

MARY WARD CENTRE EQUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Statement of Intent

The Mary Ward Centre is committed to providing an adult education service which offers equality of opportunity to users, employees, tutors and volunteers, irrespective of their age, culture, disability, gender, HIV status, race, political belief, religion, sexual orientation, income or social class. We believe that everyone has a right to an adult education service which promotes inclusion, social justice and which is free from unfair discrimination on any grounds.

We are committed to opposing discrimination both in the delivery of our adult education service and in our recruitment and employment practices. Our intention is to make equality of opportunity a reality for all. We will monitor our services and our recruitment practices and will regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of our equality assurance policies.

Structures of Employment

Recruitment: The Centre will recruit staff in accordance with the recruitment policy. This policy will be reviewed from time to time and will ensure that procedure and practice comply with the equality assurance statement of intent.

Training: Staff will be encouraged to participate in training and skill development relating to their work at the Centre. Analysis of staff training needs and action plans will reflect equality assurance issues.

Harassment: Abuse, discrimination or harassment on grounds of age, culture, disability, gender, HIV status, race, political belief, religion, sexual orientation, income, social class or any other grounds by staff or volunteers is a serious disciplinary offence and will be regarded as acts of gross misconduct under the Centre's disciplinary procedure.

Users

Individual and institutional discrimination has resulted in unequal access for some groups and individuals to the education service. Our policies aim to widen participation which will be reflected in the courses we run, publicity, and language, support and teaching and learning materials. Our staff will be aware of this policy and will be non-discriminatory in their practice.

Discriminatory behaviour or harassment by users will not be tolerated in the Centre and will be dealt with via the student code of conduct and disciplinary procedure.

Volunteers

The Centre's volunteers will comply with this equality assurance policy and any Centre volunteer policy.

Outreach

Liaison and communication helps the Centre to respond to and meet the educational needs of the community. We will regularly review the ways we develop links with the community, especially those organisations who work with disadvantaged groups.

Accessibility

The design of the Centre building creates some access barriers for disabled people. Extending disabled access and increasing the use of the Centre by disabled people is a priority. Sign Language Interpreters, other language interpreters and other support staff will be arranged to ensure our service is accessible to all.

Publicity information will be written in clear and accessible language and will contain information about access. We will use a range of community languages in publicity aimed at communities whose first language is not English. Key policies such as The Charter and Equality Assurance Statement will be available in those languages most frequently used by the students.

Monitoring

The Centre has a permanent Equality Assurance Committee which is a sub-committee of the Management Committee. It has broad representation from across all parts of the Centre and has powers to co-opt from the local community and groups as appropriate. The Committee will meet three times a year and will report to the Management Committee via its minutes and an annual report.

The Equality Assurance Committee is responsible for evaluating the Centre's practices against its equality assurance policy. It will monitor job applicants, appointments, staff, volunteers, users and Committee Members to ensure they are representative of the community.

The Equality Assurance Committee will ensure equality assurance training is made available to all full-time staff and the Management Committee.

All Staff, Management and sub-Committees also have responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy.