Mary Ward Centre

Inclusion in Action, 2013-14 Update

The Centre has an action plan to advance equality and diversity across all our activities. It goes by the name of "Inclusion in Action". We want everyone to be involved in the advancement of equality and diversity. We all have rights and responsibilities. We welcome contributions and suggestions from, students, staff, board members and visitors alike.

The plan is dynamic; we will amend it from time to time to reflect what actions we have taken and any new actions we plan to advance equality and diversity, and publish a new version of this document on our website each academic year.

There are three strands to the Inclusion in Action plan. The first is to increase the visibility of equality and diversity across the college. The second is to review our policies and procedures to make sure that we are not inadvertently discriminatory. And the third is to look for ways to improve our practices to advance equality and diversity.

What follows is an update for the last academic year.

Increasing the visibility of equality and diversity across the college

We have adopted this logo as a "brand" for advancing equality and diversity at the Mary Ward Centre.

We are developing a range of posters for display in public areas and in classrooms. Our first range will bear the slogan, "Did you know?". Some posters will be factual, such as "Last year at the Mary Ward Centre, we had X students who …" Some will contain quotations from students. And others may contain photographs which, we think, encapsulate equality and diversity at the Centre.

We invite students and other users of to make comments about the Centre, good or bad. We are rebranding our comment boxes with the Inclusion in Action logo, and will ask people to send us a postcard, which can be "posted" at reception.

The college has a large creative art section with students making some remarkable works. From time to time, there will be an artefact which exemplifies equality and diversity. We will mount displays of such artworks, highlighting the connections and attaching our Inclusion in Action logo.

The LGBT User Group, one of the highlights of 2014-15

We invited students to set up and LGBT User Group, and now we have some thirty plus member with an LGBT identity and their supporters. The User Group contributed to a re-writing of the Centre's Equality and Diversity Statement (please see the Student Charter also on this page). In October, we held a major exhibition, "We are LGBT". The Centre hopes to relaunch the LGBT User Group in 2015-16, with social media focus. Look out for new posters

Reviewing our policies and procedures

All college policies and procedures will be reviewed with the aid of a "universal impact assessment" to make sure that they advance equality and diversity. This will take a little time, as a public organisation like ours has quite a number of individual policies. Nonetheless, we will be thorough in our review. We will pay particular attention to the various course application forms that we ask potential students to complete, so that we are sure that we are collecting the right information to support students best.

From September 2013, we have been collecting more comprehensive equality and diversity data in relation to trustees, staff and tutors. We will be able to publish a "snapshot" profile on our website by January 2014, with a view to publishing more complete data annually.

Improving our practices to advance equality and diversity

This is the section of the Inclusion in Action plan where we identify opportunities better to support students and staff.

To improve the way we support students who have a disability or learning difficulty, and who require additional learning support, we are always looking for ways to increase our resources. This year we have established a base for additional learning support on the ground floor that is equipped with a bank of six laptops. The laptops have access to a range of assistive technology, such as speech-to-text.

The Centre has identified five tutors to be Assistive Technology Champions. They will be trained in assistive technology software so that they can, in turn, train students who need to use it. In the future, we envisage that Assistive Technology Champions will have a wider role in the promotion of assistive technology across the college. In this regard, we are convening a forum of dyslexic tutors as a first step to extending to them dyslexia-friendly ways of working.

We have purchased software and hardware which will assist us in providing more accessible documents to students who need them, such as larger type, Braille, audio, digital, or in another language.

A significant number of tutors and other staff working at the Centre have been trained in our duties and responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010. Further training is scheduled, and it is our intention that all tutors and staff receive this training.

We are always looking for ways to improve our facilities, and within our financial constraints, we continue to make purchases of appropriate resources. For example this year, for the first time, we are able to offer students access to portable hearing loops at reception, and for use in interviews.

If you require this document or a part of it, or any other information document, in another format such as larger type, Braille, audio, digital, or in another language, please ask.