



Annie'sland College welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on equality and diversity support in colleges and universities and offers the following comments on the consultation questions.

Overarching question

Is the four-level approach to equality and diversity an appropriate structure around which to design and implement future delivery mechanisms and initiatives?

Yes, provided this is not seen as rigid hierarchical structure and that there is recognition that institutions may be operating simultaneously across the four levels as strategies are implemented to address the different areas and strands of their equality and diversity duties and responsibilities.

Question 1

27 What do you see as the opportunities and challenges in the implementation of Level One – Advice and Information?

- Boards of Management require to be clear about their responsibilities and to have appropriate and sufficient information and advice to ensure that colleges are meeting their equality legislative requirements. Signposting and summaries specifically designed for college Boards would be welcome.
- Accessible advice and information on equalities to give teaching staff the confidence and the tools to equality proof their learning and teaching material will be necessary for Level One support.
- Professional support at Level One should be constructed to challenge any lingering institutional resistance to 'equalities responsibilities' across all areas of the college and designed to support a higher rate of staff disability disclosure.

Question 2

28 What do you see as the opportunities and challenges in the implementation of Level Two – Targeted development and capacity building?

- This is a crucial level for colleges. Boards of Management will need to ensure that a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data is being collected and analysed across the college to improve outcomes for people who share one or more aspects of their identity in relation to race, disability, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. SFC could offer support by providing templates that could be customised by colleges to reflect their stages of development and inform the setting of college equality targets.
- SFC should send out a clear message to the sector that equality action plans, equality reporting and equality monitoring should not be in a 'silo' and SFC should support developments and capacity building to embed equality in curriculum planning, course review and self – evaluation. At Level 2 the priority must be to ensure that equality data collection and reporting is embedded in quality improvement and self assessment and not seen as a separate area of activity is essential. Get Equality into Quality.

Question 3

29 What do you see as the opportunities and challenges in the implementation of Level Three – Equalities Leadership?

- Equalities Leadership should be developed through the existing sector leadership programmes, communities of practice and sector networks. It should not be seen as something different but as an essential component of all development and management programmes.

Question 4

30 What do you see as the opportunities and challenges in the implementation of Level Four – Systemic change/Integration?

- Level 4 implementation will be supported by the successful implementation of Levels 1-3. A clear and consistent message from SFC that the sector must work to mainstream equality and diversity should inform all SFC communications and underpin all activities. Strategic partnerships with e.g. HMLe, will contribute to reinforcing this message.

Question 5

31 What other mechanisms or level of support should be considered by SFC with regards to equality and diversity?

- Case studies that exemplify the embedding of equality and diversity in college strategies for learner engagement would be useful at Level 2 along with a toolkit for training student representatives to ensure that they are inclusive and have the skills to represent the views of all students.
- SFC may wish to encourage 'Equalities Updates' as standing items on the agendas of all appropriate college committees and support this by regular web-based bulletins. Funding to support sector networks would enhance information exchange and the sharing of good practice.