The Institute for Learning

Single Equality Strategy

2009 – 2014
Annually Reviewed

Scheduled for next review by Advisory Council: October 2014
## Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting out the vision</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our approach</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking responsibility</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with partners</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact assessment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of terms</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword from Toni Fazaeli, Chief Executive of IfL

‘The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1\textsuperscript{st} October 2010. The primary purpose of the Act was to consolidate the complicated and numerous array of Acts and Regulations, which formed the basis of anti-discrimination law as well as making the law easier to understand and apply.

IfL is required to comply with the Equality Act, which covers nine ‘protected characteristics’ and these cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. The ‘protected characteristics’ are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

IfL aspires to go beyond this legal requirement relating to equality and to be an organisation that provides equality of opportunity for all staff, members, the Advisory Council and the Non-Executive Board, regardless of their characteristics.’

This updated Single Equality Strategy describes how we intend to ensure that we meet our legal duties and aspirations for equality by bringing together a range of measures and actions taken to date into one strategy. The strategy and related implementation plans help us to demonstrate that equality and diversity are at the heart of what we do, as an employer and as a membership body.

Effective leadership and positive engagement at every level in every part of IfL are needed to make the strategy a success. We all need to work proactively to reinforce the rewards of having a diverse membership and staff that helps to enrich the IfL experience, the services and benefits we offer and enhances our reputation.

I wholeheartedly want us to promote and deliver this Single Equality Strategy as a means of ensuring our work, services and position in the further education and skills landscape meet the needs of our staff and members, and in turn their students and learners, as well as other partner organisations.

Toni Fazaeli
Chief Executive
“We value difference. Through the individual life experiences of our staff and members, IfL is enriched as both an employer and a professional body. In all that we do we will aspire to be inclusive and to provide full and open access to our activities and services for those who work for us and those who join us through membership. We will be proactive in our work on equality, working with our staff and members to make IfL an inclusive and accessible organisation and by working with our partners to achieve the same in the wider further education and skills sector.”

Sue Crowley, Chair
Introduction

1. This is the Institute for Learning’s Single Equality Strategy for the five year period 2009 - 14, developed to set out our commitment to diversity and equality and to address the statutory duties to promote equality in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

2. In addition we recognise that equality means more than issues of race, disability and gender equality. We regard the following legislation as relevant to our work and this Single Equality Strategy:

   2.1. Equality Act 2010
   2.2. Civil Partnership Act 2004 (CPA)
   2.3. Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favoured Treatment) Regulations 2002
   2.4. Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)
   2.5. Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA)

3. We acknowledge that being proactive on matters of equality and diversity is not only good for our governance, the people we employ and the members we serve but is good for us as a learning organisation. It enhances our business performance, enables effective recruitment of staff and members and improves employee and member satisfaction. This strategy addresses both service delivery and employment issues.

4. We believe our responsibility for equality and diversity is wider than those areas currently set out by legislation. We are committed to achieving equality for all by removing direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of:

   4.1. Age
   4.2. Gender or transgender identity
   4.3. Race, colour, nationality, national, ethnic origin or cultural background
   4.4. Disability
   4.5. Religious belief or non-belief, or other beliefs
   4.6. Pregnancy, maternity and paternity
   4.7. Marital status, family circumstances or caring responsibilities
   4.8. Sexual orientation
   4.9. Income, employment status or housing circumstances
   4.10. Membership or non-membership of trade unions or involvement in trade union activity
   4.11. Offending Status
   4.12. Any other grounds that cannot be shown to be justified

5. To achieve this, we will:

   5.1. Meet all our responsibilities under relevant legislation, codes of practice and any further education and skills sector policies or strategies
   5.2. Mainstream equality and diversity into our everyday work
   5.3. Monitor our progress against equality benchmarks and targets in relation to employment, service delivery and carrying out business processes
5.4. Actively challenge all forms of bullying, harassment and intimidation
5.5. Make delivering this strategy and resulting schemes or implementation plans the responsibility of every Council member, employee and member
5.6. Provide regular training and support for our employees, Council members and others working for or on behalf of IfL to ensure the effective implementation of this strategy
5.7. Regularly monitor the actions we take under this strategy and report on progress
5.8. Make our services and the buildings we deliver them from more accessible, recognising that geography is a real consideration in a large membership organisation and that many communities face difficulties accessing services face to face or regionally
5.9. Make certain that the diversity of our workforce reflects both the communities we recruit from and the further education and skills sector
5.10. Work with partners, nationally and locally, to address equality
5.11. Make copies of this strategy available in a range of languages, Braille, large print and audio version and as a printed document or in an electronic format on request
5.12. Ensure that where technology forms an integral part of a member’s or an employee’s experience, it does so in a manner which is fully inclusive and accessible

Setting out the vision

6. We are committed to valuing and diversity and promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and members. Equality was one of the underpinning values of our original five-year strategy, published February 2009, followed by the updated Strategy ‘IfL Supporting Professionalism – 2011-14’, which drives and gives shape to all of our activities and services.

7. Our vision is that IfL embraces equality as a membership body and employer by providing an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone can have chances to achieve their full potential.

8. This Single Equality Strategy sets out our vision of how we plan to achieve this. We recognise that individual experiences are not limited to any one equalities dimension (for example race, disability or gender) and we will aim to take a multi-dimensional approach to our work on equality.

Our approach

9. We have developed the Single Equality Strategy to bring together all aspects of the equalities agenda to ensure diversity and equality planning, implementation and review processes are presented in a cohesive way. We are committed to meeting our obligations under equalities legislation and continuing to promote diversity and equality both within IfL, its Council, staff and members, and in our relationships with our partners and external stakeholders.

10. We view the embedding of the principles outlined in the Single Equality Strategy into our governance and leadership processes as good management practice.
11. We aim to support our Council, staff and our members in recognising and meeting the differing needs of people from diverse backgrounds within their day to day activities and to embed the principles of equality in all that they do.

12. We will review the Single Equality Strategy annually to ensure it continues to enable us to achieve our equality aims as part of our strategy. In doing so we will involve staff and members in consultation activities aimed at drawing on the extensive equalities expertise that exists across the IfL.

**Taking responsibility**

13. The Single Equality Strategy will be led through the office of the Chief Executive, ensuring that our work on equality is clearly located within the senior leadership team. As the Single Equality Strategy applies to IfL as both an employer and a membership body, the strategic lead for implementation and review will be shared between the Chief Executive (members) and executive lead for Director of Human Resources (staff).

14. Work relating to this strategy will be overseen by a strategic group drawn from Advisory Council, staff and members and chaired by the IfL President. This group will own the Single Equality Strategy and its related individual equality schemes and implementation plans. The group will report to and advise the senior leadership team and, through the Chief Executive to our Non-Executive Board. The group will include staff and members with experience and expertise of different aspects of equality and diversity.

15. Five seats will be reserved on our Advisory Council for expertise in race, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation.

16. Once a year the Single Equality Strategy Group will conduct a review and report to Council on IfL’s range of work on equality, leading to an annual refresh of the strategy with NEB, and integrating reporting on equality and diversity into the quarterly reviews of the operational plan.

**Working with partners**

17. We will work with the specialist equalities groups and networks that serve further education and skills. This includes the Network for Black Professionals, Stonewall and the Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Post-School Education (this list is not exhaustive).

**Communications**

18. We will use our web site and member communications to promote and disseminate work focusing on equality and diversity.

19. We will make equality an important theme in our regular communication with Council, staff and members. We will use the staff handbook and regular updates to inform staff of our work on employment aspects of equality and the members’
handbook and regular publications such as ‘InTuition’ and ‘on the agenda’ to let members know about our successes and the challenges in this area.

20. In addition to the normal channels of communication, we will provide a central point of contact ‘equality@ifi.ac.uk’ to give staff and members the opportunity to raise issues, address concerns or to comment on our work on equality. This point of contact will be monitored regularly and correspondence forwarded to the Chief Executive (members) and Director of Human Resources (staff) for swift action or response.

Impact assessment

21. This strategy impacts on the full range of business activities we undertake and services we provide, including (but not limited to):

21.1. The elections to Advisory Council
21.2. The appointment of Non-Executive Board Members
21.3. The recruitment of our staff
21.4. The recruitment of our members
21.5. The way we are governed by our members
21.6. The way we train and develop our staff, Council members, Non-Executive Board and others who work on our behalf
21.7. Access to the benefits and services we provide for our members
21.8. The way we plan future activity and work
21.9. The services and materials we procure
21.10. The contractors, vendors and suppliers we whom we work
21.11. The way we work with partners and stakeholders.

22. Equality surveys and monitoring will allow us to see how different groups or individuals are affected by our business activities and services, for example:

22.1. How often and why members use our services
22.2. How satisfied people are with the way we behave towards them and the services we provide
22.3. If our services are effective and meet the needs of our staff and members
22.4. How often and why our staff and members make complaints

23. We will use a range of methods to promote equality and diversity, for example:

23.1. The statistical analysis of the data Comparison with external benchmarks
23.2. The results of satisfaction surveys we offer our staff and members
23.3. Random or targeted surveys focussing on particular aspects of our work on equality
23.4. Online special interest groups, focus groups and workshops

24. We will chart our progress and take positive action to accelerate our approach to equality and diversity wherever we can.
Glossary of terms

When we say:

‘diversity’ we mean recognising and valuing differences between individuals, groups and communities, in order to create a positive and inclusive culture for the benefit of our staff and members.

‘equality’ we mean a fair society in which everyone is able to participate and in which all our staff and members are given the opportunity to achieve their potential.

In addition, when we say:

‘barriers’ we mean the obstacles that society constructs which prevents individuals from full participation in society and restricts their opportunities.

‘Advisory Council’ we mean the governing body of the IfL which is comprised of elected members and representatives from national partner organisations.

‘further education and skills’ we mean all learning which takes place after the completion of compulsory schooling. Whilst in general terms this is taken to be learning which happens in further education colleges, sixth form colleges, specialist designated institutions, specialist colleges, work-based learning, adult and community learning, offender learning, voluntary sector, the armed services and all other Learning and Skills Council funded settings, IfL’s reach extends beyond this to include professionals working in higher education and private training providers.

‘individual equality scheme’ we mean those separate activities we chose to undertake to focus on a particular aspect of the Single Equality Strategy i.e. age, gender, race, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

‘Learning and Skills Council’ we mean the non-departmental public body responsible for planning and funding high quality education and training for everyone in England other than those in universities and all successor bodies introduced as a result of government changes to the funding of further education and skills.

‘members’ we mean those people in Professional membership of IfL, being our Ordinary Members, Affiliates, Associates, Fellows, Honorary and Companion Members.

‘Single Equality Strategy Group’ we mean a high level group bringing together both members and staff with expertise in equality and diversity.

‘senior leadership team’ we mean the Chief Executive, , Directors and other members of staff employed by IfL responsible for the strategic leadership of the organisation.

‘staff’ we mean the people we employ, directly and indirectly, the consultants who work for us and those who represent IfL in a paid or voluntary capacity.