



# Managing Equality and Diversity in meeting the needs of learners who are named as requiring additional or special educational support.

This resource provides an overview of equality legislation and how it applies to everyday practice in the workplace. It focuses in particular on the role of the support worker in an educational setting. The resource explains how harassment, bullying and the use of discriminatory language work against each of the 'protected characteristics'. It also offers strategies that can improve practice, modify behaviour and meet the diverse needs of learners.



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## Introduction: About the resource

This resource consists of six modules and includes a range of activities and quizzes to test your knowledge and understanding.

By working through this resource, you will:

- gain an understanding of the broader issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- understand how embedding equality and diversity in teaching, learning and support can help to develop strong relationships with learners.
- promote positive behaviours to help learners achieve and foster good relationships between diverse groups.
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a member of staff in developing and delivering your everyday practice.
- become more familiar with how to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion in your everyday work.

The following graphics should help you use this resource:

Activity to help embed learning.



Practical tips and advice



Further reading



## **Module 1: The role of the support worker**

### Key learning points:

- understand the key functions of the role.
- define a SEN learner.
- outline rights and responsibilities at work in terms of equality and diversity

### **Core duties and responsibilities**

This module focuses on the key duties and responsibilities of a support worker in a school or college environment. It outlines current statutory guidance for organisations that work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Support workers usually work with colleagues, such as teaching staff, personal tutors, curriculum managers and other relevant professionals, to provide educational support to named learners. While each school, college or other learning environment will have its own specific job and person specification for the appointment of a 'support worker', we can identify some common duties and responsibilities such as:

- ensuring learners with identified support needs receive their entitlement in terms of access to learning opportunities, facilities, and enrichment activities.
- working with learners inside or outside the learning environment and supporting them to achieve their personal learning objectives, for example improve their literacy/numeracy skills.
- supporting learners to access and use special equipment.
- working with colleagues to develop and adapt learning materials, resources, and activities to meet the diverse needs of learners.
- monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the support provided to ensure that individual needs continue to be met.
- supporting learners in their personal, social, and emotional development
- participating in learner reviews, team meetings, parents evening and so on as necessary to support named learners.
- safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of learners in line with school/college guidelines
- keeping professional knowledge and skills up to date.

## **Module 2: Why equality and diversity is important in the learning support environment.**

### **Key learning points:**

- outline the key components of the Equality Act 2010.
- explain what is meant by the term 'protected characteristics'.
- identify the different types of discrimination prohibited by law.
- give examples of discriminatory practice.
- correct popular misconceptions concerning equality and diversity issues.
- understand a range of terminology associated with equality and diversity.

### **What is equality and diversity?**

#### **Equality**

In the past 'equal opportunities' has often been described as 'everyone being the same'. This description of equality, however, is somewhat outdated.

Today when we talk about equality, we describe it in terms of everyone being different but being treated with an equal level of respect and having equal access to services, training and so on.

#### **Diversity**

Diversity is about valuing and embracing the differences in people, whether that relates to gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or a whole host of other individual characteristics not currently covered by legislation.

Just think how awful the world would be if everyone were the same, if they all looked the same, had the same values and beliefs, ate the same foods, and liked the same things.

When you think about your friends, have a think about what you like about them that is different from you – the football team they support, the music they like and so on. Diversity is about enjoying these differences – whatever they are!

## **Module 3: Embedding equality and diversity into special needs education.**

### **Key learning points:**

- outline the key changes to the SEN code of practice.
- explain the key responsibilities of schools/colleges and their employees.
- outline teaching and learning strategies to support those learners with behavioural issues.
- create a learning plan for a learner with SEN.

This section introduces the key features of the new SEND Code of Practice and provides an overview of the key responsibilities of education organisations.

The information is drawn from the Department for Education and Department of Health (2015) *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*.

### **SEND Code of Practice**

The SEND Code of Practice relates to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabled children and young people. It provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations such as:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- The Order setting out transitional arrangements.

The main changes from the SEND Code of Practice (2001) reflect the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014. These are:

- the Code of Practice covers the 0-25 age range and includes guidance relating to disabled children and young people as well as those with SEN.
- there is a clearer focus on the participation of children and young people and parents in decision-making at individual and strategic levels.
- there is a stronger focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for children and young people.

## Module 4: Dealing with harassment and bullying in the learning environment.

### Key learning points:

- give examples of inclusive language which avoids defining people in stereotypical ways.
- recognise different forms of bullying can take and who is likely to be at risk.
- identify positive strategies for dealing with incidents of discriminatory behaviour in the classroom.

## Language

### The problems with language

There are three golden rules in terms of using language and terminology which might offend other people:

- Language is a living thing – many of the words and terms used by our grandparents and maybe even words that we used to use are no longer acceptable! We have to be sensitive to the way words change their meaning over time and place and be prepared to change the terminology we use as a response.
- Language depends on who is using it – if I am a member of a minority community then I am allowed to use words to describe my community which you, if you are outside that community, should not use. For instance, many in the gay community will use the word 'queer' or 'dyke', but these terms would be offensive if used by someone who is not gay.
- Language is personal – if someone says to you that they would rather you did not use a word or phrase and you continue to use it, then you could be committing harassment.

The following pages describe some of the terms you may come across in relation to the protected characteristics, but they are by no means comprehensive.

### Language related to age.



Where it is necessary to make reference to age, it is better to use neutral terms such as **older people** or **older workers** or **elders** (this term is often used amongst minority ethnic communities), and **young people** or **younger workers**.

## **Module 5: Building equality and diversity into teaching, learning and support.**

### **Key learning points:**

- identify good practice in terms of course design.
- identify learning resources to support a range of diverse needs.
- identify areas for improvement in own organisation.

### **Designing your support programme**



Most of us do not have the luxury of a free rein to design a course from scratch. Usually, we are helping to design a course that lead to externally assessed or verified nationally recognised qualifications where the awarding body specifies the course content and assessable learning outcomes. However, you often have the opportunity to refine the context and choose the examples you use to aid understanding. This is where you may find opportunities to build equality and diversity into the curriculum.

Use the follow tips to help you contribute to course design:

#### **Make sure teaching staff know how you can help.**

Make sure teaching staff know what learner/learning support is available and understand what it involves and how it could benefit learners who may struggle to complete activities on their own. Help them to work out where and how they could make use of it in their programme and in individual lessons.

#### **Know your learners.**

You may not know who your learners are yet. If this is the case and the course has run before, you may be able to plan accordingly, taking aboard any feedback you have received with common themes from groups of learners. If your organisation has been working on attracting learners from groups previously under-represented in a particular subject area, you need to focus on making course content interesting, relevant, accessible, and engaging to them.

If the course is the next part of a multi-year course or learners are progressing from a lower level to a higher-level course, you will be able to find out more about your learners and can design your course accordingly.

## Activity 11: Identifying good practice.



Select from below three areas of good practice that you think your education institution can claim as good curriculum/support practice and list the evidence that supports your claim.

Good Practice	Evidence to support claim	Priorities for the future
Curriculum planning for learner support takes account of equality and diversity issues		
Planning for additional learning support includes opportunities for learners from different backgrounds, cultures, class, and status to use their knowledge to contribute to learning		
Learning materials are regularly and systematically reviewed for bias and negative stereotyping		
All staff actively promote equality and diversity in teaching and learning		
Curriculum planning is inclusive and specifically addresses equalities through schemes of work and lesson plans		
Curriculum audits for equality are carried out regularly		
Equality and diversity are integral to the learner induction process		

## Activity 12: Learner support needs



Using the learner details below, identify the support strategies you would consider meeting their individual needs.

### LEARNER 1

Name Ardith Ethnic background - Black British

#### **Prior experience**

Left school with no qualifications  
Was unemployed for a year (classed as NEET individual)  
New to area and to the education institution – recent assessment confirms Ardith is dyslexic.

#### **Religion/beliefs**

Although her parents are Muslim, she practises the Jewish faith because her boyfriend is Jewish.

#### **Culture/customs**

Every week she observes the Sabbath, the Jewish holy day, and keeps its laws and customs. The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday and lasts until sunset on Saturday.

#### **General interests**

Enjoys listening to all types of music.

### LEARNER 2

Name Balj Ethnic background - Pakistani

#### **Religion/beliefs**

Practising Muslim

#### **Culture/customs**

The Five Pillars of Islam are the five obligations that every Muslim must satisfy in order to live a good and responsible life according to Islam.

#### **General interests**

Religion  
Sociology

#### **Other information**

Balj disclosed on admission to college that he had been bullied at school.

## **Assessment: Supporting learners with SEN**

1. What is meant by the term 'public sector equality duty' and how does it relate to your role as a support worker?
2. Give an example of how a learner with SEN may experience bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
3. Explain how you would check teaching and learning materials for bias and stereotypical images?
4. You have been allocated to support a wheelchair user with their study of information technology. What steps will you take to ensure the learner's needs were met?
5. What strategies would you use to support a learner with dyslexia?
6. You have been asked to carry out an audit of your 'learning environment' as part of your department's annual assessment of its commitment to equality and diversity. What areas of provision will you check?
7. You are supporting colleagues to prepare for a forthcoming inspection, and you are asked to justify that 'learning support' for your department is good. What evidence would you collate to justify this claim?

# Appendix 1: References and further information

## References

Extracts from the following materials are quoted in the text. Consulting these publications will provide more information and a greater level of detail.

### Module 3

- Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), (2013) *Achievement for all: working with children with special educational needs in mainstream schools and colleges.*

[http://new2teaching.org.uk/tzone/images/achievement-for-all-december-2010\\_tcm7-26269.pdf](http://new2teaching.org.uk/tzone/images/achievement-for-all-december-2010_tcm7-26269.pdf)

- Department for Education (2014) *Further education: Guide to the 0 to 25 years SEND code of practice.*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/348883/Further\\_education\\_\\_guide\\_to\\_the\\_0\\_to\\_25\\_SEND\\_code\\_of\\_practice.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/348883/Further_education__guide_to_the_0_to_25_SEND_code_of_practice.pdf)

Advice for further education colleges, sixth-form colleges, 16 to 19 academies, independent specialist colleges explaining the duties and responsibilities of further education providers who deal with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.

- Department for Education (2015) *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years:*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/342440/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_approved\\_by\\_Parliament\\_29.07.14.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/342440/SEND_Code_of_Practice_approved_by_Parliament_29.07.14.pdf)

Statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

- Department for Education (2013) *Working together to safeguard children.*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/281368/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281368/Working_together_to_safeguard_children.pdf)

Statutory guidance setting out what is expected of organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## **Appendix 2: Activities for learners**

The following is a selection of activities that you, as a support worker, can use with your own learners as relevant to their individual needs.

## Race equality quiz

How much do you know about the Equality Act 2010?

Test yourself by answering the questions below.

1. A Scottish company does not give an English man a job on reception as his accent would not be liked by their customers even though he is the best person for the job.

This is:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| A Direct discrimination | D Indirect discrimination |
| B Harassment            | E None of these           |
| C Victimisation         |                           |

2. An employee is 'sent to Coventry' and forced to resign from his position because he supported a fellow employee in her claim of racial discrimination.

This is:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| A Direct discrimination | D Indirect discrimination |
| B Harassment            | E None of these           |
| C Victimisation         |                           |

3. A company makes a rule that the night shift at work will be made up entirely of Asian workers as that is what the employees want.

This is:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| A Direct discrimination | D Indirect discrimination |
| B Harassment            | E None of these           |
| C Victimisation         |                           |

4. Race discrimination includes discrimination because of (please list):

5. A white worker overhears colleagues making racist jokes about black people and finds it offensive because she hates all forms of racism.

This is:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| A Direct discrimination | D Indirect discrimination |
| B Harassment            | E None of these           |
| C Victimisation         |                           |

## **Race Equality/Equality Act Quiz Answers**

1. Direct discrimination
2. Victimisation
3. Direct discrimination – segregation because of race is direct discrimination under the Act; it does not matter that the employees are happy with the arrangement – it is still illegal.
4. Colour, nationality, race, ethnic origin, and national origin
5. Harassment – it is harassment if they upset anyone who happens to overhear them.

### **Discussion points**

Draw attention to the issues highlighted by the quiz, including:

- the differences between direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation and harassment
- the extent of the coverage of the Act.