About Equality Challenge Unit (ECU)

ECU provides a central source of expertise, research, advice and leadership on equality and diversity in higher education (HE) and further education (FE).

We support universities and colleges to build an inclusive culture that values the benefits of diversity, to remove barriers to progression and success for all staff and students, and to challenge and change unfair practices that disadvantage individuals or groups.

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The Equality and diversity good practice fund

The fund supported projects to help learners participate and achieve in FE, and develop the capacity of the sector to meet the public sector equality duty.

It was funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and managed by ECU.

In 2014/15, the focus of the fund was embedding, sustaining and spreading good practice.
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- National
- North west
- North east
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- East of England
- South west
- South east
- London

- General FE college
- Land-based college
- Local authority
- Private training provider
- Specialist designated institution
- Tertiary college
- Third sector organisation
- Other

- Rural
- Rural/urban
- Urban
- Other
Introduction

Twenty-nine projects from a variety of providers across the English regions were funded to tackle a range of equality challenges in the FE sector as part of the fund.

These challenges included addressing the underrepresentation and stereotyping of particular groups in apprenticeships and traineeships, developing sector understanding of issues faced by learners with specific intersectional identities and pioneering approaches to working with employers to advance equality in workplace learning.

All projects were outcome focused, demonstrated commitment from senior management to their work and provided clear value for money. In response to recommendations from an evaluation of projects funded between 2010 and 2013, all projects addressed the need to embed, sustain and spread good practice.

ECU is delighted to showcase a range of approaches drawn from work undertaken by the projects that providers can take to support learners participate and achieve in FE. These approaches, top tips and ideas around successfully developing equality and diversity will support other providers to undertake their own initiatives and meet their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Full details of the projects, including the wide range of materials that were developed, can be found at www.ecu.ac.uk/goodpracticefund. This report accompanies these webpages.
Participants

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Go for it!: Challenging stereotypical career choices through apprenticeships  

Myerscough College  
Supporting female apprentices  

Skills for Security Limited  
Women in security: Changing pathways, changing perceptions  

Halesowen College  
Challenging gender stereotypes in STEM apprenticeships  

Walsall Adult and Community College  
Increasing employability through a greater understanding of workplace culture in relation to equality and diversity  

The British Racing School  
Equality and diversity in the horseracing industry  

Hartlepool College of Further Education  
Sharing the Big Picture  

BCTG Limited  
Identifying staff and learner development needs in challenging discrimination  

Gloucestershire College  
Sexual orienteering  

Learn Devon  
Equality and diversity in family learning: Religion and beliefs  

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Intersectionality in adult community learning  

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Overcoming barriers faced by young people (18–24) with LDD on entry to FE sectors 39
Of the 29 projects, there were 10 small (under £10,000) and 19 large (£10,000–£30,000).

They represented all of England.
Projects covered a range of equality characteristics and topic areas.

Disability
Engaging with employers
Addressing stereotyping
Enabling careers advisers
Sex
Sexual orientation
Gender reassignment
Race
Age
Religion or belief
Other equality issues
LGBT equality
Marriage/civil partnership
Pregnancy and maternity
Intersectional identities
Religion and belief equality
Care leavers’ equality

They were based within a wide range of providers.

1 tertiary college
2 third sector organisation
2 land-based college
2 private training provider
3 specialist designated institution
5 local authority
11 general FE college
3 urban
7 urban and rural
7 rural
Raising the aspirations of potential learners

‘My message to everyone I meet is: no matter who you are, or where you are from, or what career you want to undertake, an apprenticeship can help you achieve what you want in your career and in your life.’

Sue Husband – Executive Director of the National Apprenticeship Service at SFA

Providers can undertake initiatives that raise the aspirations of young people, giving them the confidence to pursue a career that might challenge their social and cultural influences.

This can be done through the development of appropriate information, advice and guidance, challenging stereotypes and engaging with role models from groups typically underrepresented within particular sectors.
**Myerscough College**

Supporting female apprentices

We developed seven role models/case studies drawn from our female apprentices, largely in male dominated industries. Our case studies were marketed during National Apprenticeship Week. We had a range of print and web based articles, plus a social media campaign using the Department of Work and Pensions campaign #NotJustForBoys. One of our images and quotes from an apprentice was reproduced by the Department of Work and Pensions as part of their campaign.

**Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education**

Go for it!: Challenging stereotypical career choices through apprenticeships

We delivered a continuing professional development (CPD) science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) event to a targeted audience drawn from primary school teaching staff, college teaching and careers advice and guidance staff, local employers supporting the women in STEM agenda and other relevant local partners that will encourage supporting young female students into STEM based subjects/apprentices.

We also produced a suite of resources including a short video ‘Go For It!’ that challenges gender stereotypes through sharing the experiences of young apprentices and their employers, a series of career profiles that present role models who have challenged gender stereotypes through their career choices, and an interactive apprenticeship presentation for use within careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) sessions and for use by individual students within schools and colleges.

As the video will be hosted on our website and is incorporated into our intranet, teaching staff will be able to use the materials on an ongoing basis. The resources will be made available to schools and sixth forms for use by their students and within CEIAG programmes. Furthermore we now have the template by which to replicate resources to target other underrepresented groups undertaking apprenticeships.
Skills for Security Limited
Women in security: Changing pathways, changing perceptions

Workshops, consisting of an introduction to career pathways, practical taster sessions and guidance from leading female role models in the industry, took place from March to June 2015 introducing the security industry to local schools. Female students taking part showed a 60 per cent increase in interest in the security industry compared with before and 79 per cent of students were interested in getting further information.

Teachers and careers advisors have requested career pathway leaflets highlighting the security career prospects. Schools and career advisors have requested copies of progression pathways and survey results have informed the content of a best practice toolkit aimed at recruiting and retaining more women in security education and jobs.

‘When linking projects with schools, it is beneficial to target schools in the summer with the aim to deliver projects in the autumn. Schools and teachers generally prepare lesson plans over the summer for commencement in the autumn term. The autumn term, September to December, is also a preferred time for schools to deliver careers fairs, trips and projects. Timetables become a bit more rigid in the spring and exams in the summer lead to external activities being less favoured.’


‘Getting schools to attend workshops was difficult, but going to the schools to deliver mini sessions was achievable.’

Halesowen College
Challenging gender stereotypes in STEM apprenticeships

We have expanded our selection of STEM resources including posters and materials promoting STEM careers, books such as ‘Working in the STEM industries’, DVDs such as ‘Challenging gender stereotypes in STEM industries’ along with a range of licences and online resources to enable further targeting of STEM employers in the region. We have also offered targeted support to women and other underrepresented groups interested in STEM higher apprenticeships, including support for searching and applying for apprenticeship vacancies.

As part of this strategy to ensure sustainability, we have been delivering a variety of talks, taster sessions and workshops to students from year nine to year 13 from more than 15 local schools on the subjects of apprenticeships, higher apprenticeships and STEM opportunities, using images and testimonials from positive role models to challenge gender stereotypes from an early age.

As a result of the project we have already seen a 15 per cent increase in the number of women students applying for and gaining STEM apprenticeship opportunities. Additionally, there is a further cohort of women applicants for STEM Higher National Certificate/Diploma and higher apprenticeships currently waiting for suitable placement opportunities for September.

Engagement with employers and successful role models in STEM industries is also key in providing opportunities for professionals to advise and share their experiences with young people and equip learners with the confidence and motivation to successfully enter the STEM arena.’

Halesowen College – Challenging gender stereotypes in STEM apprenticeships

In order to ensure sustainability in challenging gender stereotypes in the STEM industries, it is vital to target school-aged learners to address ingrained attitudes and highlight that opportunities within STEM professions are open to all. This allows more time for pupils to make informed choices at option stage and in progressing to relevant study programmes at FE level.’

Halesowen College – Challenging gender stereotypes in STEM apprenticeships
Walsall Adult and Community College
Increasing employability through a greater understanding of workplace culture in relation to equality and diversity

Careers advisers participated in activities around hidden bias in guidance for potential trainees and apprentices, including a ‘bag of assumptions’ activity, using an electronic space to anonymously collect examples of hidden bias. They also undertook formal training with an external facilitator.

‘Our team of careers advisors are more aware of hidden bias in guidance activities, more confident to discuss this within their team and are working together to ensure high aspirations for all learners.’

Walsall Adult and Community College – increasing employability through a greater understanding of workplace culture in relation to equality and diversity
Enhancing employability: understanding equality and diversity

Providers can increase the employability of their learners by providing them with opportunities to develop their understanding of workplace culture in relation to equality and diversity.

Skills acquired by learners can include increased confidence and resilience in recognising and challenging discrimination, improved team working and the ability to recognise alternative thinking.

Walsall Adult and Community College
Increasing employability through a greater understanding of workplace culture in relation to equality and diversity

Learners completed a questionnaire to identify perceptions of equality and diversity in the workplace. Many perceived that they had been discriminated against at job interviews because they were too young, inexperienced, or because they had tattoos.

‘World café’ events were undertaken with trainees to gain a deeper insight. Learners were invited to a tea party, with tables covered with tablecloths and food and drink available. Learners around each table discussed a different question on equality in the workplace. Group responses were written on the tablecloth. The ‘world café’ was a new experience for learners that supported participation in vigorous discussions, challenging their own and others’ thinking. Taking learners out of their usual environment enabled wider learning which was further developed in the classroom/workshop.
The British Racing School
Equality and diversity in the horseracing industry

We created a film to show our learners that people from all the protected characteristic groups work in their industry and to understand the challenges that they face and break down any barriers that may exist due to ignorance.

We first used the film as part of a classroom session for our learners and had some very positive feedback. The young people felt that the film was more in touch with their lives and that they felt more empathy with the interviewees than they did with the characters portrayed in the previous film used in their sessions. We rolled the film out to staff during our staff training week and again received very positive feedback. The film can be used in classroom equality and diversity sessions or general English lessons as a resource for speaking and listening functional skills.

‘It is a very worthwhile area to work in. You may be worried that people don’t want to talk about their protected characteristic but we found the opposite. They were all happy to talk about it and most relished the opportunity to help raise awareness in the community.’

The British Racing School – Equality and diversity in the horseracing industry
Hartlepool College of Further Education
Sharing the Big Picture

The Big Picture is a high quality equalities campaign that researches and presents major current topics to learners using an ‘informed, uncompromising and often striking’ set of resources. The material is designed specifically for learners and apprentices and it can be customised by in-house designers or media teams. It seeks to address characteristics to be inspected by Ofsted under the new personal development, behaviour and welfare inspection aspect.

In the short term, the project challenged immediate perceptions and encouraged students to think about key events, topics and perspectives. When used correctly it is a simple yet powerful tool that can be used as a starting point for a teacher. We have some superb case studies of using the resource with vulnerable learners. Longer term, we would hope that the resource changes mindsets through a ‘little and often’ approach. The college estimates that over 10,000 people have viewed the Big Picture to date.
BCTG Limited
Identifying staff and learner development needs in challenging discrimination

Our analysis found that 80 per cent of staff had little confidence that their learners have confidence in challenging inappropriate comments relating to gender, ethnicity, religion or disability made by others (for example, work colleagues or customers) and that 60 per cent of staff felt that their learners’ employers or workplace supervisors did not have sufficient equality and diversity related knowledge to help their learners develop in these areas.

We have designed a range of ‘what if’ scenarios which can be applied generically in the workplace.

“Key message one – be prepared to accept that changing established views is difficult.”

BCTG Limited – Identifying staff and learner development needs in challenging discrimination
Developing staff understanding of learner experience

All staff have a role in ensuring learners are supported on their courses. Improving staff knowledge on the diversity of learner experience will support providers with their long-term goals of improving recruitment, achievement and progress of learners.

Gloucestershire College
Sexual orienteering

The aim of this project was to produce four differentiated learning activities and resources in order to support and contextualise the understanding of sexual orientation for learners with specific learning difficulties. Outputs were developed through action learning sets made up from staff working in Gloucester College and National Star College. Staff came from teaching roles, support roles, therapy and residential services, which resulted in a mix of expertise and experience from different areas of work.

A baseline survey was carried out with participating staff to establish their confidence in delivering sessions relating to sexual orientation and relationships. Throughout the project staff confidence levels rose and by the end of the project 96 per cent of staff expressed high confidence in being able to teach sexual orientation themes, citing the development of specialist learning resources as the main instigators for this rise.

Teachers have also been filmed talking about their resource and giving ‘teacher tips’ on how the resource can be used and adapted. Each resource has been designed to be flexible. Teachers can adapt the basic principle to their own requirements without losing the overall themes and content.

One challenge was for the groups to identify times for meetings, due to shift patterns and different workloads. In future we would arrange the activities over several half day meetings/workshop activities to avoid clashes with work patterns.’

Gloucestershire College – Sexual orienteering
Learn Devon

Equality and diversity in family learning: Religion and beliefs

The project conducted extensive consultation with equality experts, family learning providers, children’s centre staff, learners and potential learners to increase understanding of issues and identify effective practice. The main outputs of the project are live training on equality and diversity in family learning, resources, and a new webinar series. The outputs are relevant to a wide range of providers across the learning and skills sector. The core principles are transferable and the resources can be contextualised to meet the needs of other groups of learners.

The project embedded good practice by delivering capacity-building training to tutors on the ground and providing ongoing support to promote a culture of continuous professional development and establish long-term changes to practice.

“Providers and learners are all anxious about discussing issues around faith and belief and fearful of causing offence or creating conflict within their learning environment. We found that this fear inhibited effective practice and that addressing this fear was a critical factor. Our experience was that by being explicit about the need for mutual respect and introducing tools to create a culture of open and honest dialogue, the risk of offense and conflict are minimal.”

Learn Devon – Equality and diversity in family learning: Religion and beliefs
Worker’s Educational Association
Intersectionality in adult community learning

We produced a suite of nine eLearning modules (plus an introduction module) which highlight the issues which need to be considered when working with students sharing different characteristics. The modules demonstrate ways to support students and also how to celebrate diversity within teaching and learning. They are designed to enable learning practitioners to reflect on their practice and how it could be improved. This should result in better learning experiences and increased success rates for students with intersectional protected characteristics.

The modules have been developed with staff and volunteers working in the adult and community learning sector as key beneficiaries. The examples of best practice when working with the students who have particular intersectional characteristics can be applied much wider to FE or other providers of adult education. They are principally aimed at learning practitioners but could be used for all staff and volunteers who will have contact with students.

Using our students’ and tutors’ lived experience as the basis for the content of the module has enabled a learner voice perspective to be developed. The modules specifically focus on the needs of the student and best practice is highlighted from this perspective. Anyone undertaking the modules will learn how to effectively engage and work with different groups with intersectional protected characteristics. The content in each of the modules are indicative of students across the adult and community learning sector.’

In terms of technology, factor and build in sufficient time for the technology to a) work as it should and b) enable staff to get used to the technology being used.’

Worker’s Educational Association – Intersectionality in adult community learning
Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
Developing awareness of barriers faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) learners

A critical aspect of our project was the training of staff champions to enable them to act as ambassadors and mentors for colleagues who have a direct impact on recruitment and delivery. This was with a view to enhancing the likelihood of wider participation and success for those learners where stereotyping can be a barrier to recruitment and success.

The champions programme provided an effective vehicle for identifying and embedding good practice. Success stories have been effectively used as a discussion tool to share experience of growing up lesbian, gay or bisexual and the significance and importance of coming and being out. Champions are well prepared for their role having developed a better understanding of the challenges and needs of LGBT people, particularly in the construction industry.

A staff training programme has also been created to be delivered by a trained group of CITB trainers. The staff training programme will be widely available and used in CITB training.

‘Know what can be changed and focus on the hard things first. This is particularly important for a national, employer led provider like CITB. We have focused the project on the key objective of developing staff expertise and utilising this to change practice within industry.’

Construction Industry Training Board – Developing awareness of barriers faced by LGBT learners
The Northern College
TeachDifferent: The identity programme

Our overarching project aim was to ‘change the way that educators talk about diversity, intersectionality and identity’. The project used thinking environment processes to challenge untrue limiting assumptions made about aspects of identity and about intersectionality and privilege – difficult concepts to articulate and ones which are generally unacknowledged in the sector.

All chosen project participants ('Identity Champions') teach students who are drawn from the most vulnerable groups in society and operate in organisations (or networks of voluntary and community organisations) where they are able to influence how identity is recognised, celebrated and promoted. Our aim was that ultimately all users of those services will benefit from being recognised as complex individuals, rather than diversity labels.

As a result of this project:

- thinking environment approaches to embedding equality and diversity (thinking rounds, thinking pairs, the ten components) are now used at eight institutions
- a shift in language has been seen, as participants moved from talking about equality and diversity to using terminology such as identity, intersectionality, privilege, white work
- a network of identity champions exists and continues to discuss equality and diversity issues, share resources and instigate new teaching practices
- project participants reported a growth in personal confidence regarding the embedding and integration of equality and diversity in their practice.

“I’m a different teacher now. I resist the labels; the pigeon-holing; the merging of equality and diversity into something meaningless, about ticking a box. As Audre Lorde said, “there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives”.”

Identity programme participant
Given the nature of the personal explorations around identity, it is essential to use trained coaches who are able to distinguish between guided and therapeutic approaches to coaching. Our recommendation is for use of thinking environment methods which uncover limiting assumptions, coupled with the more traditional GROW model which provides clear direction and goal-setting.’

The Northern College – TeachDifferent: The identity programme

‘Creation of safe spaces through the co-construction of group agreements and online discussion forums is essential (we used Yammer for this, which also works well as a project management tool).’

The Northern College – TeachDifferent: The identity programme
Engaging with employers to advance equality in workplace learning

Tackling negative employer perceptions can improve the opportunities of learners entering or undertaking workplace learning.

**Grantham College**

Tackling employer perceptions

It was recognised that positive and current relationships with businesses could make the difference in convincing them to offer employment opportunities to disabled individuals. The project has therefore tackled employer perceptions about disability using various forums, including networking through local business clubs, employer forums and employment fairs, and through the regional provider network.

Case studies have been obtained and have been included in the employer brochure ‘Advancing Equality In The Workplace.’ The employer brochure also showcases employers who have been inclusive in their recruitment practices, demonstrating to others how they can make recruitment more inclusive within their organisations. The brochure will be used by the college business team in their employer engagement.

“It was apparent from early on in the project, following our initial engagement with employers (and providers) about project aims, that we are working in a risk-averse culture. Colleges and providers are concerned about the achievement and success of their students, whilst employers are concerned about maintaining an effective workforce and retention of staff.’

Grantham College – Tackling employer perceptions
City College Norwich
Apprentice mE & Do: Advancing equality and diversity in the workplace

The aim of Apprentice mE & Do was to raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and embed good practice within businesses currently offering apprenticeships in Norfolk. The project has sought to identify apprentices’ barriers and support needs and work with employers to challenge behaviours and meet those needs.

The good practice is being embedded through a training and induction programme for our assessors with the aim of working with employers to achieve a kitemark in excellence for equality and diversity. We believe this approach will enable us to sustain this project as it will become part of each assessor’s work remit.

“The main challenge was the lack of engagement by employers. We therefore feel the best approach is to establish our assessors as equality and diversity champions within the workplace; they have an existing relationship with both employer and apprentice, they know the business and they are best placed to monitor progression.’

City College Norwich – Apprentice mE&Do: Advancing equality and diversity in the workplace
South Tyneside College
Gender equality in non-traditional apprenticeship occupations

South Tyneside College works within a number of sectors in its apprenticeship provision, including those with a high degree of gender bias. The project sought to understand and improve providers’ position and efforts in relation to driving forward a better gender mix within their respective sectors.

The project manager devised a set of audit statements and sub statements that covered policies and procedures, apprenticeship ‘learner journey’, CPD, working environment and practice and achievement rates. As an outcome of the audits, we developed and delivered CPD in order to address the key issues arising from the audit. Further, in order to ensure that all apprentices of the college (including its partners) have a clear understanding of how equality and diversity relates to them (including in their workplace), all providers were required to offer specific learning opportunities to embed this knowledge before apprentices undertook the equality and diversity passport assessment via the college’s intranet platform.

Ensure all CPD is done under an agreement of confidentiality – this is an emotive subject and participants need to feel that it’s ok to say how they feel about it and explore the subject fully.’

South Tyneside College – Gender equality in non-traditional apprenticeship occupations
Removing barriers to opportunities

The way that learning opportunities are provided may present barriers to some learners. For example, support that is provided may not be open to all or course content may not be relevant.

Myerscough College
Supporting female apprentices

Through the project we have been able to develop a shared protocol for identifying and monitoring remote learners that are in need of additional support, including access to wider support structures offered by the college and other organisations. The data generated from this system will allow both the work-based learning team and the student support team to monitor the support provided to apprentices and identify trends relating to female apprentices and other vulnerable learners as well as learners from other protected groups.

‘We are pleased that this has not only helped us to support our female apprentices, but has led to better resources across the college.’

Myerscough College – Supporting female apprentices
Supporting learners to participate and achieve in FE
Removing barriers to opportunities

The Learning Partnership for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Limited
Cornwall equality project

The project has allowed mentors with real life experiences of being learners to speak externally to partners who don’t have a specialist interest in learners from particular target groups. We have created three very diverse methods of engaging with partners including a self-assessment report, learner questionnaire and a ‘mystery shopper’ process. All of these processes have had a document created that can be used by any organisation to assess the quality of provision in working with care leavers, disabled learners, and learners experiencing mental health difficulties.

‘If an organisation were to deliver a similar project in the future, I would advise them not to strive for perfection during the development and trial stages as this slows the process down. We found the best thing is to get out and test the method as soon as possible and you will soon work out if the process has any issues. These can then be rectified at that stage.’

Petroc
Pathways to apprenticeships

Changes will be made to curriculum content and related qualifications to improve confidence and employability of students progressing from Petroc, including:

= more work related qualifications
= incorporate retail and customer service
= introduce basic skills surrounding self-employment
= even more independent travel training

We are committed to reviewing curriculum on an ongoing basis to ensure that it still meets the students’ needs and equips them with relevant skills for jobs that they want to do, and that are obtainable in the local area. Where appropriate for the young person, a move into apprenticeships will be encouraged, although we are finding that most interns are successful in securing full employment or traineeships.

‘Employer engagement can be a significant challenge – employers really want to help but they simply cannot spare much time.

Petroc – Pathways to apprenticeships
Hackney London Borough Council (Hackney Learning Trust)
Hackney deaf awareness ambassadors: Paving the way for inclusion

The aim of the project was to pilot specific support to integrate deaf and hearing learners on our existing community learning provision, challenge stereotypes, promote awareness and develop understanding and appreciation of the experience of deaf learners. We aimed to train ten deaf awareness ambassadors to engage with and support hearing impaired, deaf with speech and profoundly deaf learners to access mainstream adult community learning classes in Hackney.

Together tutors, ambassadors and learners developed strategies to enable joint learning. Learners described a strong sense of achievement, they felt less isolated individually and no longer segregated as a group. They enjoyed the support of hearing classmates who in turn valued the new experience and additional communication skills they developed. They described a greater community connection as a result of the course.

During this project, adult learning services made new links with specialist organisations. All advised us on developing and continuing the programme and will be important partners going forward.

‘Partnership work to establish links and set up volunteer agreements with trainee interpreters and communication support workers needs to take place prior to integrated classes starting.’

Hackney London Borough Council (Hackney Learning Trust) – Hackney Deaf awareness ambassadors: Paving the way for inclusion
Working Men’s College
The Humane Selfie, ‘life gets better together’

We developed a six-week course (crafting language) where students explore local LGBT history, use of language (including Polari) and labels to create a visual piece or performance. A video has been produced, including a scheme of work, suggested procedure and teaching resources.

We also piloted and designed a vocational hairdressing module inclusive of all gender and sexualities, with two sessions delivered to staff and students by a local hairdressing and barbering service for all genders and sexualities. This has led to genderless hairdressing curriculum including genderless pricing.

‘LGBT is a good way to embrace other protected characteristics.’

Working Men’s College – The Humane Selfie, ‘life gets better together’
Providing tailored opportunities

Where opportunities are not accessible to all learners, targeted opportunities can be made available to support progression for all achievers.

Barking and Dagenham College
Learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) calendar project

This project provided a model for LDD students to engage with entrepreneurial project work. A quality calendar was designed by LDD students and printed professionally. LDD students were involved in the design, choices, marketing, pricing and selling of the calendars. Calendars were sold at the college Christmas market, the LDD shop, the reception area, the café, and in the local community. Students also operated a mobile shop within the college campus.

Students had to work out profit margins by calculating the total costs and the individual cost of producing one calendar. They also had to use interpersonal and communication skills to sell the calendars face-to-face to customers. In the long term, we hope that this will give them confidence and experience which could enable them to tackle a traineeship or lead to work opportunities.

‘Overall, this was a really successful project in terms of developing students’ confidence and teaching them about the basic fundamentals of business.’

Barking and Dagenham College – Learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) calendar project
Abingdon and Witney College
Identifying and disseminating best practice for apprentices with special educational needs (SEN)

This project tackled underrepresentation by delivering an apprenticeship pilot programme for four SEN learners, using appropriately tailored teaching and assessment methodologies which, critically, did not lower the standard of the qualification. Working in partnership with a forward-thinking employer, we developed a best practice model which we will disseminate nationally to show how SEN friendly apprenticeships work.

SEN learners have experienced significant benefits as a direct result of this project through increased access to high quality, vocational apprenticeship training pathways that have hitherto been restricted. A short film portraying a day in the life of the apprentice and a how to guide which details how to deliver best practice apprenticeships to apprentices with SEN will be showcased and available for distribution at an awareness event of local employers, providers and potential apprentices.

"We feel that it is critical to ensure that the provider and employer fully understand the complexities, cost and time required to provide apprenticeships to individuals with SEN. Our apprentices were aged 19 plus and could only work a 20 hour week. They therefore had an extended apprenticeship programme duration and required specialist teaching and support at work. These factors resulted in reduced funding for more input. So as an employer and provider, funding and profit cannot be your driver – you have to want to do this. If you do, you too can help address the underrepresentation and stereotyping by disability in apprenticeships.

Abingdon and Witney College
The key to implementing a successful initiative

“Don’t try to change the world but do aim for a little revolution in your part of the world!”
South Tyneside College

Work collaboratively with:
- learners
- internal partners
- external partners

Respond to or develop an evidence base

Ensure that your project plan:
- is systematic
- is flexible
- has realistic timescales, which consider frontloading delivery
- incorporates internal and external project communication
- includes evaluation
We adapted our plans to address the recruitment and attendance experience. We adopted a celebratory approach to boost participation, with the wine and cheese event, in tandem with face-to-face invitations through class visits. We also adapted our research method to include participation by those who could not commit to regular meetings.

Mary Ward Centre – Inclusion in action for LGBT students

Work collaboratively

Long-term equality and diversity requires a collaborative approach. For example, through extensive engagement with the beneficiaries of the project, joined-up work between different staff members and departments or partnership working between the provider and an employer or different provider.

Learning providers are experts in teaching and learning; they can’t be experts in understanding every learner’s faith and beliefs and nor should they expect to be. Learners themselves ARE the experts and are therefore the best resource when developing inclusive practice.’

Learn Devon – Equality and diversity in family learning: Religion and beliefs

We wanted to ensure that LGBT students were fully represented within our project, which had these objectives: to increase the visibility of equality and diversity; review our policies and procedures; and improve our practices.

Five user group meetings were held which raised the visibility of LGBT identities in the college and enabled LGBT representation and dialogue. Out of the user group seven significant items of work have either been completed or scheduled, all with long-term impacts:

- an agreed questionnaire, doubling as a standing agenda
- a new equality and diversity statement and a revised student charter
- a planned review of the centre’s equality and diversity policy and other key documents
- a planned art exhibition with the theme ‘We are … LGBT’
- a plan for networking with the wider LGBT community
- plans for dissemination and staff training
- a commitment to sustaining and building on the project by seeking to re-establish the group every academic year

The Mary Ward Centre
Inclusion in action for LGBT students
The key to implementing a successful initiative
Work collaboratively

Bradford College
Towards a trans-positive culture

Our aim was to create a more accessible, welcoming, supportive and inclusive learning environment and experience which better meets the needs of the trans community. In the short term our project has raised the profile of issues faced by the trans community in engaging FE. We have received lots of positive feedback from staff and students in the process of conducting research. The project has further strengthened our links with the trans community in the city. We have also identified several examples of existing good practice which we have used as case studies in the development of our training resource. In the long term, we have several recommendations that will be tabled through our equality committee.

A clear learning point for us was that there is diversity and difference within minority groups and certainly within the trans community. For example, some trans people want and need to be visibly trans. Others, having transitioned, prefer to be less visible. The key is to be open to learning and gaining understanding of the needs of others.’

Bradford College – Towards a trans-positive culture

The value of including the wider trans community in this project has brought about significant change in and of itself. The perception of the college has changed within the community as a result and helped us create a strong foundation on which to build.’

Bradford College – Towards a trans-positive culture
Blackpool Council Adult Community and Family Learning (BACFL)
SafeHaven: Tackling harassment and bullying in the community

Several members of the trans community were involved with scripts and trans actors were identified and used in the production of a film. The film will be used as a training video around key themes and issues that trans people face on a daily basis. This will be a valuable tool for training within a variety of organisations – not just training establishments.

Tutors have undergone professional development to enable them to deliver the training element of this project. Local libraries are keen advocates for training as they come into contact with a variety of members of the community. A variety of learners have been amenable to having their voice heard and taking part in the project.

“A particular success is the continued assistance by those from the trans community within Blackpool.”

BACFL – SafeHaven: Tackling harassment and bullying in the community

“Blackpool Adult Community Learning has learnt so much from the people involved with the project. It has highlighted issues that people face on a daily basis.”

BACFL – SafeHaven: Tackling harassment and bullying in the community

“If any person is unsure how to communicate with any of the nine characteristics, then the primary answer is to ask. Don’t be afraid to broach subjects. If it is inappropriate, they will inform you of that fact. Everybody has a voice and this should be heard and taken notice of.”

BACFL – SafeHaven: Tackling harassment and bullying in the community
The key to implementing a successful initiative
Work collaboratively

Engage a wide range of partners, stakeholders and staff in your organisation with different viewpoints.’

Petroc – Pathways to apprenticeships

Collaboration across departments was key in identifying and sharing good practice. Similarly, in developing a protocol to identify and monitor support for remote learners, a number of departments, including IT, were brought together to identify the best systems and processes that would best fit our needs.’

Myerscough College – Supporting female apprentices

Be free with praise and encouragement. Project work like this is usually carried out over and above a participant’s existing workload. Therefore praise and support, with transport arrangements where possible, can make individuals feel valued and encourage them to enthusiastically contribute.’

Gloucestershire College – Sexual orienteering

North Lindsey College
Building bridges: Changing gender perceptions

The primary output of the project was the production of a good practice guide collectively produced in association with college staff, learners, employers and external partners. The challenge of working with staff who have culturally predetermined attitudinal barriers was overcome by the use of the professional dialogue template initially, and in other stages of the project through the use of the behaviour change insight model. This enabled staff to both feel empowered and also to reflect upon the negative (and positive) impact of their attitudes. The result has been the production of the primary output.

Similarly, collaborative work with all project partners has been positive at all times, which has been reflected in such events as the ‘Building bridges’ event. This enabled dialogue to take place between learners, staff, employers and other stakeholders.
Collaboration should lie at the heart of any such project to ensure that all voices are heard and that any outputs produced are the result of a collective rather than an individual voice.’

North Lindsey College – Building bridges: Changing gender perceptions

Partnership work with external LGBT organisations was instrumental to the success of activities.’

Working Men’s College – The Humane Selfie, ‘life gets better together’

The partnerships were critical to the success of this project and we would strongly advise that projects such as these can only work with partners who contributed and were committed to the aims from the beginning.’

Reading Borough Council – Valuable or a drain: Perception of employment for 50+

Good links with learning providers across a wide geographical area has been essential to being able to gain access to a diverse cohort.’

Careers South West – Overcoming barriers faced by young people (18–24) with LDD on entry to FE sectors

Test out your idea with other providers before you start and take on the feedback – realign aims as early as possible.’

Hartlepool College of Further Education – Sharing the Big Picture
Be aware of your partner organisations and their schedule.

Blackpool – SafeHaven: Tackling harassment and bullying in the community

Ensure that the partners that you are working with understand the practical implications of agreeing to be involved in the project. Make sure that this is agreed by the organisation and not just one particular individual.

Worker’s Educational Association – Intersectionality in adult community learning

Anticipate problems with partner organisations – eg time-keeping, role conflict, lack of cooperation etc.

Plumpton College – Equality and diversity in Sussex colleges

Find and use experts – we did and they made a huge impact on the perceptions of the provider partners.

South Tyneside College – Gender equality in non-traditional apprenticeship occupations

Trust and use staff expertise, but know when external support is needed. This blend of peer development and accepted sector experts has provided an effective synergy for the success of the project.

CITB – Developing awareness of barriers faced by LGBT learners

Ensure good quality teaching and learning by working with experienced training providers/tutors with a track record of delivering in the community.

Hackney Learning Trust – Hackney deaf awareness ambassadors: Paving the way for inclusion
Respond to or develop an evidence base

Successful projects used existing evidence to develop their work or contributed to the current evidence base.

Plumpton College
Equality and diversity in Sussex colleges

We researched the barriers that prevent achievement by apprentices and work-based learners who belong to minority characteristic groups. Their performance was referenced to that of classroom learners and the success rate for the funding stream as a whole.

Data analysis across a three-year period was a challenge due to changes in data collection methodology. It proved to be extremely important to word questions and data requests accurately and in a way that was meaningful for the management information systems managers involved. This was essential to obtain consistent responses.

The outcome of the research has informed and influenced the CPD agenda required to raise awareness and improve current practice in colleges where performance discrepancy exists. The gathering of statistical data also gives a base line from which future analysis and judgement of performance can be made.

The CPD awareness programme devised for face-to-face delivery early in the autumn term of 2015/16 and information on the project analysis has been posted in the project section of our website as advanced virtual CPD. A virtual peer support network has also been established and is available to all staff.

Be patient and recognise it takes time to collect and interpret data in a systematic and user-friendly manner.

Use data to effect positive change, not negative reinforcement.

Plumpton College – Equality and diversity in Sussex colleges
**Reading Borough Council**

Valuable or a drain: Perception of employment for 50+

We aimed to develop a wider understanding of 50+ employment issues via disseminating resources for a range of practitioners, including advisors, teachers and human resources staff that challenge negative perceptions of 50+ employment. Face-to-face interviews were carried out by three partners, electronic surveys were completed by other companies and individuals who were unemployed or who had recently gained employment aged 50+ completed a questionnaire electronically or in hard copy. Four 50+ unemployed individuals undertook work experience placements with Reading and Bracknell Forest councils. Case studies were gathered and capitalised upon when opportunities arose.

As a result, further work is now under way and it is likely that this will influence deployment of localised resources. Furthermore, our council is now shaping its employability pathway to ensure it continues to provide, and increases the volume of, valuable work experience opportunities. Our service has now been tasked with coordinating activity across the whole council. We have now developed a scheme, which has been awarded silver status by Fairtrain (the work experience quality standard).
The key to implementing a successful initiative
Respond to or develop an evidence base

Careers South West
Overcoming barriers faced by young people (18–24) with LDD on entry to FE sectors

The project team appointed to carry out the project consisted of three researchers and a project manager. All were qualified careers practitioners with well-developed interview skills and experience of working with LDD learners. We used our extensive database to identify young people with LDD from particular groups. We interviewed participants on a mainly one-to-one basis with our focus on quality interactions rather than quantity in order to fully explore the barriers that young people face and to gather detailed usable information for our case studies. We also contacted families and providers in order to get a full picture of the barriers and constraints faced by LDD young people. Information recording sheets were devised for capturing data. Baseline data was gathered by running reports from the Careers South West group client database.
A greater awareness of the issues facing learners with LDD will enable our advisers working with this group to provide better informed advice, information and guidance in their day-to-day work. The results of the research will feed into our company equality and diversity policy. They will also be used to inform our internal equality and diversity staff training.’

Careers South West – Overcoming barriers faced by young people (18–24) with LDD on entry to FE sectors

A mechanism and format has been agreed to enable the final results and findings to be embedded in our internal equality and diversity training programme, and the results and recommendations will also be published on our webpages. This will enable our findings to be disseminated to our staff working with clients with LDD across our transitions contract, across the whole FE sector and to other sectors and professionals working within the LDD field.

It has been important to be able to speak to key people in the lives of our cohort who have provided support to enable learners to succeed. These may be placement staff, family, parents/carers and other support workers from external agencies. This is because the majority of young people we spoke to are able to provide excellent advice and encouragement to other young people and can identify the benefits of their learning, but are often less able to identify barriers or are aware of the support taking place in the background. It is therefore important to factor this into any research.’

Careers South West – Overcoming barriers faced by young people (18–24) with LDD on entry to FE sectors
The key to implementing a successful initiative

Check the design of your project plan

‘Be systematic – giving a quality framework to the project and using a familiar structure of self-assessment and improvement planning helped to provide a familiar context.’

South Tyneside College – Gender equality in non-traditional apprenticeship occupations

‘Ensure that you have a robust project plan with contingencies.’

Hartlepool College of Further Education – Sharing the Big Picture

‘Know upfront what you hope to achieve, but be flexible as this might change as your research gets underway.’

Petroc – Pathways to apprenticeships

‘It is important to be flexible to ensure that working patterns are not too disruptive.’

Gloucestershire College – Sexual orienteering

‘Alternative strategies and methods of working should be developed and an organic approach should be adopted in order to meet changing situations as the project progresses.’

North Lindsey College – Building bridges: Changing gender perceptions

‘Being organised is key and establishing a timeline of activities with dates helps the overall process.’

Gloucestershire College – Sexual orienteering

‘It is important to work out your timelines for outputs and stick to them.’

Blackpool Council Adult Community and Family Learning – SafeHaven: Tackling harassment and bullying in the community

‘Consider staff time management and availability.’

Gloucestershire College – Sexual orienteering
Another small thing is to try and frontload the delivery plan as aspects will always be delayed and this will allow time to catch up.’

The Learning Partnership for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Limited – Cornwall equality project

Ensure that you do your work upfront.’

Blackpool Council Adult Community and Family Learning – SafeHaven: Tackling harassment and bullying in the community

Lead-in time needs to be sufficient to fully induct the ambassadors and secure their commitment for both stages of the project ie British sign language training and community learning class support.’

Hackney Learning Trust – Hackney deaf awareness ambassadors: Paving the way for inclusion

Keep open the channels of communication and be as informative as possible throughout the project timeline.’

Gloucestershire College – Sexual orienteering

Plan how you are going to review outcomes and progress over time, and be prepared to adapt in light of any changes in labour market and student requirements.’

Petroc – Pathways to apprenticeships
The key to implementing a successful initiative

Check the design of your project plan