

Equality and Diversity Checklist for Learning and Teaching



- When resources are produced, consideration is taken to represent the diverse range of learners who access provision
- A variety of teaching methods are used following an assessment of different learning styles
- Assessment is fair and does not discriminate against any learner
- Language used by the tutor is non-discriminatory and appropriate
- Discussion and comments within the learning environment are managed to ensure learner language is appropriate and non-discriminatory
- Materials and topics are presented in a way that are sensitive to equality and diversity
- Resources are adapted to ensure that learners can access information and to meet individual needs (large print, on tape, using symbols)
- Learners have the opportunity to fully evaluate the course in an open and anonymous way

What I need to think about as a tutor to ensure equality in my classroom practice?

Planning

- Do the course documents take into consideration the individual needs of the learner? (Initial Assessment, Scheme of work, ILP)
- Is the learning environment conducive to learning? (layout, accessibility)
- Are there a variety of learning styles included in the teaching – auditory, visual and kinaesthetic? (Schemes of work, lesson plans)

Delivery

- Is time allocated during learner's induction for information and discussion on equality and diversity, including policies, etc? (Scheme of work, lesson plans, ILP, complaints procedure)
- Setting appropriate ground rules with learners (Lesson plan)
- Are appropriate assessment methods used for all learners? (Differentiation)
- Using appropriate and sensitive language and challenging inappropriate use of language

Diversity

- Is diversity included within teaching – making reference and using examples from a variety of cultures, religions, traditions, exploring stereotyping and other topics around equality? (Lesson plan, resources)
- How is prejudice and stereotyping challenged in the classroom?
- How do you build on learner diversity as an educational resource?

Resources

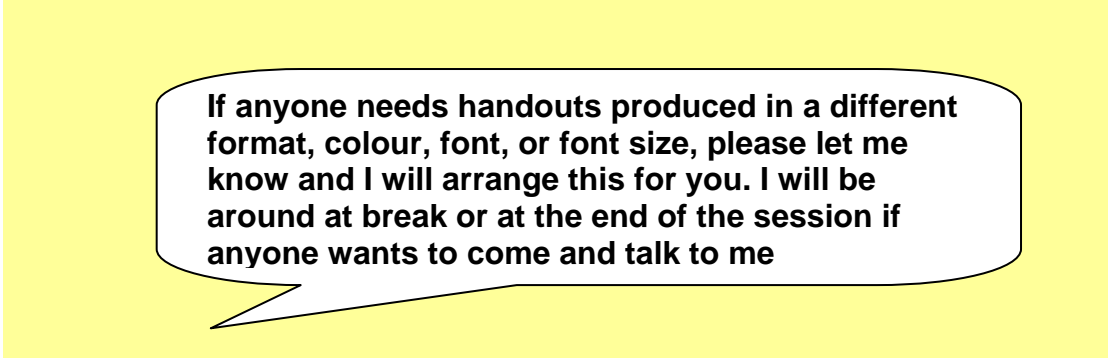
- Are teaching resources accessible for all learners?
- Do learners require additional resources to help them to access information? (Initial assessment, ILP)
- Are people from diverse backgrounds, socioeconomic, cultural, people with disabilities visible in course materials?

Additional Support

- Are learners given the opportunity to discuss additional support at the beginning and throughout the course?

Providing Accessible Handouts/Course Materials

First and foremost, find out the individual needs of your learners. It is good practice at the start of the course to tell learners:



If anyone needs handouts produced in a different format, colour, font, or font size, please let me know and I will arrange this for you. I will be around at break or at the end of the session if anyone wants to come and talk to me

When you are producing any paper-based resources, the following handy hints are useful:

- Leave lots of space and make sure you do not pack too much text or information on to the page. Use more paper and more space
- Use a clear font. Arial, Gill, Sans, Century Gothic and *Comic Sans* are better than most. Learners may have specific needs if they are dyslexic or have a visual impairment.
- Use point 14 for text and bigger if the learner requests it. It is not appropriate to enlarge using the photocopier; this will distort the letters and make them hard to read.
- Avoid using Jargon and be careful to use plain simple English.
- For learners who have a visual impairment, any pictures, charts or symbols **must** be explained in text format, so learners can access them.
- Some learners find it easier to read from coloured paper than white. Black on lemon paper is particularly good. Check with the learner.
- Avoid dark coloured or fluorescent paper which can be hard to read.
- Use pictures to aid understanding and meaning of text. Pictures are especially useful for Deaf learners who think and communicate visually.

Example of Equal Opportunities session (Induction)

Time	Content	Method	Resources
5 mins	'Introduce myself' and learning outcomes	Talk/Whole group	Whiteboard/flipchart
5-20 mins	Reflection on our everyday experience/understanding of prejudice and stereotyping	Pair work/ exercise with handout Group discussion	'Getting to know you' handout
20-35 mins	Explore what students can do if they experience any form of discrimination	Question and answer session with whole group	'Dealing with Discrimination' handout
30-45 mins	Inform students of equal opportunities services available and offer the opportunity for one-to-one meeting.	Talk and distribute leaflets	Equal Opportunities Policy Disability Statement Complaints Guide

Equal Opportunities in the Curriculum

Rights & Responsibilities	Inclusive Curriculum	Inclusive Learning	Responding to Diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying • Respecting Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating the diversity of achievement • Beyond Euro- centism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Learning support • Differentiation of Teaching and Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs and interests of communities • Being aware of diverse needs of different communities/groups

Learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties - Accessibility



Car Park Access



Lifts



Internal Ramps



Adjustable desks



Tape Recorders



Minicom



Enlarged Handouts



Dietary needs



Wide doors



External Ramps



Toilets/Showers



Automatic Doors



Loop systems



Assistive technology
(Software/hardware)



Note takers/scribes



1:1 or small group
support

A guide to preferred words and phrases

Terminology There are often concerns around the appropriate terminology to use when addressing disabled people. Below is a guide to appropriate use of language

Use	Do not use
'People/learners with.....' (e.g. diabetes)	The adjective as a noun 'the disabled' 'a diabetic'
Adjective, e.g. 'dyslexic person' or 'disabled person'	'persons'
Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (as a general term)	'people suffering from' or 'people afflicted with' (implying victim role) 'SEN' or 'special educational needs'
'Disabled person'	'cripple(d)' 'invalid' 'handicap'
'person with a learning difficulty'	'SEN' or 'ESN' 'mentally handicapped' 'person with a mental age of...' 'retarded'
'wheelchair user'	'wheelchair bound'
'person with partial sight' 'blind person' 'partially sighted person'	'visually handicapped person'
'deaf' or 'deafened' 'hard of hearing' 'person with partial hearing'	'deaf and dumb' 'deaf mute'
'person without speech'	'dumb'
'person with mental health difficulties' 'a mental health service user'	'psychiatrically disturbed person' 'mental patient' 'sufferer'
'person with autistic spectrum disorders'	'autistic people'
'toilet/facilities that are accessible'	'disabled toilets'
'non-disabled' or 'not disabled'	'normal' which implies that disability is abnormal

Learners who are deaf or partially hearing

Some people may have been born deaf, while others may have become deaf either gradually or suddenly. For the majority of the population hearing impairment tends to be acquired as they get older. People who become deaf before they learn to speak may have difficulty in speaking clearly. People who are born profoundly deaf will probably have learnt to use sign language (British Sign Language) which is a language in its own right and has its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

Technology can enhance deaf people's access to language:

- E-mail and text messaging on mobile phone or a Minicom
- Hearing aids – help to amplify sound
- Loops – which can be either a permanent fixture in a room or be a portable loop which can be set up in any suitable room

The following are practical tips which should be followed to allow maximum impact to learners who are deaf:



- Face the person at all times when speaking
- Speak clearly using clear language and encourage other learners to do the same
- Speak at a natural speed. Speaking slowly distorts lip patterns which become very difficult to read
- Avoid startling a deaf person who is working; approach them from the front or side
- Arrange lighting and seating so that everyone's face is well lit
- Do not talk and demonstrate at the same time
- Group work can be difficult for deaf learners, get learners to indicate when they are speaking
- Establish clear ground rules to ensure that all learners are included, for example only one person to speak at any one time
- Keep background noise to a minimum, a carpeted room absorbs sound
- Lip-reading is tiring: learners need to have periods of rest from lip-reading
- Hand-outs are very helpful in complementing spoken instructions and descriptions, but provide them in advance
- Use as much visual information as possible, pictures, diagrams and keywords
- Whiteboards are effective because they cast enough light for signing or lip-reading and grab the attention of the learner
- Take care not to speak while writing on a board or chart

- Any video tapes or audio tapes that are used should have written transcripts
- Use visual information such as pictures, labels, diagrams, key words.
- When working with interpreters make time for them; always address the deaf person and not the interpreter

Further sources of help:

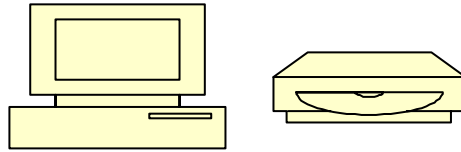
Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)

The RNID runs a telephone/text service, produces information leaflets and fact sheets.

Their publication 'Deaf Students in Further Education' gives a clear account of what learners may need whilst studying. It is available on their website.

www.rnid.org.uk

Learners who are blind or partially sighted



Some people will be born blind or with partial sight, but the majority of people will have acquired a visual impairment later in life. The term 'blind and partially sighted' covers a range of impairments. The needs of people who are partially sighted will vary depending upon the level of their sight problem.

Some people may need information in other formats, in tape or via some speech software. Only a minority of people with partial sight or are blind can use Braille, these are usually those who have been blind since birth or early childhood.

Technology has had a massive impact for accessing information for learners who are blind or partially sighted. There are a range of technologies that can be used via the computer, including different voice recognition software packages, Braille keyboard, and electronic note-taking devices amongst others.

The following are practical tips which should be followed to allow maximum impact to learners who are blind or partially sighted:



- It is crucial to ask partially sighted/blind people what is most suitable for them because the support they need may be very different
- Make sure learners tell you about best seating, lighting etc
- Some learners may need to visualise the layout of the room
- Too much light can be a hindrance, many learners who are partially sighted cannot tolerate bright light
- Produce materials in advance so that they can be put into Braille, modified print or audio tape
- Prepare handouts in advance
- Written materials are easier to read if they are clear and simple, on non-glossy paper and with strong contrast in colour and tone
- Arial font at 14 point size, black print on yellow or white paper, although learners may have individual preferences
- Avoid placing text over a background pattern or illustration
- Some learners prefer using a tape recorder, as it is efficient way of reviewing materials
- Speak clearly and try to eliminate background noise
- In group work or discussions ask learners to introduce themselves before they speak

- Always read out what is written when using a whiteboard, OHT, or PowerPoint presentation
- Fully explain any diagrams, illustrations or videos
- Use black or blue pens, not red or orange on whiteboard
- If you are using computers, ensure that they are accessible (specific software)
- Awarding bodies produce guidelines for assessment for people who are blind or partially sighted. Examination arrangements could include extra time, readers or scribes for written assessments, a separate room.

Further sources of help:

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

The RNIB produces a wide range of resource materials which will be useful for learners. It runs a telephone information service and supports this by a range of fact sheets.

www.rnib.org.uk

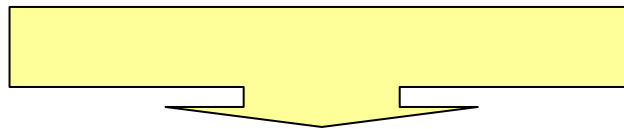
Learners with dyslexia and related difficulties

Dyslexia is defined as a difficulty in processing written language. It affects around 10% of the population, nearly half of which experience severe difficulties.

A range of other difficulties are associated with dyslexia:

- Dysgraphia – handwriting difficulties
- Dyspraxia – poor motor coordination or ‘clumsiness’
- Dyscalculia – difficulties with calculation/maths

The Dyslexia Learning Style



People with dyslexia can often cope well with a range of complex tasks, such as solving complicated problems in electronics or design, yet find difficulties with simple tasks such as reading and spelling, following instructions or finding their way around.

Many of the following characteristics of learning styles ‘fit’ most dyslexic learners. Dyslexic learners:

- Think holistically rather than step by step
- Need to see the whole picture first, before they can learn the details
- Are good at remembering patterns but find difficulty in remembering sequences
- Learn best from direct experience
- Are often tactile learners
- Need to make personal connections to remember things
- Learn to read and write through having a personal interest in the subject matter
- Learn better with the help of colour, humour, stories and images

Do not make assumptions about a person’s intelligence because they have dyslexia. Many dyslexic learners are very successful when their individual difficulties are understood and they have appropriate support.

Some effective ways of working with learners who are dyslexic:

- Talk to learners and find out what works best for them. Do not repeat strategies that may have failed in the past
- Help learners to find out what colour of paper suits them. It is often the case that dyslexic people find it difficult to read from or write on white paper. Coloured overlays may be helpful

- Technology may be a key way of helping dyslexic learners. Using the computer will allow the learner to produce a piece of work without worrying about handwriting and enabling them to easily correct spelling mistakes. Spell check can be used.
- Help learners to explore and understand their own effective ways of learning and to find their own strategies for success.
- Use teaching strategies that match the individual learning style. For example if a learner thinks visually, use a highlighted or bold typeface for certain words
- Encourage learners to use visual representations to help them (mind maps – information is presented in a visual format so the learner can see it all at once rather than having to follow it sequentially)

Further sources of help:

Adult Dyslexia Organisation

The ADO provides support for dyslexic adults and resources for those working with dyslexic adults

www.futurenet.co.uk/charity/ado/adomenu/adomenu.htm

The Dyslexia Institute

The Dyslexia Institute is a charity that specialises in the assessment and teaching of people with dyslexia. It looks at ways to improve the effectiveness of teaching and also focuses on the development of teaching materials

<http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk>

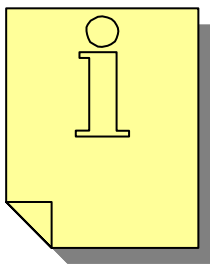
Learners with physical disabilities

Learners with physical disabilities have physical impairments of different forms. They can be temporary or permanent and vary in severity. The particular form of disability determines the way it affects learners and the impact on learning. Learners may also have experienced negative barriers from education or learning that they have previously attended.

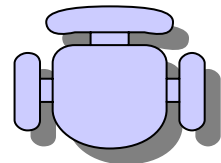
The effects of physical disability will be different according to the kind of disability a person has. For some people their condition may mean that for sitting for long periods of time will be difficult. Others may have difficulties with hand use, hence handwriting will be hard for them.

Some people may have a physical disability caused by a neurological condition and may experience difficulties in the way they perceive things, for example they may find it hard to locate the correct place on a page or to move from left to right when reading.

The initial barrier faced by learners with physical disabilities is access, so it is crucial that the following questions are asked.



- Is the learning environment accessible?
- Can learners get into the building?
- Can they get around when in the building?
- Is there somewhere where learners can take a rest or breaks?
- Would a different chair be better?
- Is the table height appropriate?



Considerations to be taken into account:

- Ensure that the learner has the opportunity to disclose their disability, so they can discuss what may be difficult for them
- Ensure that any preparatory work on access to the learning environment is undertaken before the learner starts
- Certain simple adjustments might make a lot of difference, for example seating at a different height, some kind of an arm rest, or thick books under a computer to raise its height.
- Consider the location where learning takes place in addition to any ongoing improvements to access needed
- Plan the arrangement of and adaptations to, furniture and learning resources
- Be aware of the classroom layout
- Organise orientation sessions for learners to assist navigation around the building, material and learning resources
- Structure learning sessions to incorporate short breaks according to individual need
- Identify and ensure access to personal, assistive technology
- Do not assume that the learner cannot participate in physical activities.

There are many physically disabled athletes and dancers. Ask the learner

- In practical sessions there are a range of simple adaptations that will aid learners: hand rests can sometimes help people to carry out manual tasks; left-handed or sprung scissors can make a difference to the level of independence in some craft classes; a learner who uses only one hand can be helped by the use of a non-slip fabric under a note pad; support workers can assist too
- If a learner has difficulty remembering, ensure that you provide instructions in small steps and work with the learner to develop individual techniques
- If a learner has difficulties with handwriting, simple adaptations such as a grip around a pen can make a significant difference. The use of a computer with specially adapted keyboard or speech-activated software will also help.

Further sources of help:

Scope (national organisation for people with cerebral palsy)

Scope produces information relevant to people with a physical disability. The Scope website offers a large quantity of useful information on-line but it also provides an index of additional publications that may be useful. The publications website is: <http://www.scope.org.uk/action/publications/index.shtml>

Learners with learning difficulties

Some learners with learning difficulties have specific learning difficulties (i.e. dyslexia) and others have what is known as cognitive learning difficulties. The definitions currently used to describe learners with cognitive learning difficulties are:

- 'profound and complex learning difficulties'
- 'severe learning difficulties'
- 'moderate or mild learning difficulties'

Provision and programmes particularly for people assessed as having mild or moderate learning difficulties can include learners with diverse and wide-ranging learning needs.

People with learning difficulties often have uneven learning profiles – they may find certain areas of learning very hard but be very good at other things.

Learners with learning difficulties may have experienced a sense of failure in previous learning and may lack confidence in trying anything new for fear of failing. These learners may also have difficulties with:

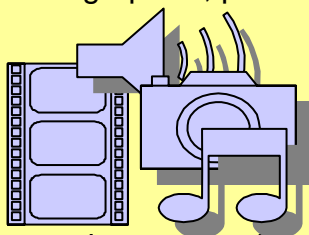
- Memory and retaining information
- Conceptualising and understanding abstract concepts
- Sequencing
- Concentrating
- Transferring skills

Approaches to consider:

- Treat learners as individuals. They will be demotivated if they are repeating tasks that they have done at school
- Find ways of exploring learners' own interests and skills and build on these
- Choose practical activities to develop concepts and skills. Use a range of materials (visual and spoken as well as written)
- If learners have difficulty concentrating, plan lessons so that there are a variety of short activities
- Find out what has worked and what has failed in the learners' past experiences
- Explain tasks clearly and check learners understanding by asking them to explain it back to you
- Think of ways of differentiating learning
- With those learners who have difficulties in retaining information, work with them to develop strategies that work and check that they use these strategies
- Vary tasks and plan short learning activities for those with

concentration difficulties

- Make sure learning is age appropriate. All adult learners need to feel that they are not being treated like children and are not unnecessarily repeating work they once did at school
- Pace your input/interaction in short chunks
- Encourage learners to ask for help
- Limit the use of paper-based activities and find alternatives where possible
- Use visual clues such as graphics, pictures or illustrations to accompany text



- Use Learning support assistants sensitively, appropriately and creatively, they can help to ensure that strategies in class are used in other areas of the person's life
- Encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and maximise learner independence and communication
- Help learners to record progress and successes, maybe by using pictures rather than words

Further sources of help:

NIACE – A national organisation that promotes adult learning. It has published several packs that are accessible for people with learning difficulties and books on different aspects of education for adults with learning difficulties.

www.niace.org.uk

BILD (British Institute of Learning Disabilities)

BILD is a not for profit organisation which exists to improve the quality of life for all people with a learning disability. It provides information, publications, training and consultancy services

www.bild.org.uk

CHANGE Picture Bank – The CHANGE Picture Band CD Rom has pictures to help make information easier to understand. The pack gives lots of ideas on how to make information easier to understand, including drawing your own pictures, using easy words and writing in easy ways.

www.changepeople.co.uk

Learners who have mental health problems

Learners with mental health problems may experience more anxiety about learning than other learners. Those that take medication find that it affects their memory, concentration and at times ability to participate. Short-term memory may be especially affected. Anybody can experience severe mental health difficulties at any time.

While some mental health difficulties can be severe, the most common symptoms are depression, anxiety and stress.

Attendance, punctuality and behaviour will be affected due to the variable nature of mental health. Progress can also be variable and regression can be common. Some learners will need to have their emotional issues resolved before they can progress or engage in the learning process.

People who have been diagnosed as having mental health difficulties might be on some medication which may have certain side effects. These can vary from difficulty with concentration and memory to feeling very tired or shaky. These will affect the person's learning.

Some learners may find it difficult to participate in new activities, for different reasons, perhaps because they are afraid they will not be able to cope or because they feel there is no point. In some cases their anxiety means they may need more reassurance in order to build confidence.

Approaches to consider:

- Establish good rapport with the learner and give plenty of encouragement. Deal sensitively with personal information and focus on what is required to help the learner
- Recognise that some learners may need considerable time to settle into new surroundings and feel comfortable enough to address and fully participate in learning
- Anxiety can cover true ability, a learner's potential therefore may not become apparent until several weeks into a course, once they have relaxed
- Enable learners to have immediate success in the learning they do
- Some learners may experience changes in behaviour due to external circumstances and this may create an uncomfortable situation in a learning environment. Ideally allow the learner to withdraw if they wish to rather than trying to 'manage' the behaviour and cause confrontation
- Design learning sessions that include a variety of activities
- Plan flexible programmes of learning to respond to variations in capacity to learn, attendance, etc
- Learning support should allow extra time to 'catch up' on areas of the programme that may have been missed
- Provide practice, reassurance and additional time for formal assessments. If possible try alternative methods of assessment

- Be clear on the extent of your role and when to refer onto other professionals and counsellors
- Encourage a supportive environment especially for learners who may find social interaction difficult
- Occasionally, people with mental health difficulties can behave erratically in ways which can upset other learners. In such situations specialist advice needs to be sought and getting advice on strategies that might help. There may also be the opportunity to have a specialist support worker who can attend with the learner.

Further sources of help:

(MIND) The Mental Health Charity

The aim of this charity is to advance the views, needs and ambitions of people with experience of mental distress, promote inclusion by challenging discrimination, influencing policy through campaigning and education and inspire the development of quality services which reflect expressed need and diversity.

www.mind.org.uk

Other useful publications:

Wertheimer A (1997) Images of Possibility: Creating Learning Opportunities for Adults with Mental Health Difficulties – NIACE. This book looks at key features and innovative practice in LEA and college provision

Skill (2002) Students with Mental Health Difficulties: Your Questions Answered. This gives an overview of the specific issues related to working with learners with mental health difficulties in a further education context.