

National Council – ELWa

Equal Opportunities

Annual Report

2002-03

Background

This Annual Report is a requirement of the Learning and Skills Act 2002, Part II Section 42. Under this Act the National Council, in exercising its functions must have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups, between men and women, and between persons who are disabled and persons who are not. However, there is a wider obligation upon the Council as an Assembly Sponsored Public Body to pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people. This report outlines the progress the National Council has made to promote equality of opportunity during its operational year, from April 2002 to March 2003.

Introduction

Our Vision

Making Learning Work for You Mynnwch ELWa ar Ddysg

Our Mission

To promote lifelong learning and provide world-class learning opportunities for all in Wales to fulfil their potential.

Our Vision and Mission statement implies the National Council's commitment to equal opportunities – it includes all people. Success should be a function of ability and effort, not background. In order to achieve this we recognise:

- Our vision cannot be achieved in the short term, it is a huge and significant agenda that will require a continual understanding of the needs and demands of all our customer groups;
- The important role that our partners must play if change is to be visible at the level of learning delivery; and
- The need to be a good example to our providers to ensure they recognise and reflect the benefits of diversity.

Cross-Cutting Themes

The National Council has adopted the National Assembly's **cross-cutting themes** of **sustainability, equal opportunities, social inclusion** and **bilingualism**. These will be an integral part of our activities, as this report outlines.

Achievements

This section outlines specific equal opportunities activities which the National Council undertook during 2002-03 and where relevant what the National Council intended to achieve during this period. In addition to these activities, many developing policies contribute to the promotion of equal opportunities by encouraging a learning culture and environment that is focused on the needs and preferences of all learners regardless of background, need and circumstances. These examples include the e-learning strategy, Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales and the new National Planning and Funding System. The Council's new Quality Assurance strategy sets out arrangements for assuring and improving the quality of the learning it funds, including factors that could affect learning opportunities and the learning experience, such as ensuring equal opportunities in terms of gender, race, disability and the Welsh language. Future activities will include training for staff in relation to equal opportunities/ learner entitlement, learner support, access to learning and social inclusion.

Cross-Cutting Theme Frameworks

In last years Equal Opportunities Annual report, we stated that we would further develop our commitment to the equalities cross cutting theme. In 2002-03 the National Council commissioned a report from the National Centre for Public Policy to provide detailed advice on the approach to embedding the cross cutting themes during the design, implementation and review of policies and initiatives. The report will help the Council to identify knowledge gaps, good practice and develop systems for embedding the frameworks. The report was finalised after March 2003. The Council is currently considering how to implement the recommendations of the report via a detailed work plan. The 2003-04 Equal Opportunities Annual Report will describe the progress that is being made.

Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

The existing funding methodology for FE institutions recognises the additional resource implications of programmes that are attended exclusively by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These programmes include Independent Living Skills and Communication Skills such as lip reading, sign language and brailing. These programmes attract an additional weighting in the recurrent funding methodology (RFM). In 2002-03 approximately £8.5m was allocated to FE institutions in this way. The National Council aimed to support 5,000 students following independent living skills programmes in 2002-03; this target was exceeded by 26%. The National Council is currently reviewing its arrangements for funding, with a view to creating a single funding system that focuses on the learner. This will include recognition of resource implications associated with learners' additional support needs.

In 2002-03, the National Council made available £3.15m in supplementary funding to FE institutions. The purpose of supplementary funding is to enable providers to make their mainstream provision accessible to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. With supplementary funding providers are able to secure the human and technical support necessary to improve the accessibility of mainstream provision. The National Council aimed to support 2,700 learners in mainstream

provision through this funding in 2002-03; over 3,000 learners were assisted during last year.

£3.12m was allocated to secure provision for 149 learners attending specialist residential colleges in England and Wales.

£104,000 was made available to Work Based Learning providers to provide aids and adaptations to assist them in making their training provision accessible to trainees with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Over 4.5% of entrants on WBL courses were disabled, exceeding the target for 2002-03.

The National Council allocated £89.8m to school sixth forms in 2002-03. Of this, a notional allocation of £9.2m was identified for learners in LEA maintained special schools and out-of-county placements. Also, an element of the £89.8m was used to provide support for learners with learning difficulties in mainstream sixth forms.

Race Equality Scheme

We set out to consult widely on our Race Equality Scheme; develop an Action Plan and work towards implementation (Equal Opportunities Annual Report 2001-02).

Activities during 2002-03

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) imposes a general duty on the National Council to promote race equality, which requires us to

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

The National Council is also required to meet specific duties relating to policy and service delivery. To ensure compliance with the legislation it was required to have prepared and published a Race Equality Scheme by 31 May 2002.

The Scheme was published on the National Council website in May 2002 and a public consultation took place on the external elements of the Scheme. Paper copies of the draft scheme were also mailed to learning providers and other stakeholders for comment, including umbrella organisations representing minority interests. A well-attended consultation event was held on 23 September 2002.

The outcomes of the consultation and other sources of information indicated many issues for further development of the Scheme. An action plan was drafted from the consultation exercise, workshop feedback and information contained in the Commission for Race Equality Code of Practice. This is currently being implemented.

The action plan will address the areas of non-compliance in the Scheme. One of the main reasons for non-compliance is that the Scheme is required to assess the relevant functions, current and proposed policies to the general duty to promote race equality. Equally, the Scheme is required to detail the review process and time scales for review. Formal discussions have taken place with the Commission for Race Equality (CRE) regarding these issues with acceptance that there were some mitigating circumstances; in particular imminent changes to National Council

structures and the development of the new National Planning and Funding system. In addition, the need has been identified to ensure that the Scheme and its associated processes is thoroughly embedded into the organisation and its activities, especially with learning providers. It is proposed to submit the revised Scheme in Autumn 2003 to the CRE.

In conjunction with discussion of the issues outlined above, progress has been made during 2002-03, includes:

- The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) has been identified as a continuous monitoring and feedback channel;
- A comprehensive revision of the Equal Opportunities Policy was undertaken. By developing and enhancing our equal opportunities policy, a wider approach to diversity is being taken forward;
- A review of all Human Resource policies identified that they addressed equal opportunity principles consistent with promoting race equality; and
- An equal opportunities audit of our employee base was undertaken during November 2002, this data will be used to monitor our progress on managing diversity.

Furthermore, agreement has been given for the QAC to co-opt an additional member with specialist expertise in relation to race equality as required.

Projects

All external applicants for National Council project funding must submit an Equal Opportunities policy, which is subsequently analysed for the contract award process. During 2002-03, the National Council funded various projects to promote equality of opportunity, examples of which are outlined below.

Innovation and Development Fund

The Dyslexia Institute; "Second Chance"

The project aimed to:

- provide specific multi-sensory, structured and cumulative tutoring for adults with dyslexia or those with severely low literacy skills;
- empower them to raise their academic levels and achieve their true potential; and,
- increase their access to wider employment opportunities and improve their quality of life.

34 individuals were assisted by the project. Each had an individual assessment and an individual learning plan. As a result, the individuals have improved their communication and literacy skills, confidence and self-esteem. 28 have succeeded in gaining employment or in entering further education or training.

Praxis Training & Consultancy; "Vale Gender Equality Audit"

The project aimed to establish the issues that affect women's participation in employment in the Vale of Glamorgan. The project aimed to support SMEs, their female employees and women job seekers with work advice and guidance,

motivation and orientation and job search assistance. The project ended in December 2002 and achieved the following outcomes:

- 16 companies participating in research;
- 55 employed and 67 unemployed women interviewed;
- basic Guide produced "Looking for Work in the Vale"; and,
- full report and summary currently being produced.

Praxis Training & Consultancy - "Vale Entrepreneuses Mentoring"

The project aimed to research, develop and pilot a mentoring network for women in business in the Vale of Glamorgan. The project ended in December 2002 and achieved the following:

- The development of an accredited training course for mentors;
- 9 women have completed the course and become fully trained mentors; and,
- 198 women have become members of the mentoring network.

Learning Challenge Fund

Neath Port Talbot College – Enablement

This project has been set up to research the demand for and provision of learning for people with learning difficulties in South West Wales. The project aims to work with:

- a sample of disabled individuals to find out more about their aspirations, needs and barriers to Learning and Employment;
- learning Providers and support agencies to discover their capacity, resource needs, training requirements and to facilitate the creation of a series of networks across South West Wales to overcome the issues identified; and
- a sample of employers on their awareness, concerns and resource needs in employing disabled individuals.

The project report will be available in Autumn 2003 and the findings will have wider implications on provision for disabled individuals across all parts of Wales.

Human Resources and Internal Procedures

In addition to the outcomes below, a comprehensive revision of the Equal Opportunities policy was undertaken during 2002-03, to include a code of practice and a Harassment Policy. A review of all HR policies identified that they addressed equal opportunities principles, including promoting race equality. Grievance and conduct/disciplinary process have been reviewed, having been cross-referenced to the revised Equal Opportunities Policy and Harassment Policy.

Objective 2002-03: With regard to internal procedures we will continue to develop our HR processing system to allow consistent equal opportunities monitoring for recruitment, selection and training and development exercises.

Outcome: Equal Opportunities analysis of training and development opportunities given to staff was undertaken as a matter of routine. Training offered is flexible to accommodate wherever possible the personal circumstances of employees.

Objective 2002-03: We will complete a data audit of staff in order to provide current data from which to benchmark equal opportunities monitoring data for staff for the future.

Outcome: An annual data audit process has been established; the last audit was completed in November 2002. The data on the personnel database was strengthened to allow for analysis and reporting. Mechanisms have also been introduced in the Performance Appraisal exercise for 2002-03 to allow analysis of performance review data, including for equality of opportunity.

Objective 2002-03: We will progress the National Council's Diversity agenda.

Outcome: Discussions on developing the Councils' Diversity Framework have taken place through established forums such as the Works Council and HR Committees. A Diversity Working Group has been established, its function and outcomes to be further developed during 2003-04.

Disaggregated Statistics

Further Education

The figures in the tables below are derived from the partial year Individualised Student Record (ISR) and provides an in-year snap shot of learners undergoing training with support from the National Council-ELWa during the week of 1 December each year and other learners enrolled that week.

The ratio of males and females in FE is 2:3, which has stayed constant over the past three years. The majority of FE students are white (86% in 2002), the second largest group is "not known", which is over 10% of students, but this also includes invalid codes. The composition of other ethnic groups has remained steady during the last three years. In 2002, 84% of learners in FE had no known disability. In the last three years there has been a significant decrease in the number of learners who state their disability as not registered – from 6.5% in 2000 to under 2% in 2002. In addition the percentage of learners with a disability (4.2% in 2002) is higher than the corresponding figure for Work Based Learning (2.9%), and this pattern has been evident during the previous two years.

Gender

	DECEMBER 2000	DECEMBER 2001	DECEMBER 2002
Male	61824	65842	66995
Female	93729	98991	101640
Unknown	8	731	133
TOTAL	155561	165564	168768

Source: Partial Year ISR

Ethnicity

ETHNICITY	DECEMBER 2000	DECEMBER 2001	DECEMBER 2002
White	134103	127822	145871
Black Caribbean	203	237	276
Black African	421	459	642
Black Other	223	217	273
Indian	328	354	393
Pakistani	471	516	556
Bangladeshi	328	304	376
Chinese	417	414	511
Other - Asian	411	522	758
Other	843	962	1147
Information Refused	864	843	1034
Not known	16949	32914	16931
TOTAL	155561	165564	168768

Source: Partial Year ISR

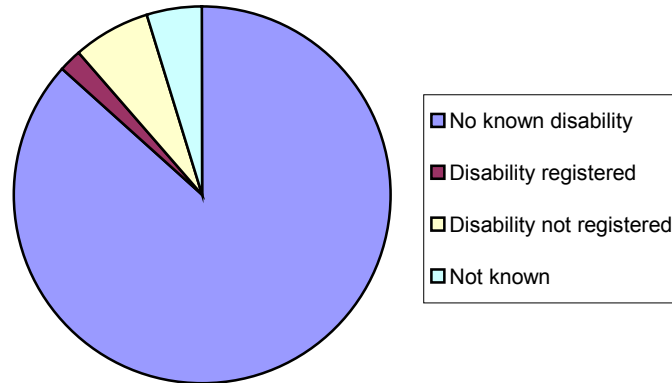
Disability

	DECEMBER 2000	DECEMBER 2001	DECEMBER 2002
No known disability	131627	138742	136990
Disability registered	3188	3054	3924
Disability not registered	9924	2994	2907
Not known	7331	14951	17916
TOTAL	152070	159741	161737

Source: Partial Year ISR

Please note that the total student number in the table above excludes students entered solely on the short ISR, for whom disability data is not requested.

FE Students by Disability - 2002



Work Based Learning

The figures in the tables below are derived from the National Trainee Database (NTD) during the week of 1 December for each year and provides an in-year snapshot of learners undergoing training with support from the National Council. Hence, these figures will be subject to further updates.

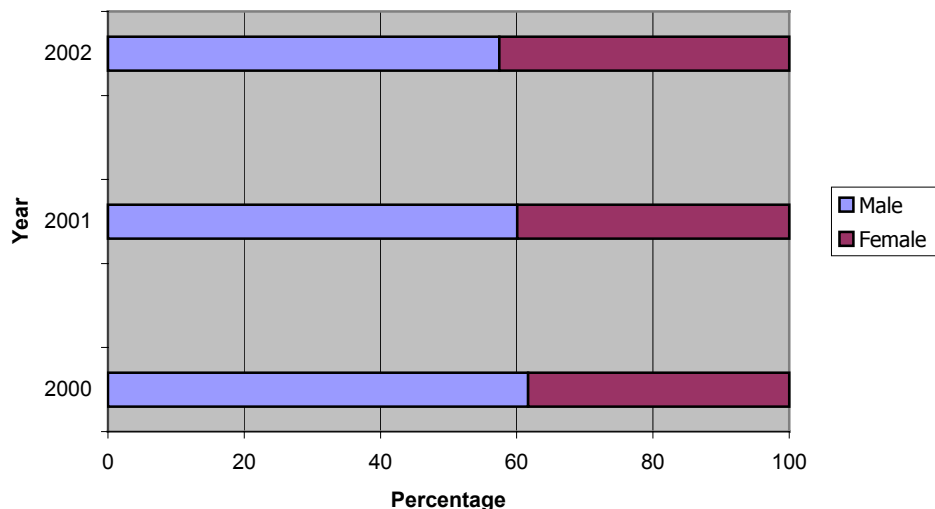
The majority of learners on Work Based Learning course are male, and this has stayed the same over the last three years, although the proportion of female learners is steadily increasing. The majority of learners are white. The "other" category has not been broken down into ethnic groups as the numbers are so low, a comparison would be insignificant. As stated above, the numbers of disabled learners on Work Based Learning courses is comparably low.

Gender

	DECEMBER 2000	DECEMBER 2001	DECEMBER 2002
Male	14474	15700	17580
Female	8994	10433	13011
TOTAL	23468	26133	30591

Source; National Trainee Database

Work Based Learning Students by Gender 2000-02



Ethnicity

	DECEMBER 2000	DECEMBER 2001	DECEMBER 2002
White	17848	22806	28552
Other	260	275	403
Not Known	5360	3052	1636
TOTAL	23468	26133	30591

Source; National Trainee Database

Disability

	DECEMBER 2000	DECEMBER 2001	DECEMBER 2002
Disabled	822	779	887
Not Disabled	22646	25354	29704
TOTAL	23468	26133	30591

Source; National Trainee Database

Adult Continuing Education

The figures in the tables below are derived from the 2002/03 Adult Continuing Education (ACE) return. Ethnicity data for the sector is not available.

The learners on adult continuing education maintained courses are overwhelmingly female (76%). Few learners are disabled.

Gender

	DECEMBER 2002
Male	3616
Female	11499
TOTAL	15115

Source; ACE Return

Disability

	DECEMBER 2002
No known disability	13497
Disability registered	556
Disability not registered	111
Information refused	5
Not known	946
TOTAL	15115

Source; ACE Return

Forward Look

Equal Opportunity Arrangements 2003-04

This section outlines the National Council specific objectives for the promotion of equal opportunities during 2003-04.

Cross Cutting Theme Frameworks

The National Council will embed more thoroughly equal opportunities in policies, programmes and strategies in response to the National Centre for Public Policy's report on the integration of cross cutting themes. During 2003-04, the National Council will:

- develop an action plan to embed the cross cutting themes through mainstreaming and other desirable means; and,
- monitor the extent to which the cross cutting themes are being implemented and review best practice.

Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

The National Council will ensure that proper and reasonable facilities are provided for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, within resources available. Targets for 2003-04 include:

- 6,300 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities following living skills programmes in the FE sector;
- 2,800 learners at Further Education Institutions with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are supported by supplementary funding; and,
- 150 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities supported on specialist residential placements.

The new National Funding System will move towards implementation in 2003-04, which will include the development of a coherent approach to the funding policy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Both the National Council and the National Assembly are planning research into current post-16 provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The information gathered from this research will inform the National Council's decisions relating to this type of provision.

Race Equality Scheme

It is proposed that the National Council will revise and publish its Race Equality Scheme during Autumn 2003. Milestones that will be achieved during 2003-04 include:

- Creation of a cross-organisation Race Equality Management Group to take forward detailed work to ensure compliance with the general and specific duties;
- A comprehensive review of policies and functions for impact on race equality;
- Mainstream the promotion of race equality throughout our organisation;
- Establishment of appropriate monitoring arrangements; and
- Mandatory equal opportunities and diversity training for all staff plus targeted training of line managers, which will include training in the Race Relations Amendment Act.

Human Resources and Internal Procedures

The National Council will continue the development of initiatives to support ELWa's progress towards a fully integrated Diversity Policy including equal opportunities and work-life balance. This will include:

- complete and evaluate a pilot of flexible working practices;
- develop policies to support work-life balance and diversity; and
- develop an action plan for the implementation of the internal aspects of National Council's Race Equality Scheme

Strategic Performance Indicators and Targets

The National Council is revising its performance indicators at a strategic and operational level. The Council will want to ensure that its performance monitoring is cogniscent of equal opportunity issues.

Long Term Objectives

The following development work will be undertaken during 2003-04, laying foundations for full implementation in due course.

Quality: The National Council's Quality Assurance strategy sets out arrangements for assuring and improving the quality of the learning it funds. At the heart of the strategy is a Quality Framework designed to take account of factors that could affect learning opportunities and the learning experience. The framework will help drive forward improvements in equality of opportunity in terms of gender, race and disability. Future activities that will need to be scoped and costed include training for staff in relation to equal opportunities/ learner entitlement, learner support, access to learning and social inclusion.

Strategic Planning: The National Planning Framework will provide a rational basis for resource allocation and management, allow for longer-term decision-making and promote joined-up policy with key partners and stakeholders. The ability to use planning as a tool to influence funding has the potential to help the National Council make progress in promoting equality of opportunity. The National Council will explore possibilities for integrating principles of equality and diversity at key stages of both internal and external planning cycles.