

## Strategic Equality Plan 2019-2022

# STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2019-2022

## SECTION ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment in 2015, Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales has firmly established itself as the National Community College, serving the adult population of Wales with inspirational, life-changing learning opportunities.

Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales is committed to equality of opportunity, and to ensuring that all people have equal rights and should be treated as such regardless of any particular characteristics they might have. The organisation provides equality in all aspects of education and employment and ensures that no learner, employee or job applicant is discriminated against on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage or civil partnership.

This plan affirms the organisation's commitment to equality and sets out strategic equality objectives for the four-year period commencing in 2019 and continuing until 2022.

#### 1.1 THE LAW

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) brings together and replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies and strengthens the law, removes inconsistencies and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The Act prohibits discrimination in employment, education and the provision of goods and services in respect of nine "protected characteristics":

**Age:** This refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

**Disability:** A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Gender reassignment:** The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

**Pregnancy and maternity:** Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

**Race:** Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

**Religion and belief:** Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

**Sex:** A man or a woman.

**Sexual orientation:** Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

**Yr iaith Gymraeg / The Welsh language** – although not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 has a significant impact on public bodies in Wales through the implementation of Welsh Language Standards.

The purpose of the Welsh Language Standards is to provide more rights for people to use Welsh in their everyday lives. The Standards require named organisations including Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales to plan for and increase the use of the Welsh language.

The Welsh Language Standards give us the opportunity to develop our bilingual service, to make an active offer across our external delivery and partnerships and to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh internally. The challenge is to ensure legislative compliance with each of the Standards whilst continuing to engage with individuals to develop best practice in language awareness and bilingual organisational development.

Under the Equality Act 2010, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other

conduct that is prohibited by the Act

2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

In April 2011 a Single Public Sector Equality Duty was implemented as part of the Equality Act 2010, putting in place a series of specific duties to underpin the general duty. These are:

- to publish equality objectives by 2 April 2014 reviewing them every 4 years;
- to publish a statement setting out the steps that it has taken or intends to take in order to fulfil each objective and the timescale to achieve;
- to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the steps taken;
- to identify, seek out and where appropriate, publish information that can be used to gauge whether the general duty is being met;
- to carry out and publish impact assessments showing how its current and proposed policies and practices affect the organisation's ability to comply with the general duty;
- on an annual basis, collect and publish certain employee data by reference to protected characteristics;
- to promote employees' understanding of the general and specific duties.

Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales (AOC|ALW) is committed to these principles of mainstreaming equality and welcomes these legislative changes. We are committed to providing high quality, lifelong education and training in support of individuals, communities, employees and their employers. We also understand that mainstreaming equality issues will ensure that we deliver our aims in a more meaningful way, which will reach all groups in our community more effectively.

## SECTION TWO

### DESCRIPTION OF OUR ORGANISATION AND OUR CORE FUNCTIONS

#### 2.0 OUR VISION, MISSION AND GOAL

Addysg Oedolion Cymru|Adult Learning Wales is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and supportive working environment for our staff and an excellent learning and teaching experience for our learners. Staff and learners are equally valued and respected, and are encouraged to thrive and reach their potential. We are committed to providing a fair, equitable and mutually supportive learning and working environment and this is reflected in the core values of the college:

**Equality:** we believe in equality of opportunity for all.

**Diversity:** we embrace the diversity of our staff and learners and see this as a great asset.

We value the talent, skills and knowledge of every individual and we recognise that this is a key contributing factor in achieving excellent standards in all that we do. We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of staff and learners and enables them to achieve their full potential, to contribute fully, and to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of the college.

**Our Vision:**

*“Increasing the social, economic and personal impact of adult community learning in Wales through co-ordination and development of national, regional and local partnerships; delivering equal access to Welsh medium provision”.*

**Our Mission**

*“Providing inspiring learning opportunities for adults in communities and workplaces throughout Wales: prioritising learning opportunities for those who are hardest to reach. Empowering people to develop skills and knowledge to realise their full potential”.*

**What Binds Us Together**

*“Inspirational learning”.*

**Our Goals**

1. Excellent teaching and learning
2. Raising the profile and importance of adult community learning
3. Strong collaboration and engagement
4. Responsible growth

## **2.1 INFORMATION SOURCES**

The following information has been used to identify and set our equality objectives:

- Learner data
- Staff data
- Consultation with learners through Learner Forums and feedback from Learner Representatives
- Consultation with learners, staff, representatives, partners, key stakeholders and external communities
- Consultation through our Council, Committee structures, Regional Forums and Annual General Meetings
- The college's Self Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Development Plan (QDP)
- Management Team Meetings
- Employee Surveys
- Learner Voice Surveys
- Equality training evaluation and feedback
- Estyn inspection reports
- Consultation with, and involvement from, external agencies
- Joint Consultative and Negotiation Committee meetings with our recognised Trade Unions

## SECTION THREE

### EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

#### 3.0 EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

This section outlines our key equality objectives, the steps we are taking or intend to take to meet them and the timescales in which we expect to achieve them.

In drawing up these objectives and actions we have drawn on our work to date. We have extended consideration to each of the 8 protected characteristics covered by all three of the main aims of the general duty (within the Public Sector Equality Duty) and the requirement to eliminate discrimination, harassment and other actions prohibited in the Equality Act 2010 in respect of the 9<sup>th</sup> protected characteristic relating to civil partnerships and marriage. We have also included the Welsh Language as a further area for consideration.

In consultation with our partners and key stakeholders we have identified the following functions of AOC/ALW as the most significant in respect of equality and the general duty. In broad terms they are:

1. Curriculum
2. Learner outcomes
3. Learner Services
  - i. Recruitment and enrolment
  - ii. Support services
  - iii. Health Safety and Wellbeing
  - iv. Safeguarding
4. Employment
5. Self- employed and sub contracted workers
6. Physical environment
7. Staff training and awareness

### **3.1 CURRICULUM**

#### **Where we are now and how we arrived at our objectives:**

As an organisation we have identified our priority objectives; these will remain under review as we engage in consultation with learners, staff and other stakeholders. In addition, we will use our equality information to identify any gaps in access, course allocation and achievement for the different protected characteristics.

#### **Objective**

We will improve access to courses, regardless of any of the protected characteristics and make sure that we take the needs and views of all protected groups into account when we design and deliver new courses and how we deliver the curriculum.

We will continuously measure, monitor and improve the ways in which we deliver courses to different groups.

We will build a positive and inclusive culture, with a common understanding and approach through which we can integrate equality issues in respect of all protected groups into everyday work.

We will ensure that equality is considered in all learning opportunities offered to our learners.

We will improve our course offer for learners who wish to undertake their learning in Welsh, via development of our Welsh medium and bilingual curriculum throughout Wales.

#### **The steps we will take to meet this objective:**

- We will continue to develop monitoring processes regarding all of the protected characteristics
- This data will include enrolment on courses and learner achievement
- This information will form part of our management information system and will be published and publically available
- Each year we will use this data to identify key issues and barriers for particular groups in consultation with staff, learners and expert groups
- We will continue to review our course content to ensure that it positively reflects the needs and issues of all protected groups
- We will continue to deliver training and awareness to our tutors and support staff in respect of equality issues and the curriculum
- We will continue to promote good practice and tools for professional teaching staff to increase knowledge and expertise in respect of all the protected characteristics and curriculum issues
- We will develop and implement a Welsh Medium and Bilingual Curriculum Action



Plan to increase delivery in this area.

### **3.2 LEARNER OUTCOMES**

#### **Where we are now and how we arrived at our objectives:**

We are aware that different groups experience particular barriers and issues; therefore they may not have equal outcomes in respect of learning achievement.

#### **Objective**

We will monitor and measure learner outcomes by all protected characteristics.

In particular we have identified through our on-going equality work and our engagement activity that different racial groups and people with disabilities may experience particular types of disadvantage in achieving their learning potential.

#### **The steps we will take to meet this objective:**

- We will deliver and develop our tailored support programme for disabled learners.
- We will use this information base to identify other priority actions to ensure that disabled learners, whatever their disability, have appropriate support packages and services in place.
- We will extend our engagement activities with disabled learners to identify appropriate actions. These will be included in our Equality Action Plan on an on-going basis.
- We will work with ethnic minority groups to progress positive action.

### **3.3 LEARNER SERVICES**

#### **Where we are now and how we arrived at our objectives:**

We aim to ensure that all learners have access to and are encouraged at every step to fulfil their potential and gain success as a learner at AOC|ALW. We are aware that some barriers will still exist and it is our aim to continue to work with staff and learners to identify and remove any obstacles and to improve the learner environment.

#### **Objective**

We will ensure that our learner services are fully assessed for the impact on different protected groups and that these impact assessments are used as a basis to identify appropriate actions to address barriers experienced by particular groups. This will

include all aspects of our work on Health, Safety and Wellbeing and will therefore cross over into our work to support our staff.

We will ensure that our ESOL provision is fully assessed for its impact on different equality characteristics and that appropriate actions are mainstreamed into our delivery of this area of work.

**The steps we will take to meet this objective:**

- **Gender and Sex equality**

In particular we realise that the gender pay gap exists within Wales and we are committed to working towards closing this gap. We are committed to diminishing occupational segregation and have therefore built this into our objectives. We will continue to promote images of men and women in non-traditional roles, and encourage our adult learners to enter careers which are traditionally taken up by the opposite sex.

We will ensure that staff and partners are aware of the role they have to play in supporting gender equality both internally and externally.

We will ensure that we have the right data to be able to effectively analyse and mitigate against issues of inequality for all protected characteristics.

- **Disability**

We recognise from our research and from our engagement activities that disabled learners and prospective learners experience particular barriers and have specific needs from our learner services.

We will continue to ensure that staff are trained in disability issues on an on-going basis. We will continue to engage with specialist groups to ensure that particular disability issues are identified and addressed.

For learners with particular learning needs or mental health issues we will continue to monitor our services for disproportionate impact and provide relevant support.

We will continue to monitor this activity and identify priority actions.

- **All protected characteristics:**

We will show how we have involved men, women, transgender people and people with disabilities in the decisions we have, and will, make in respect of learner services. These groups have been identified as experiencing particular issues in respect of our learner services and we will target our actions towards ensuring their needs are met.

We will continue to collect and monitor relevant information in respect of all of the protected characteristics and use this information along with engagement activities to identify further priorities and objectives for action.

### **3.4 EMPLOYMENT**

#### **Where we are now and how we arrived at our objectives:**

We recognise the importance of our employment policies, the opportunities they represent within the local community and the impact they have on our staff.

#### **Objective**

We will promote equality for all protected groups, particularly those who are most under-represented in our staff through appropriate and targeted positive action.

Along with meeting the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, we will develop opportunities for staff to use the Welsh language in the workplace, both enabling Welsh speakers to use their language of choice at work and supporting staff to improve their Welsh language skills.

#### **The steps we will take to meet this objective:**

We will collect, monitor and publish equality data in respect of all protected characteristics and in respect of all aspects of our employment policies. This will be published, updated and reviewed every year.

We will positively target recruitment of underrepresented groups following our engagement work with protected groups. This will include innovative uses of advertising employment opportunities within appropriate communities. In the first instance we will work with local ethnic communities and their leaders to identify appropriate actions.

We will continue to provide opportunities for staff to use and develop their Welsh language skills, in line with our Welsh Language Standards Action Plan.

We will work with Transgender groups to target our recruitment at their community.

We will also identify innovative ways to employ and support people with disabilities. These groups have been identified in the first instance as being underrepresented and experiencing particular barriers.

We will continue to monitor and measure employment application and success at all stages for all protected characteristics.

We will build on our previous equality impact assessment work to identify key employment policies and practices with the highest relevance to equality.

We will identify appropriate actions and objectives from this work and include them in our Strategic Equality Plan.

### **3.5 EMPLOYED AND SUB-CONTRACTED WORKERS**

#### **Where we are now and how we arrived at our objectives:**

We recognise the importance of our employed and sub contracted tutors and partner organisations.

We need to ensure that they are made aware of and adhere to our organisational policies and have access to training and support to ensure they understand their responsibilities related to equality.

#### **Objective**

To ensure parity of responsibility and support across employed and sub contracted tutors / partner organisations.

#### **The steps we will take to meet this objective and when we will do this by:**

We will review how directly employed tutors access and understand their responsibility to adhere to AOC | ALW policies.

We will standardise partnership agreements with sub contracted tutors and partner organisations to ensure that they can access and understand their responsibility to adhere to AOC | ALW policies .

We will develop a training plan focused on Equality that all tutors - whether directly employed or sub contracted will be actively encouraged / expected to attend.

### **3.6 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Where we are now and how we arrived at our objectives:**

We will undertake a review to ensure that the physical environments of our facilities do not disadvantage protected groups, particularly disabled people.

In particular through our work we will identify a key priority in respect of outcomes for learners and carers of learners with particular physical and mental disabilities.

Engagement with relevant groups and particularly disability experts has identified

our physical environment as key to advancing equality.

### **Objective**

We will engage with appropriate disability groups including learners and staff to identify key environmental issues which create difficulties or barriers.

We will put in place a programme of improvements specific to particular groups to continue to improve their access to all aspects of our organisation.

### **The steps we will take to meet this objective and when we will do this by:**

We will carry out engagement activity with disabled learners and particular groups with needs identified.

From this engagement we will identify any particular needs for specific groups such as the visually impaired, deaf or those with particular learning needs.

The highest priority needs will be included in our action plan, and we will ensure that this is publically available and that we monitor delivery of the actions.

## **3.7 STAFF TRAINING AND AWARENESS**

We will continue to deliver a training and awareness programme for tutors and support staff in respect of all protected characteristics and the requirements of the duties in Wales. This programme will be tailored and designed to be appropriate to different staff with different functions. It will include mainstreaming equality and the duties into our induction programme and into all our CPD opportunities. This is a mandatory training requirement and all staff are required to attend. Awareness training will feature in our annual staff development programme and staff induction.

Welsh Language Awareness training will be provided to all staff at induction, and opportunities for staff to improve their Welsh Language skills will be provided and supported wherever possible.

## **3.8 OTHER KEY EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

### **Equality Impact Assessments**

We will undertake impact assessments on all new policies and functions.

### **Engagement**

We will carry out external engagement exercises to identify areas for improvement in equality matters. These will be targeted at specific protected characteristics and

we will concentrate on those groups and characteristics where we recognise we have least information and experience. These will include age, transgender and sexual orientation.

### **Identifying priorities for staff**

We establish equality issues from staff through our consultation arrangements.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

In respect of pregnancy and maternity the organisation already has a raft of policies and positive action support programmes and policies for staff and learners. We will identify these policies and engage with staff, learners and expert groups to ensure that they are as effective and appropriate as possible.

### **Race, Religion and Belief**

We have identified opportunities to implement positive action in respect of recruitment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and learners.

We will continue to review our curriculum provision to identify opportunities to increase awareness of racial, cultural and religious issues, including consideration of various beliefs.

### **Disability**

We will continue to address disability issues in respect of curriculum, employment, physical access and learner support services

### **Gender and Sex**

Our objectives in respect of each of the areas above include consideration of different outcomes for women and men. We have also identified objectives in relation to pregnancy and maternity.

We will identify appropriate Equal Pay objectives for women and men.

### **Transgender**

We are aware that transgender people often experience the most difficult barriers and discrimination in both employment and access and success in education despite their relatively low numbers. We will build on this experience to identify positive action to address and overcome transgender people's issues.

### **Age**

We will continue to collect and monitor age related information in relation to both

staff and learners and prospective learners. We will identify and differentiate between age appropriate provision and aspects of our functions which may be creating disproportionate outcomes for people of different ages.

### **Sexual orientation**

We will continue to collect information on sexual orientation in relation to staff, learners and prospective learners.

We will work with expert groups and LGBT staff and learners to identify appropriate proportionate actions. We continue to work on building trust and confidence within these communities with a view to improving reporting so that we can in turn use our information in a more meaningful way.

## **3.9 PAY OBJECTIVES**

### **All protected characteristics**

#### **Objective in respect of all protected characteristics**

We will collect information from our pay system in respect of all protected characteristics where this is available.

Where we identify gaps in this information we will put appropriate actions in our systems to address them.

We will use this information to identify pay gaps between the protected characteristics and to identify actions to address them.

#### **The steps we will take to meet this objective and when we will do this by:**

We will review this information with a view to creating meaningful and proportionate objectives where the need is identified.

### **Gender Equal Pay**

We will review our own pay system to ensure it does not discriminate on the grounds of gender and we will expect our partners and contractors to have due regard to equal pay systems.

## **SECTION FOUR**

### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS**

Successful delivery of our objectives will require strong leadership under the direction of the Chief Executive, and subject to scrutiny and monitoring of the Council and its Committee structure. Our Head of Learner Services and Resources has strategic responsibility for the equality and diversity agenda and oversees the implementation, monitoring and review of equality and diversity for employment issues and for learner matters.

Responsibility for operational delivery rests with all teams within the organisation. Each manager will ensure their staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge of equality that are required.

We will review our information, engagement evidence, impact assessments and objectives on an annual basis. Our Resources and Learner Experience Committees will monitor delivery against the objectives and scrutinise the information available to ensure we identify and implement new strategies and objectives appropriately.



## SECTION FIVE

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR COLLECTING RELEVANT EQUALITY INFORMATION

#### **Internal employment data (profile)**

The Head of Learner Services and Resources will establish appropriate systems for collecting all staff data in respect of all protected characteristics.

This will be published annually on our website.

The Head of Learner Services and Resources will also be responsible for capturing data relating to Welsh language skills of staff, and recording details of training attended.

#### **Learner data (profile)**

The Head of Curriculum and Performance is responsible for learner data and will establish appropriate systems for collecting all learner data in respect of all protected characteristics.

This will be published annually on our website.

#### **External applicant data (access to opportunities)**

The Head of Learner Services and Resources will establish appropriate systems for collecting all data regarding applicants for employment in respect of all protected characteristics.

This will be published annually on our website.

#### **Learner applicant data (access to opportunities)**

The Head of Curriculum and Performance is responsible for learner data and will establish appropriate systems for collecting all data in respect of learner applications and protected characteristics.

This will be published annually on our website.

#### **Learner achievement data**

The Head of Curriculum and Performance is responsible for learner data and will establish appropriate systems for collecting all learner data in respect of all protected characteristics and learning achievement.

This will be published annually on our website.

### **Arrangements for publishing equality information**

All equality information in respect of the protected characteristics will be published annually on our website in accordance with the categories identified above.

Should you require this information in alternative formats please contact our Head of Learner Services and Resources on 029 2023 5277 or email: [cath.hicks@adultlearning.wales](mailto:cath.hicks@adultlearning.wales)

## **SECTION SIX**

### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING LIKELY, ACTUAL AND ONGOING IMPACT ON PROTECTED GROUPS**

We are committed to measuring the impact of new and existing policies, practices and procedures on all equality groups and in respect of the Welsh language by conducting appropriate impact assessments. When conducting assessments we will:

- Establish clear criteria for measuring the relevance of a policy, practice or procedure to ensure equality of opportunity for all groups.
- Prioritise and set a timetable to assess all existing and future policies, practices and procedures which are considered to have an impact on all groups.
- Collect and analyse relevant data to assist with impact assessments.
- Engage appropriately through involvement and consultation with people who are likely to be affected by policies and programmes from the start of the development and planning processes.
- Review and revise proposals in light of data collection, consultation and involvement of people to ensure any negative impact is mitigated.
- Provide our staff with training and support to ensure they carry out equality impact assessments with confidence and knowledge.
- Aspire to provide a positive outcome for all equality groups in our work.

## **SECTION SEVEN**

### **PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC DUTIES AMONGST EMPLOYEES**

Our objectives above include the commitment to developing and implementing a comprehensive training and awareness programme for all staff in respect of the general and specific duties.

We will deliver this through a variety of methods:

1. Ensuring that our induction programme and process includes knowledge and awareness of the duties and what they mean for staff
2. A general training and awareness programme in respect of the duties for all staff
3. Training for all senior managers and governors in respect of the duties and their responsibilities
4. Training for appropriate teaching staff in respect of curriculum
5. Training for tutors and the production of appropriate material for tutors to use with learners. This will assist in mainstreaming equality for all protected groups into learner culture and behaviour
6. Tailored appropriate training on assessing the impact of policies and functions on all protected characteristics for appropriate staff
7. Tailored targeted disability training for identified priority staff
8. Mainstreaming of equality and the duties into all professional development training programmes

## **SECTION EIGHT**

### **ENGAGEMENT**

We recognise that equality is diverse and we cannot know what people need or how we can help them without involving them, and their representative groups, in our planning and decision making processes. We have committed ourselves to involving underrepresented people in areas where our work will have most impact on their participation in our courses and in employment with us.

Engagement is always an important part of our work, but we recognise that we now need to put specific processes in place to ensure that the needs of people are taken into account, and that the dimensions of diversity, such as ethnicity, age, gender, transgender, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief and the use of Welsh language, are all addressed. Staff and stakeholders will be involved with the delivery, implementation and, monitoring and evaluation of our objectives.

We will publish reports on the outcome of our engagement activity including consultation and involvement to show clearly how people and their representative groups have influenced planning and decision making within our Organisation.

## **SECTION NINE**

### **CONTACT US**

If you have any questions or require further information regarding our Strategic Equality Plan, please contact:

Cath Hicks, Head of Learner Services and Resources on:  
029 2167 8714 or email: [cath.hicks@adultlearning.wales](mailto:cath.hicks@adultlearning.wales) or

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