken seriously.



During the 2012/13 the college reviewed its learners' feedback mechanism 'you said, we did.' An idea was developed into talk boxes – a network of anonymous suggestion boxes placed throughout the college buildings and learning centres. For those learners who studying online or via distance learning, a talk box page of the website was produced allowing learners to provide feedback (through an online form) and read responses from staff. During the year it was agreed to run a pilot of the learner feedback system and to monitor the engagement of learners and that and responses would be displayed.

It was agreed by the senior management team that the responses to the comments should be clearly visible to all learners. Therefore a designated display board in the café area was used, as well posting the responses on the college website.

After the successful pilot it was decided that talk boxes should become an integrated part of the college's quality improvement processes. Whereas course team meetings are primarily focused on learning and teaching matters, talk boxes are able to provide feedback on any aspect of the learner's experience.

Measures we are using to monitor our progress:

Talk boxes are managed by the communications and student engagement assistant, whose role is to mediate between learners and relevant staff. If lecturers or other support staff were reading the comments, they may recognise handwriting and identify the learners involved therefore possibly compromising anonymity.

Evidence of progress that has been made:

During the 2012/13 pilot the total number of comments from learners was thirty-one. This suggested the use of the feedback system was proving to be very popular and was actively engaging learners.

However the total figure for learner comments in 2013/14 was ten. This significant dip in usage was due to the difficulty in locating a permanent display of the talk box responses due to major building work that was taking place in the café area that academic year.

However at the start of 2014/15 the building work had been completed and the café now houses a permanent display for the talk box mechanism. To date the total figure for usage is fifty-three, covering all aspects of college life.

In the January 2014 the review of Shetland College UHI by Education Scotland, cited the following regarding the talk box feedback mechanism, 'learners are provided with a range of opportunities to engage in the work and life of the college. Learners provide evaluative commentary on their experiences and suggestions for improvement through use of the online talk box feedback forum.'

Challenges that have been faced in progressing this key area:

Initially in 2012/13 it was difficult to gauge whether learners would 'buy in' to using the new feedback system, therefore it was decided to pilot the system and monitor the results.

During 2013/14 the college underwent major building works in the area normally located for the display of the talk box responses. This resulted in difficulty in finding a suitable location for the display the talk box responses.

Further action we intend to take:

In January 2015 it was decided for this successful initiative should be forward for the student support initiative award 2015. Below are the judges' comments regarding the talk box feedback mechanism and we are delighted that it was 'commended' by the judges.

'The concept of a suggestions box updated in an innovative way with a prompt and public response. This is a very useful project which could readily be replicated in other institutions. There are normally a number of opportunities for students to comment on academic issues and this project gives them a clear route to give feedback and information on other issues.'

‘Very good mechanism for student voice, with excellent feedback to the student body on actions taken. Good that it is being embedded as part of the culture and seems well managed.’

It is envisaged that talk box will remain as an integral part of the college’s quality systems and the learner engagement strategy.

STUDENT

TALK BOX

'Who's daft idea was it to divide subjects into/over 2 days?! I now have to attend college 2 days for 1 higher and worse case scenario for next years' 2 highs? 4 days ☹️ I have children and I have to work part-time.

How about making your timetable a bit more like a college/uhi and less like school – for the grown-ups. Cheers.'

This year we trialled splitting Highers across two days because of feedback from students over the last couple of years. College staff are looking at the timetables again to decide how Highers would be best organised next year.

- **'We need a quiet door to the library.'**
- **'The door to the library closes very loudly and is often in constant use, which is a major distraction and not good whilst studying or reading. Needs muffling!'**

This feedback has been passed on to the building contractors for action.

'Especially at this time of year with bugs being rife, would it be possible to have keyboard and mouse wipes?'

This is a great suggestion considering flu is often going around. An order has been sent to Shetland Janitorial Supplies and wipes should be in all teaching spaces in the New Year.

I saw someone saying that the canteen is expensive, but the maet is so good I'd say it's value for money! Keep it up 😊

Thank you for this positive feedback. It's always a boost for our café staff!

Have brownies every day. Please 😊

The café certainly makes tasty brownies! Since they are proving popular, they are being stocked most days now.

'The vending machines could do with being fixed!'

We are aware that students rely on vending machines in the afternoon, and apologise for the inconvenience of them not working properly. This comment has been passed on to the Operations Manager for action in the New Year.

'We really need a litter bin outside the main door / seating area.'

We don't have a suitable bin to hand, but we are now looking into the possibility of purchasing one for the outdoor seating area.

I would like it if the kitchen had a fridge of reasonable quality. I would like to say either fix the fridge or at least get a new one. I would like cold water in the kitchen.

from a major brand of chips then they can't be. Unfortunately all like lovely is far too limited.

STUDENT

Can we get please? Especially area or just

A rubbish bin next to the seating area. Let us know if of the college

I'm feeling

We're sorry to hear students to feel isolated, or any other support if there is any speak about. In particular:

- Linda Tait, Guidance
◦ linda.tait@uhi
- Greg McCarron, Student Assistant:
◦ greg.mccarron

Please don't hesitate to would like to speak with

If you would like to contact have you considered for E.g. Film club, knitting club anything else?

Support is available from to set up a society, and if like-minded students!

Need better Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi is rubbish

For a variety of reasons possible to install Wi-Fi the new building prior term. The technology is but due to the disruption done during the October should be greatly improved return after the holiday

The machines don't girls' toilets!

This comment has been passed on to the janitor, who will