

A decorative graphic consisting of a series of thin, curved lines that sweep across the page from the bottom left towards the top right, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are light gray and form a grid-like pattern that tapers as it moves across the page.

# **disability equality scheme**

**2009-2013**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Disability Equality Scheme sets out City Lit's framework within which it promotes equality and strives to eliminate all forms of disability discrimination against disabled students, staff, visitors and contractors. City Lit recognises that the diversity of its students and staff is one of its greatest strengths.

This Disability Equality Scheme is published on the website at [www.citylit.ac.uk](http://www.citylit.ac.uk) and is available on e-share.

This document can be made available in large print or in alternative formats that meets individual needs. Please contact Human Resources at City Lit on 020 7492 2684 or [personnel@citylit.ac.uk](mailto:personnel@citylit.ac.uk) or minicom 020 7492 2746.

City Lit wishes to ensure that it is able to meet both the general and specific duties of the Disability Equality Duty, which came into force on 4 December 2006.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 (and subsequent amendments) makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in connection with employment, the provisions of goods, facilities and services (including education) or the management of premises.

### 1.1 Meaning of "Disability"

The DDA defines a disabled person as someone with "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities"

This document refers to "people with a disability"; however, it is recognised that people may have multiple disabilities.

### 1.2 The Social Model of Disability

City Lit uses the social model of disability, which identifies the barriers that disabled people encounter as products of society as opposed to results of the impairments that disabled people experience. Our policy and practice in relation to disabled people and the development of this Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan is based upon the removal of these barriers.

### 1.3 About City Lit

City Lit has a history of promoting inclusion and is enriched by the diversity of its student and staff community. The Centre for Deaf People, over 20 years of provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities (Progress) and the unique provision for students via the speech therapy department exemplify the choice of discrete provision. In more recent years City Lit has established support mechanisms for an increasing number of disabled students to access mainstream courses.

The move to the new site in May 2005 has meant that many more students can access City Lit and courses independently, while others may gain access with appropriate support. In the new building City Lit aims to promote a culture of inclusion, with support staff having increased awareness of the needs of disabled learners.

Events such as *Deaf Day* and the *Progress Celebration*, reflect the diversity, contribution and needs of disabled learners. Staff are offered general disability awareness training, specialist training regarding communication with D/deaf students, those with learning difficulties and speech difficulties. Tailor-made training and support is offered to tutors and departments supporting students with a range of needs from dyslexia to visual impairment.

City Lit respects the right of students and staff to choose whether to disclose their disability, however staff and students are positively encouraged to do so, through opportunities at pre-enrolment/interview, at enrolment, on course or in post.

Support for students with mental health difficulties is available through the Counselling service or Access to Learning. Access to Learning provides physical support, in class support, tutorials, transcribed materials etc.

#### 1.4 City Lit's approach to the Disability Equality Scheme

City Lit's Disability Equality Scheme provides a way to tackle disability discrimination in a practical way by developing and maintaining policies, procedures and practices that actively promote opportunities and so thus strives to minimise discrimination. By taking a college wide approach tangible outcomes and improvements for disabled people can be achieved. With personal commitment from everyone within the organisation City Lit will seek to make a real, positive change to attitudes, understanding and opportunities for both staff and students. The Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan covers the three years from 2006 to 2009. A subsequent Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan will cover the period from 2010 onwards.

The Executive is responsible to the Governing Body for ensuring that the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan is comprehensively implemented and reviewed.

#### 1.5 General Duty

The General Duty requires City Lit to have due regard to the issues listed below. "Due regard" means more than just "consider." City Lit will decide how relevant an issue could be to a disabled person when developing a facility or a procedure. It will also have to decide how important the development could be for disabled people. The views of people potentially affected will be important in making these decisions.

The issues to which we need to give due regard are to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability;

- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- take steps to take account of the disabilities of people with a disability, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

## 1.6 Specific Duties

City Lit also has specific duties to carry out in order to achieve the general duties. These specific duties are:

- to publish a Disability Equality Scheme outlining how City Lit intends to fulfil its General and Specific duties;
- to involve disabled people in the development of the Disability Equality Scheme.

To include the following in the Disability Equality Scheme:

- City Lit's methods for impact assessment;
- steps which City Lit will take towards fulfilling the General Duty, i.e. the Action Plan;
- arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, and to the delivery of education and support services;
- arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of the Action Plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes;
- within three years of the Disability Equality Scheme being published take the steps set out in the Action Plan and put into effect arrangements for gathering and making use of information;
- publish a report containing a summary of steps taken under the Action Plan, the results of the information gathering and the use to which the information has been put.

## **2. PRINCIPLES OF CITY LIT'S DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

City Lit's Disability Equality Scheme sets out the framework within which it promotes equality and strives to eliminate all forms of disability discrimination against our disabled students, staff, visitors and contractors. City Lit recognises that the diversity of its students and staff is one of its greatest strengths.

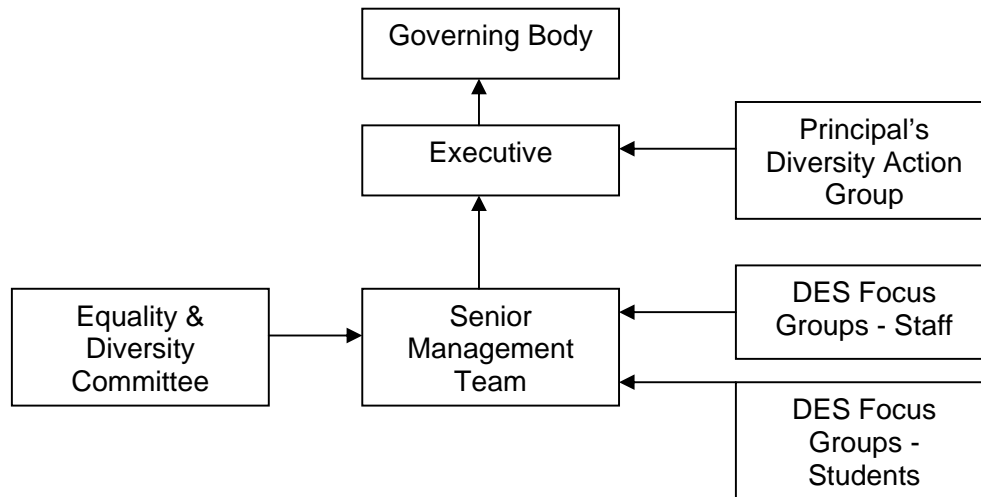
The commitment to delivering City Lit's Disability Equality Scheme is embodied in the following principles:

- The mainstreaming of best practice in disability equality across all areas of City Lit's work will be a key element in all of its activities.
- Staff and students are entitled to dignity and respect in the workplace and learning environment. City Lit recognises that discrimination, direct or indirect, based on a person's disability is unjust and it will not be tolerated.
- Disabled staff and students know best of their own requirements and should be enabled to make informed employment choices, and study choice where appropriate.
- The ongoing realisation of an inclusive culture which promotes disability equality will enable all students and staff to participate as fully as is realistic in all aspects of City Lit life.
- The continued development of an inclusive learning environment and the provision of an accessible curriculum will be at the centre of our high quality, planned delivery of student services and curriculum design.
- The continued diversification of the workforce to ensure it more accurately reflects the population of London.
- The ongoing development and maintenance of the purpose built accessible premises.
- Recognition that the successful implementation of our Disability Equality Scheme requires the commitment, involvement and active support of staff, students, partners, contractors and governors.

### 3. INVOLVING DISABLED PEOPLE

#### 3.1 Involvement in the development of the Scheme

The following groups are in existence to involve disabled people in the implementation and monitoring of the Disability Equality Scheme:



As a first step towards student and staff involvement a series of disabled student focus groups were established to actively engage them in the drafting of the scheme. These focus groups will become a regular feature, to be involved in key disability questions, equality impact assessments and make recommendations regarding the on going development of the Disability Equality Scheme.

Students suggested no significant changes to the scheme. Staff have not yet been involved in the review of the scheme. Further student and full staff involvement will occur early in 2010; this is to coincide with the development of the equality and diversity strategy; the scheme and plans will then be adjusted accordingly.

#### 3.2 Making Adjustments

City Lit will continue to involve staff and students in the making of adjustments to work, the environment or learning. For students these adjustments could include communication support, note-taker support, in class or tutorial support, dyslexia or study skills support, learning and teaching approaches and materials. For staff adjustments could include workstation redesign, job review, dyslexia support and communication support. *Access to Work* funding is requested where appropriate.

### 3.3 Buildings

In May 2005, City Lit opened in its new purpose built site. The building is designed to provide a high standard of physical access for people with a disability, with level access, electric front door, high speed lifts, disabled toilets and showers, ramped access to the canteen and hearing loops.

### 3.4 Equipment and Software

A range of specialist hard and software is available in the assisted learning centre, classrooms and staff offices, other equipment can be provided through learning support (students) and Human Resources (staff).

#### **4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

City Lit has undertaken equality impact assessment on all of its existing policies, procedures and processes to identify any impacts on disabled people. The social model of disability will be applied as the test on all of City Lit's policies, procedures and processes. This process has recently been extended to include all reports and proposals submitted to formal City Lit meetings and all actions within the self-assessment action plan.

## **5. PRODUCING THE ACTION PLAN**

City Lit has produced an Action Plan, was incorporated into the annual self-assessment process. This means that it will be a part of City Lit's ongoing quality improvement process and as such is be published and available to all stakeholders, including the Governing Body, the Learning & Skills Council and Inspectorate. The plan clearly commits City Lit to a timescale for activities to take place.

The action plan includes.

- A clear time-scales for activities;
- the person/persons responsible for the activities;
- agreed improvement targets.

## 6 GATHERING AND USING INFORMATION

### 6.1 Students

City Lit collects student data prior to admission and ensures that the information is used to positively support students access appropriate courses. All student achievement records will be monitored at frequent intervals to ensure that the disabilities of the learner are fully taken into account when setting and reviewing achievement targets.

The application and enrolment processes generate statistical information about the number of students who declare that they have one or more declared/hidden disabilities.

Students are then given the opportunity to discuss appropriate measures to support them, and, with their permission, this information is shared with relevant staff.

Programme Managers will ensure that learning opportunities are open to those with a disability. At the annual Curriculum Reviews any identified barriers and actions taken overcome them will be reviewed and incorporated into the self-assessment plan.

Disabled learners will be monitored to ensure that the learning environment is appropriate for their needs. Where possible, reasonable adaptations to meet their needs will be anticipated and arrangements will be in place prior to their admission.

If at any stage when City Lit becomes aware of a disability that is impacting on the student's learning, action will be taken to address this to facilitate an improvement.

The level of support offered to students will be governed by adult learning support funds available to City Lit.

### 6.2 Staff

City Lit's Human Resources Strategy is under review and its aims will be dovetailed with those of this scheme and the equality and diversity strategy.

City Lit is currently making the necessary changes to policies and procedures to enable the *Two Ticks* accreditation to be gained.

City Lit collects information from applicants and existing employees that indicate the number of disabled staff.

The information obtained will be used for monitoring to ensure that:

- recruitment is open to all and prospective disabled staff are as likely to be appointed as those without existing disability;
- promotion is open to all and all staff whether disabled or not are able to have access to suitable promotion opportunities as they arise;
- access to training and development opportunities is equally open to disabled staff;
- disputes resolution procedures are applied fairly;
- all staff receive an annual professional development review;

- there is no disparity in the retention of staff with a disability.

This process has been carried for the past 6 years and is published in the autumn term in the annual Human Resources Review.

City Lit analyses any differentials in the areas monitored between disabled and non-disabled staff; investigates the reasons for them; and takes action to remedy them. Actions for change are recommended in the Human Resources Review and are published as a part of the self-assessment process.

Where possible, all employment opportunities are open to those with a disability. At the annual Curriculum and Service Reviews any identified barriers and actions taken overcome them will be reviewed and incorporated into the self-assessment plan.

Disabled staff will be monitored to ensure that the working environment is appropriate for their needs. Where possible, reasonable adaptations to meet their needs will be anticipated and arrangements will be put in place.

At any stage when City Lit becomes aware of a disability that is impacting on the employee's ability to fulfil their job role, action will be taken to address this to facilitate an improvement.

All staff are offered an exit interview and, where appropriate, the opportunity to state whether they hold a perception that reasonable adjustments had not been made to meet their needs.

### 6.3 Partners

City Lit has outsourced facilities management, covering security, catering, cleaning and building maintenance, to Equion FM, who have subcontracted elements to four other sub-contractors. City Lit has also outsourced Information Technology services to Getronics. All these contractors have significant numbers of staff on site, who will interact with both staff and students. City Lit will work with these contractors to ensure that they also have disability equality schemes in place for their work with City Lit or agree that their staff will adhere to City Lit's procedures and ethos and support City Lit in addressing our action plan.

## **7. ANNUAL DES REPORTING AND REVIEW**

The Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan was presented to the Governing Body early in 2007 for review and comments so governors can be confident that City Lit is meeting its obligations under the disability equality duty. The plan is reviewed each year in City Lit's self-assessment review.

This scheme will next be reviewed in 2010 as a result of the production of City Lit's Equality & Diversity Strategy and if the Single Equality Bill is passed.