

# Equality & Diversity Update

For Providers of Further Education

Prepared by Pinnacle Training Solutions

“Flexible training, consultancy, on-line learning and much, much more”

- Key definitions & concepts
- Covers all ‘protected characteristics’
- Legislation
- Web-links and E&D calendar
- Case studies and quizzes

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## Section One: Introduction

### 1.1 Equality and Diversity – What is it?

The diversity of our population is one of our greatest assets. Diversity, at its most basic level, means difference. Everyone is unique and this enriches our culture. With so many different people, sometimes we need a helping hand in educating those around us and raising awareness with regard to the following:

- Building understanding of backgrounds, lifestyles, cultures, abilities and characteristics
- Giving respect to everyone when we interact – regardless of differences
- Developing and sustaining a pleasant and productive environment in which we can work and progress together
- Making the most of our diversity (for example, by considering applicants of all backgrounds, of all abilities, regardless of differences, you are able to access a much wider pool of talent and skills – and can consequently enhance your competitiveness)
- Facilitating change that is essential for the efficiency and the survival of the organisation
- Ensuring we stay on the right side of the law

These materials provide structured and practical support and this is put into context with background information, history, statistics, legislation, activities and the appropriate signposts to further information.

**Please note this is not an exhaustive source of information relating to equality and diversity and should be used for guidance purposes only. Although every effort is made to ensure this information is correct at the time of printing, we cannot guarantee accuracy after this time.**

## 1.2 The Business, Moral & Legal Case

### Why do I need to consider equality and diversity?

- **Demographics** - Our population is more diverse than ever. We need to raise awareness and appreciate the differences between individuals and communities, while unlocking the benefits that this diversity offers.
- **The Business Case** - Maintaining a happy diverse workforce makes good business sense through increasing innovation, filling skills gaps, finding new solutions to problems, enhancing talent management and keeping in touch with a widening customer and supplier base. Showing sensitivity to the people around you helps promote your organisation as one that others would like to work for and do business with.
- **The Moral Perspective** - Equality is based on fairness. No-one should suffer detriment on the basis of “protected” characteristics (e.g. gender, disability). It is important for providers of learning and training to prepare learners for the environments they will live, work and socialise in, in the years ahead.
- **The Legal Perspective** – The Equality Act 2010 has replaced several pieces of legislation that combat discrimination and promote equal opportunity and diversity (more detailed guidance in this area is available throughout this document). It is there to offer protection and guidance; however non-compliance can be extremely costly and damage the reputation of your organisation.
- **Collaborative Working** - Other organisations may require that you have a good knowledge of E&D issues before working with you (e.g. funding bodies).

**How much do I need to know?**

This is a vast and growing area. Organisations and the people working within them are realising that, the legal and moral reasons are not the only arguments for embracing equality and diversity. Embracing diversity and striving for equality will have benefits to the business itself. Therefore, training in this area should be considered an investment – one which can enhance creativity, competitiveness and profitability. For learners you are preparing them for a world of work where they will be meeting people from a variety of backgrounds.

If organisations are serious about managing and providing an equitable service for all, they need to develop a strategy that reflects their position in relation to equality and diversity issues, set out overall objectives for the organisation and provide a framework within which appropriate policies can be developed and implemented. The clearer an organisation's strategy and policies are, the stronger the leadership of the organisation will be.



## 1.3 Definitions

### 1.3.1 Equality

Equality is about being free from discrimination with the aim to ensure that no group receives less favourable treatment by virtue of one's skin colour, race, gender, ethnic origin, disability, age, class or sexuality thereby enabling all people to have equality of access to the provision of goods, services, facilities, premises and employment.

### 1.3.2 Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunity is about addressing representation and balance. It is a term most often used to describe the measures taken by organisations to ensure fairness in employment and the recruitment process. Your organisation should have an 'equal opportunities policy', which describes the steps it must take in order to promote equality in the workplace and to abide by equality legislation.

### 1.3.3 Diversity

The word diverse means "varied and different", and so 'diversity' is about more than equality. It is about valuing variety and recognising individual and group differences. Diversity is about capitalising on everything that makes us unique and encourage an environment of respect and understanding.

Although equality and diversity are interdependent, equality of opportunity cannot truly exist if diversity and difference are not recognised and valued. Equality without diversity is treating everyone the same and can lead to political correctness without common sense. Effective diversity programmes are about continuous improvement. This, therefore, is an ongoing process and not for a limited period.

Many people argue for a shift from the equal opportunities approach to a diversity approach, mainly because the former was, to some, insufficiently holistic in its attempts to eradicate discrimination. Some disadvantaged groups were inadequately represented, and those who were represented were regarded as homogeneous groups (for example, each disabled employee requires individual consideration).

Managing diversity is about ensuring all individuals have the opportunity to maximise their potential and enhance their self-development and contribution. The positive effects of this are likely to extend to the performance and management of the organisation in which they operate.

Equality	Diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The means by which disadvantage and discrimination is reduced and eliminated by legislation, positive action and a compliance-driven approach.</li> <li>• Aims to ensure that no group receives less favourable treatment by virtue of ones skin colour, race, gender, ethnic origin, disability, age, class or sexuality, thereby enabling all people to have equality of access to the provision of goods, services, facilities, premises and employment.</li> <li>• Can be seen to focus on policies and ticking boxes.</li> <li>• Can be deemed more inclusive than exclusive – focuses on all as individuals, regardless of differences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity, at its most basic level, means difference. We are all different and so it follows that diversity is about all of us.</li> <li>• Recognises <i>both</i> individual and group differences.</li> <li>• Capitalising on everything that makes us unique.</li> <li>• Shapes how we approach tasks and view work.</li> <li>• Managing diversity effectively encourages respect throughout an organisation.</li> <li>• Can be deemed more exclusive than inclusive – focuses on people’s differences.</li> <li>• Embedded in the culture of the organisation.</li> </ul>

**Example 1****London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.**

“Working to a finite timescale that ends in 2012 is LOCOG Ltd, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. It has to recruit and develop diverse talent to make sure the Games are a success. It has to do this not only to protect the highly respected and enviable global brand of the Games but also the reputation of the UK as the host country. These are great challenges in themselves, but the UK will be adding a diversity legacy to the way the Olympics are organised in the future. What is achieved in this respect and how it is achieved will set a template for other countries to follow.” [www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com)

**Example 2 - IBM**

“IBM has a long history of commitment to Diversity and has consistently taken the lead on Diversity policies long before it was required by law. It began in the mid-20th century, grounded in Equal Opportunity legislation and compliance (Diversity 1.0). We moved forward to Diversity 2.0 in the 1990s with a focus on eliminating barriers, and understanding regional constituencies and differences between the constituencies. As our demographics changed, we adapted our workplace to be more flexible and began our focus on work-life integration. In addition, over the past 5 years, we've introduced IBM's Values, which links to our diversity work.

This strong foundation brings us to where we are today — Diversity 3.0. This is the point where we can take best advantage of our differences — for innovation. Our diversity is a competitive advantage and consciously building diverse teams helps us drive the best results for our clients.”

<http://www-03.ibm.com/employment/us/diverse/index/shtml>

### 1.3.4 Stereotyping

A 'stereotype' is an oversimplified or generalised idea about a group of people with a shared characteristic, often held by the members of a different group. A stereotype can be a description of all the characteristics which members of a particular group are assumed to have (without taking into account the wide range of individual circumstances and needs within that group) and can be:

- Negative or positive for the group
- Based on truth or be inaccurate.

#### Example 1

If we are walking through a park late at night and encounter three senior citizens wearing fur coats and walking with canes, we may not feel as threatened as if we were met by three teenaged boys wearing leather jackets.

At best, a stereotype can be defined as an oversimplified opinion or image. At worst, it can contain strongly negative thoughts about people. Having or using stereotypes is generally viewed as undesirable or unattractive, yet there is every indication that avoiding them entirely is unrealistic.

#### Example 2

Many people have the view of a person with mental illness as someone who is violence-prone. This conflicts with statistical data, which indicate that persons with mental illness tend to be no more prone to violence than the general population.

Stereotypes can occur within different ethnic groups, social classes and religious groups and opposite sexes. Some examples could include:

- Lower class people are uneducated
- Jewish people are good with money
- Men are stronger than women

Consider how you would respond to the following phrases:

- Men are ...
- Women ...
- American people ...
- Chinese people ...
- Black people are ...
- Young people ...



### 1.3.5 Prejudice

Prejudice is the process of prejudging someone or something, possibly resulting in unreasonable or unfair behaviour or harm. Discrimination could be said to be prejudice 'in action'.

Essentially then, prejudice is based on an individual's thoughts, whereas discrimination represents some form of action. This is highlighted by the statements below:

- A person can be prejudiced and discriminatory (e.g. where actions reflect thoughts);
- A person can be non-prejudiced yet still discriminate (e.g. through lack of awareness and understanding);
- A person can be prejudiced yet not discriminate (e.g. where actions do not necessarily reflect thoughts);
- A person can be both non-prejudiced and non-discriminatory (the ideal scenario!).

#### Example 1

Gender discrimination, whether at workplace or at home is another of the commonly observed prejudices that exists in today's society. An organisation which hires more male candidates and rejects women, due to their gender, is said to be prejudiced. Another example is of an organisation, where women are hired equally, but not given top jobs.

### 1.3.6 Labelling

'Labelling' is when we identify individuals as members of particular groups (based on a stereotype) and categorise them in society, whether or not they see themselves as members of that group. The individuals are then expected to conform to the behaviour associated with the stereotype with which they have been labelled.

## 1.4 Role of the Media

The media, unfortunately, can play a very negative role in the portrayal of some equality and diversity issues. For instance, people with a mental health illness are all too often misunderstood. Many stories about mental health focus on violence and crime - some 10 years ago a Glasgow University study reported that 62% of stories relating to someone with mental health issues focused on violence.



Stereotypes can act like codes that give audiences a quick, common understanding of a person or group of people—usually relating to their class, ethnicity or race, gender, sexual orientation, social role or occupation.

This kind of stereotyping can be problematic.

It can:

- Simplify a wide range of differences in people to a small number of categorisations
- Create assumptions about particular groups of people and portray them as 'realities'
- Perpetuate social prejudice and inequality.

**Action:** Look at some materials your organisation has produced, a prospectus or a magazine for example. Do the images challenge or support stereotypes?

There may be issues with materials that you have produced, stereotypical images regarding gender for instance (e.g. only female hairdressers) or a limited range of diverse pictures. It is important to have mechanisms in place to check for this (e.g. by including on a 'proofing' checklist).

Issues with race and ethnic background dominate the press on a regular basis, but some have criticised the lack of ethnic diversity of those working in the British media in general, which could have a negative impact on how many issues are presented.

## 5.9 Sexuality (*sample from “Protected Characteristics”*)

Everyone has a ‘sexuality’ (sometimes referred to as ‘sexual orientation’) which is a combination of emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person. Sexuality can also be described as the deep-seated direction of one's sexual attraction. It can evolve through a multi-stage developmental process, and may change over time, especially in our younger years when we are still discovering our identities.

### **Legislation Update:-**

The Equality Act protects from discrimination on the grounds of sexuality regardless of whether a person’s sexual orientation is towards people of the same sex, the opposite sex or both sexes. This means the law protects all people from sexual orientation discrimination: lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and heterosexuals (often called ‘straight’ people).

Discrimination on the grounds of assumed or perceived sexual orientation is also banned and it is not important whether a person’s sexual orientation is assumed correctly or incorrectly. The law also protects those people who are discriminated against because of the sexual orientation of the people with whom they associate – their family members and friends.

### **Key Information:-**

Stonewall is a national organisation working for equality and justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. Their definition of ‘lesbian’, ‘gay’, ‘bisexuality’ and ‘heterosexuality’ is better expressed as ‘sexual orientation towards people’, rather than ‘sexual attraction to’. This reflects the fact that people

build committed, stable relationships and is not purely a focus on sexual activity.

**Note:** - The term 'homosexual' has been widely used in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but is not so popular today. It is more appropriate to use 'lesbian, gay or bisexual'.

Recent findings from an ONS (Office for National Statistics) survey (part of the Integrated Households Survey) found that nearly three-quarters of a million adults in Britain say they are gay or bisexual. The estimate puts Britain's gay community at 1.5% of the total population – much lower than the most commonly used estimate of 5 to 7%. (This figure cannot be cited as truly accurate because of possible apprehension and the numbers refusing to respond.)

The term 'trans' relates to gender identity and can incorporate transgender, transsexual and transvestite (see 5.5). Some people may feel their gender is not consistent with the identity they were born with. This may provide motivation for lifestyle changes and, in some cases, sexual reassignment surgery.

Sexual orientation and gender identity are two very different things. However, they are often referred to together (e.g. with the acronym LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans) because people within these minority groups can often face similar issues and barriers.

### Why might an individual decide to hide their sexuality?

If an environment is strictly heteronormative (belief that people fall into two distinct categories, male and female; that sexual and marital relations are normal only between people of different sexes), it can force lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals to hide their feelings and sexualities. The lack of knowledge and discussion concerning LGB people's experience, feelings and perceptions of their sexuality can have negative effects.

Often, young LGB people think that 'coming out' would endanger their physical and emotional well-being and, therefore, they choose to manage their identities by hiding - a practice which can result in depression, dysfunctional peer groups and family relationships, alcohol and drug use, and in some cases self-harm.

### What does the term 'homophobia' actually mean?

First used as a concept by the psychologist George Weinberg in the 1960s, it is the hatred, intolerance and fear of LGB people. It can be defined as the fear of feelings of love for members of one's own sex and therefore the hatred of those



feelings in others. While there is a need for a word to describe anti-gay attitudes, there are conceptual problems with the term 'homophobia'. The '-phobia' suffix suggests a fear that is beyond our control. But we can recognise our own homophobic attitudes and overcome them.

There are different types of homophobia which include:

<p><b>Personal homophobia</b></p>	<p>As we grow up we are taught the values of our society. In a homophobic, discriminatory culture, we may learn negative ideas about gay people. Like everyone else, gay people may be socialised into thinking that being LGB is somehow 'wrong'. This can lead to feelings of self-disgust and self-hatred. This 'personal' form of homophobia is also known as 'internalised homophobia'.</p>
<p><b>Interpersonal homophobia</b></p>	<p>Refers to behaviour between individuals. Hatred may be expressed by telling jokes, name calling or even physical violence. Families often pressurise their members to conform to beliefs deemed to be acceptable. Anything outside this is often rejected. Peers may be uninterested in hearing about relationships between persons of the same sex.</p>
<p><b>Cultural homophobia</b></p>	<p>Refers to the norms and social values which portray heterosexuality as being superior. For example, most mainstream films feature characters in heterosexual relationships.</p>
<p><b>Young people</b></p>	<p>LGB young people face particular problems. They may not have access to information about their sexuality. At an age where conformity and acceptance is particularly important they may try to conceal their sexuality from family and friends to avoid rejection. They may have already internalised a negative self-image and find it hard to accept themselves. Young people who identify themselves as LGB have been found to be more susceptible to bullying.</p>

**Effects of Unchallenged Homophobia:-**

The seriousness of using homophobic language is not, in many cases, fully appreciated or tackled. While it is usually made clear to staff that the use of racist language is unacceptable, the same may not be true for use of homophobic language. However, constant use of such language and homophobic incidents will have an effect on individuals' ability to learn, or willingness to stay in a given environment.

Researchers have emphasised that if the social environment is disapproving of LGBT adolescents' emerging sexuality, then they may experience profound isolation and fear of discovery, and consequently have lower self-esteem and experience identity problems.

Wright and Cullen conducted research on homophobia in college learners and they looked at changes in the students' attitudes after they had been exposed to information about different sexualities and had actual interactions with LGBT individuals. They suggested reasons for the change in attitudes from negative to positive were the dispelling of myths surrounding LGBT people and that there was a relationship between having low levels of knowledge of sexual orientation information and high levels of homophobia.



'Coming out' can be an ongoing process for LGBT people. For example, an individual may come out to their families, then to close friends, then people at

college, etc. If they move area or switch jobs in the future they may have to do it all over again. This can prove stressful for the individuals concerned and they may need additional support.

Homophobia can mean that LGB people have disruptive periods in their lives which can lead to, for example, them leaving work or education with a poor record. Due to this disruption LGB people are often disadvantaged when it comes to getting a job or progressing their careers. Bullying can cause higher levels of absenteeism or truancy and, of course, this will impact upon the organisation as well as the individual.

**Note:-**

LGB people who have been bullied are less likely than their peers to enter further or higher education and are more likely to contemplate self-harm or suicide (Human Rights Watch).

Organisations can make a significant contribution in addressing this trend by being proactive about LGB issues and by intervening in the development of positive values and attitudes. Continued verbal harassment of LGB individuals can be a serious problem and whilst damaging in itself, verbal harassment that goes unchecked may escalate. If there is a failure to act and prevent harassment this may send the message that it is permissible for individuals or groups to engage in such behaviour.

LGB people are not the only victims of harassment and violence. Those who commit such acts do so based on their perception of an individual's sexuality and gender identity. Heterosexual people can also become targets of homophobic harassment if they do not conform to normative gender roles or behaviours. Unsurprisingly, those who endure such abuse on a daily basis

report that it has affected their performance and general well-being. The failure to address these issues impacts upon all the people within that environment, not only those who are harassed.

Remember – the law protects people of all sexualities and covers those perceived to be of a particular sexuality (when in fact they are not) and those that are associated with someone that has been treated unfavourably due to their sexuality (e.g. family, friends and colleagues).

**“Coming Out”:-**

This term is used by many people and means something different to everyone. ‘Coming out’ often has to do with realising attraction to people of the same sex (or both sexes) and deciding to let others know. It is a process of understanding, accepting, and valuing one's sexual orientation and identity. See the summary below which details the potential benefits and risks of ‘coming out’:

Benefits of ‘Coming Out’	Risks of ‘Coming Out’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living an open and whole life</li> <li>• Developing closer, more genuine relationships</li> <li>• Building self-esteem</li> <li>• Reducing the stress of hiding an LGB identity</li> <li>• Connecting with others that are LGB</li> <li>• Helping to dispel myths and stereotypes about who LGBT people are and what their lives are like</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not everyone will be understanding or accepting</li> <li>• Family, friends or co-workers may be shocked, confused or even hostile</li> <li>• Some relationships may permanently change</li> <li>• Harassment or discrimination may be experienced</li> <li>• Some young people may lose support from parents</li> </ul>

**Key Dates:-**

<b>February</b>	LGBT History Month, celebrates the lives and achievements of LGBT people <a href="http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk">www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk</a>
<b>17th May</b>	Idaho Day, international day against homophobia - recognises the lesbian and gay communities' struggle to achieve equal rights and legal recognition <a href="http://www.dayagainsthomophobia.org">www.dayagainsthomophobia.org</a>
<b>June</b>	London Pride, consists of a parade through central London, a politically based rally and free entertainment. The aim is to raise awareness and funding for the LGBT community
<b>July</b>	Hull Pride and Lincolnshire Pride, events to celebrate and raise the profile of the LGBT community in these areas
<b>August</b>	Pride Events in Brighton, Leeds, Manchester - LGBT festivals
<b>Annually</b>	UK National Queer Youth Conference, Stonewall's 'Education for All' conference

**Three Good Links:-**

- [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk) - Organisation championing equality and justice for lesbian, gay men and bisexuals
- [www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/your-rights/sexual-orientation/](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/your-rights/sexual-orientation/) - Useful guidance from The EHRC around sexuality discrimination
- [www.imaan.org.uk](http://www.imaan.org.uk) - Imaan is a social support group for LGBT Muslims, their families, friends and supporters, and those questioning their sexuality or gender

**Sexuality Equality Quiz:-**

Please note that guidance for facilitators, suggested answers and discussion points are available in a separate document. Question pages can be copied and used as answer sheets.

Q1. What does the acronym LGB stand for? *1 mark for the correct answer.*

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Q2. According to a recent national survey (Office for National Statistics) as a percentage, approximately what proportion of the population is lesbian, gay or bisexual? *Circle the correct answer for 1 mark.*

**(a) 1-5%**

**(b) 5-10%**

**(c) 10-15%**

Q3. In which month of the year is 'LGBT History Month' celebrated? *Circle the correct answer for 1 mark.*

**(a) February**

**(b) April**

**(c) June**

**(d) October**

Q4. What is the name of the national organisation that champions equality and justice for lesbian, gay men and bisexuals? *Circle the correct answer for 1 mark.*

**(a) Stonefish**

**(b) Stonewall**

**(c) Sequality**

**(d) Equality Commission**

Total: \_\_\_\_\_/4

**Sexuality Equality Case Study:-**

Please note that guidance for facilitators, suggested answers and discussion points are available in a separate document. Question pages can be copied and used as answer sheets.

**Please note:** - This case study would be most suitable as part of a session for staff that work for an organisation providing learning, skills or training

Lesbians believe they have to disguise their sexuality or risk being overlooked at job interviews, according to a recent study.

Research found that gay women thought they would have little chance of getting a job if they dressed as they really wanted to during an interview.

Q1. Why might a lesbian interviewee want to try and disguise their sexuality?

*1 mark per valid reason, up to 2 marks available.*

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Q2. What is the potential impact on both the interviewee and the business?

*1 mark for each valid impact, up to 4 marks available.*

Impact on the interviewee	Impact on the business

Q3. What could a business do to improve their approach? *1 mark for each valid impact, up to 3 marks available*

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Total: \_\_\_\_\_/9





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