

# **London School of Economics and Political Science**

## **Disability Equality Progress Report 2008- 09**

### Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this progress report and to all departments for their efforts towards promoting disability equality.

## Director's Message

This report describes in some detail the steps we have taken over the last year to promote equal opportunity for disabled people at the LSE. I believe it demonstrates commitment and enthusiasm and I am grateful to the staff directly involved for the work they have done.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'H'.

Howard Davies

## **Background**

LSE is committed to creating a stimulating, accessible and supportive environment for its disabled staff and students. The Disability Discrimination Act 2006 requires LSE to report its progress on disability equality in order to show the institution's continuing commitment to disability equality.

Specifically, the Disability Rights Commission's Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Disability Equality states that the annual report must:

- Monitor and demonstrate progress against the DES action plan, including progress on eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and meeting targets.
- Show the results of the year's information-gathering – what information has been obtained and what does it indicate?
- Describe how the information gathered will be used to inform action.
- Indicate how the DES will continue to develop.
- Show continuing commitment to disability equality.

This report represents LSE's third disability equality progress report. It shows the progress that LSE has made on disability equality in the period between December 2008-09 to eliminate disability-related discrimination; and to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. It highlights LSE's progress in relation to key actions as identified in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan.

Each section is sub-headed with the key actions set out in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan 2007-10. These objectives are in addition to the ongoing reasonable adjustments that departments and services routinely make for disabled staff and students.

### **1. Strategy and Leadership - Key Actions:**

- a) Translate disability equality needs and issues into a coherent plan of action.
- b) Include disability equality in LSE's business and operations plans.
- c) Leadership actively promotes disability equality.

### **Progress:**

1.1 LSE's first Disability Equality Scheme was developed through active involvement and consultation with disabled staff, students, and visitors. The needs and issues identified through this process were translated into a coherent three-year action plan for the School. Subsequently, the action plan was included in the Disability Equality Scheme which was published on Planning and Corporate Policy Division's Website in December 2006.

1.2 Soon after the publication of the DES, the Disability Consultative Forum of the School suggested that it may be useful to review the Scheme at the early stages of its implementation. The School agreed to this review which resulted in some activities, such as departmental plans and mentoring and shadowing, being delayed.

1.3 Moreover, it was felt that the guidelines for integrating the DES into an overall Equality and Diversity Strategy (Single Equality Scheme) could change with the recent Discrimination Law Review, the formation of Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the forthcoming

Equality Bill. This activity was therefore delayed until such time that new guidelines from the EHRC are received.

1.4 To promote equality and diversity, including disability equality, at the strategic level, the following Equality and Diversity statement has been included in the Strategic Plan 2009-14 as a key organisational value:

*We will promote equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds. We will uphold a culture free of discrimination on the basis of race, disability, gender, age, religion, belief or sexual orientation.*

1.5 Equality and Diversity also features as an essential foundation for the School to deliver its key strategic priorities. The plan states:

*We will endeavour to improve equality and diversity across the School.*

1.6 This organisational value was translated into School's Operational Plan 2007-08 which includes implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan as a key objective. The Planning and Corporate Policy Division (PCPD) is taking a lead on this objective, and plans to work in close cooperation with other departments and services with responsibility for specific actions in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan.

1.7 During the reporting period, the PCPD included Equality and Diversity in the Division's Service Development Plan. This inclusion resulted in allocation of non-staff budget for equality and diversity activities. Over the next academic year, discussions will be initiated with all relevant departments and services, on how best to integrate disability equality into an overall Single Equality Scheme and to encourage the consideration of disability equality in their future Service Development Plans.

1.8 The preparation and agreement of disability equality plans by each department has been absorbed into actions around the development of The Single Equality Scheme but a distinct Disability Equality Action Plan will be retained under this umbrella in the interim in order to keep up the momentum.

## **2. Governance and Institutions - Key Action:**

a) Governance arrangements for disability equality are put in place.

### **Progress:**

2.1 The Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) was established in December 2007 to oversee all equality and diversity work at LSE. It is a joint committee of Council and the Academic Board. Its membership includes governors, academics, students, support and service staff. The Committee is being chaired by a Lay Governor. The EDC completed its first year of operation in December 2008. During this time, the committee met three times to consider a number of proposals/papers on equality and diversity, including disability equality. In October 2008, the EDC considered a proposal to join the Employers' Forum for Disability. The EDC is still considering this proposal.

2.2 The Disability and Diversity Consultative Forum (DDCF) continues to highlight disability issues related to staff, students and visitors. Its membership is diverse, involving the Deans, and representatives from the Disability and Well-being Office, other LSE services, and students and staff. DDCF reports and makes recommendations to the EDC as well as the Student Affairs Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee, though its reporting arrangements are yet to be finalised.

2.3 The LSE's Nominations Committee's 'Search for New Governor form', includes Equality and Diversity as part of the selection criteria for governors. Link to the document below:  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/planningAndCorporatePolicy/pdf/SearchHonorarygovOct08col.pdf>

2.4 The Central Administration has been considering other ways to promote diversity in the School's governance structure. The School is currently reviewing the procedures used by the Nominations Committee and its sub-groups, with a view to eliciting candidates from a more diverse range of backgrounds.

2.5 Some departments have identified a disability lead and further discussion is taking place about whether this initiative will be absorbed into a diversity lead within the context of The Single Equality Scheme. The institution is mindful that these discussions need to take into account the requirement not to dilute the response to disability and to fully involve disabled people in the decision making process.

### **3. Participation and Equality Impact Assessment - Key Action:**

a) Disabled staff and students are involved in the impact assessment of policies, functions and services.

#### **Progress:**

3.1 In June 2008, the EDC set up a working group to produce an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) tool that would involve disabled members of staff and students. The EIA Working Group comprises the Adviser for Disability and Dyslexia, an academic member and the Diversity Adviser. It presented a paper to EDC in October 2008. This group has now disbanded, and a series of pilot Equality Impact Assessments is being carried out across the School to inform the development of written guidance and a toolkit for managers. The new Equality Impact Assessment Framework will come into effect in the Summer Term 2010, and will inform the development of the Single Equality Scheme.

3.2 A number of policies and procedures, such as the development of the new Student Centre, disciplinary regulations for students and the Anti-Stress and Well-Being Policy are being assessed in terms of their impact on our diverse student and staff body, of which disabled students and staff play a significant part.

### **4. Information and Communication - Key Actions:**

- a) Information on E&D legislation is communicated to staff and students
- b) Disability equality efforts are promoted to internal and external stakeholders.

#### **Progress:**

4.1 LSE prepared a revised Equality and Diversity Statement to better reflect its commitment to equality, including disability equality. This statement, which has been approved by Council and Academic Board, is included in most publications of the School, including the Strategic Plan 2008-13.

4.2 The on line Disability Equality Practical Guide was reviewed in September 2009 and will be updated annually.

4.3 On line Disability Equality Guidelines are currently being reviewed and each will be reviewed annually.

4.4 A set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) was prepared, which included information on disability equality and which is now posted on the Planning and Corporate Policy Division's website, and continually updated.

4.5 Some examples of promoting disability equality to internal and external stakeholders include:

The Widening Participation (WP) Team of the Academic Registrar's Division requests equality and diversity information in advance of a prospective student's attendance at the School. The Team will work with disabled students, and his/her parent or guardian (as appropriate), and where necessary with the LSE Disability and Wellbeing Office, to provide a comfortable, supportive and inclusive environment in which disabled students can access the School's programmes. The Widening Access Project is engaging in the Action on Access Disability networking events and liaising with the Disability Office.

As part of LSE's Teaching Excellence Awards 'the teachers ability to respond to the diverse needs of students (with reference to a range of diversity categories)' is cited.

4.6 The Library has recently publicised the following initiatives and services, which are intended to improve access levels for disabled users:

- A new Library guide entitled 'Information for disabled Library users' has been produced to offer guidance on the provision for internal and external users of the Library who suffer from a disability. distinctions are made between the sets of services available to these two groups. The guide has been highlighted at introductory meetings and is available at:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/hocaiusthli/supdisuse.htm>.

- A trawl of library resources relating to disability equality has been actioned in collaboration with the library and Disability and Wellbeing office and discussions have taken place about purchasing further books on disability equality.
- An updated web page and a section in the Disability Guide remind users of the possibilities of obtaining materials in alternative formats and the Library's ability to approach more appropriate lenders when users require materials that can be used at home (rather than just for reference within the Library). The Disability Guide is available at:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/hocaiusthli/supdisuse.htm>.

4.7 Building work in summer 2007 has led to DDA compliant self issue and return services, height adjustable furniture for pc workstations, DDA compliant service desks throughout the building, air conditioning in the dedicated study rooms for users with disabilities and swipe activated accessible entry and exit in the Course Collection.

4.8 Annual user satisfaction surveys are conducted in the area to assess disability arrangements.

4.9 The Human Resources Division has revised a Managing Disability Toolkit, which gives information to managers and staff on how to support disabled staff. This information is available on HRD's website.

4.10 HRD has published 'LSE Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours: Framework for managers and leaders', which includes a self-assessment toolkit for all management levels. The framework, under the heading 'Leading by example', specifically states that managers and leaders will: create

constructive and respectful relationships; recognise that diversity and difference are assets; and seek to ensure that all members of staff are treated fairly. This process has been reinforced by a 360 degree and targeted coaching sessions, which is being offered to the School's senior managers in 2008/9.

4.11 The Access to Work Funding scheme is publicised on the School's website and in the Managing Disability Toolkit, as well as being taken into account in Risk Assessments and referred to in staff induction sessions.

4.12 The Recruitment Team asks all job applicants whether they have a disability and, if so, required assistance with their application or interview. The School's diversity toolkit, entitled 'Respect for People', is also presented to new appointees.

4.13 A two-day recruitment and selection course at the School includes a case study on disability, so that recruiting managers are aware of disability-related issues.

4.14 The Disability and Well-being Office extended the Circles scheme (<http://www.circlesnetwork.org.uk/>) around the School in 2008/9 with the help of student coordinators.

## **5. Staff Training and Development - Key Actions:**

- (a) Training on disability is mainstreamed in staff training programmes.
- (b) Disabled staff have access to development opportunities.

### **Progress:**

5.1 The three year Disability Equality Training Plan has been integrated into the Diversity Training Plan, which largely focuses on a holistic approach to dealing with issues of equality and diversity. Training on disability equality is included in staff and student induction sessions, which are organised by the Staff Development Unit and the Teaching and Learning Centre. Disability Equality training is by definition delivered by disabled people and The Speakers Bureau, a network of disabled students willing to act as (paid) speakers is being co-ordinated by The Disability and Wellbeing office for this purpose. The Disability and Well-being Office is intending to make more use of the Speakers' Bureau in 2009/10 to provide training and try to increase awareness of disability issues.

5.2 The Staff Development Unit organises a half-day event which is aimed at all levels of staff. It is delivered by an experienced external consultant and covers equality legislation, including disability legislation, case studies, and self-reflection exercises.

5.3 The Flying Start staff induction day includes an Equality and Diversity introduction.

5.4 The Teaching and Learning Centre organises induction sessions for Departmental Tutors, which includes a slot on disability equality. There is also an on-line interactive program, titled, '[Accessible Education Matters](#)', which staff can access as part of their disability equality training.

5.5 A programme of staff training activity on mental health-wellbeing is ongoing in residences for wardens and sub-wardens.

5.6 A resource has been developed and widely disseminated to staff by the Mental Health and Well-being Adviser entitled 'working with students who give cause for concern'.

5.7 The School will be offering specific diversity training for managers in the Lent Term 2009/2010.

5.8 Participants in staff development activities are invited to identify any access requirements in advance and advice is available on inclusive practice for deliverers.

## **6. Learning, Teaching and Research - Key Actions:**

- a) Disability equality is reflected in learning and teaching.
- b) Disability equality is integrated into research.

### **Progress:**

6.1 Disability equality is considered in curriculum delivery increasingly, with a move somewhat towards inclusive curriculum design which is of benefit to all learners as an alternative to making reasonable adjustments for a few identified students. The Disability and Well-being Office (DWO), in collaboration with Human Resources, Academic Registrar's Division and other departments and services, provides a front-line service to prospective and current students disabled students including those with long-term medical conditions (including mental health), specific learning differences and physical and sensory impairments. The Disability and Wellbeing Office offers advice to staff across the university on inclusive practice. Specific achievements of DWO during 2008/09 were as follows:

6.2 Over 400 students per year are supported by an Individual Student Support Agreement (ISSA). For a 7-year breakdown of case work with individual students and individual support, please refer to Table 1; the number of disabled students accessing the services increases year on year.

6.3 The Financial Support Office have developed a system in liaison with the Disability and Well-being office to ensure that students are not disadvantaged because of the national problem of delays in processing DSA's via the new Student Finance England systems. Students have been given additional advice and support in order to navigate the complex system.

6.4 A second successful Alumni special interest group event focusing on disability equality has been held; a secondment project which involved a NHS Mental Health Advisor attending the School to provide support to students; the Careers Service is working with the Disability office on providing specific information relevant to final year disabled students.

6.5 The Adviser to Students with Dyslexia, achieved a specialist qualification which enables her to diagnostically assess for dyslexia. The mental health and wellbeing adviser is engaged in relevant PhD study. The Disability and Well-being Office Manager; has achieved level 2 BSL qualification. A Community Service Volunteer provides support to disabled students.

6.6 As a standard practice at the School, reasonable adjustments are made on a regular basis in the design and delivery of lectures and seminars. The idea of moving beyond reasonable adjustments and towards inclusive practice in the planning stage is increasingly influencing course design and delivery (for example in the planning on the new LSE100 course). Reasonable adjustment and inclusive design principles are negotiated in collaboration with other related departments and services, such as the Disability and Well-being Office, Estates Division and Finance and Facilities Division. Some examples of reasonable adjustments and inclusive design are:

- Seminar rooms have been changed on a number of occasions to provide wheelchair access and this is articulated as policy.
- Moodle, lecture capture and podcasting are principles of inclusive design which benefit all students.

- Lecture notes have been distributed ahead of time to students with visual impairments.
- Lecture notes have been loaded on the student resource website for students with visual impairment.
- Exam sub-boards have taken student disability into account when it has ratified student marks.

Discussions are taking place about the consideration of disability equality within curriculum delivery as well as design. As an initial action an audit is in progress of library resources which promote disability equality .

The development of a research group to provide a forum for staff and students engaged in research activity with a disability equality theme is also being discussed currently. Again this may feature as part of a series of initiatives which are relevant to the Single Equality Duty. Contact has been made with some relevant research groups within LSE, for example The Social Exclusion Centre.

The Research Degrees Unit is working with the Disability and Well-being Office on ensuring that ISSA's reflect the research degree regulations without compromising disability equality. Discussions have also taken place around making the PhD viva as accessible as possible and developing greater links between students and staff who are engaged in research with a disability equality theme.

The Disability and Well-being office and the Exams Office are meeting to ensure the timely production and discussion of ISSA's and smooth running of systems for disabled students.

## **7. Physical Access - Key Action:**

- a) Physical Access Audit is conducted on a regular basis
- b) Way Finding Audit to identify gaps in signage.

### **Progress:**

7.1 The Estates Division (ED), in collaboration with the Disability and Well-being Office (DWO), continues to make further improvements to the physical environment of the School. The assessment of the signage and on-line information is an ongoing activity undertaken by ED and will continue in the next academic year. The ED recently introduced a disability access request form so that disabled students and staff can bring any concerns or specific requirements to the attention of the ED.

7.2 Timetabling and new initiatives (e.g. the development of the staff counselling service and inter faith centre) consider access issues as standard in the planning process.

7.3 The Disability and Wellbeing office (DWO) liaise closely with the Accommodation office. The Accommodation office facilitated a tour of all the accommodation for the new head of DWO during the first month that the post holder was in place.

7.4 A system of priority places in halls of residence for disabled students has been put in place with a view to providing better proximity and access to university resources for disabled students; The Disability and Wellbeing office is working with the Accommodation office and student representatives on a disability policy

7.5 The Estates Strategy Committee of the School takes into account the requirements of the

disability legislation as part of its management of the School's estate. Discussions are ongoing about ensuring the ongoing active involvement of disabled people in the process of estates development.

7.6 We have also reviewed our pricing structure for disabled adapted rooms at High Holborn residence, resulting in charges that are lower than otherwise equivalent non adapted rooms.

7.7 The New Student Centre design has disabled access designed in ab initio to BS8300:2009, advised by David Bonnet Associates. This includes, for example, step free access routes from the street to all floors, as well as features to assist people with visual and other disabilities. This will address the majority of access issues remaining on site. An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the development of the School's new student centre.

7.8 The NAB opened in Michaelmas Term 2008, giving step free access to all floors, achieved by (inter alia) investing £1m in changing the ground floor level to meet the adjacent street levels. Other features include wheelchair spaces in all lecture theatres and classrooms, facilities for people with hearing difficulties, and more.

7.9 The Brunch Bowl refurbishment has resulted in a restaurant where people in wheelchairs can use almost any table, instead of being confined to one table in a corner near the cashier. It may not be apparent, but the walkways are also designed and identified by distinct colouring to assist people with visual difficulties and to ensure that wheelchair access is kept free of obstruction.

## 8. Monitoring and Reporting Progress - Key Actions:

- a) Disability equality is monitored on a regular basis.
- b) The progress of disability equality is reported on a regular basis to internal and external stakeholders.

8.1 In May 2009 a conference took place to ensure ongoing engagement of disabled people in the progress of the DES.

### Progress:

8.2 The Disability and Well-being Office, the Human Resources Division and the Academic Registrar's Division monitor disability on an ongoing basis.

Table 1: DWO Case work with individual students and support

|  | 2001/<br>02 | 2002/<br>03 | 2003/<br>04 | 2004/<br>05 | 2005/<br>06 | 2006/<br>07 | 2007/<br>08 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Students with "current" files in the Disability Office | 120         | 300         | 440         | 434         | 563         | 790         | 850         |
| One-to-one appointments with disability adviser        | 377         | 518         | 570         | 694         | 693         | 588         | 550         |
| One-to-one appointments with dyslexia adviser          |             |             |             |             | 279         | 313         | 378         |
| One-to-one appointments with mental health adviser     |             |             |             |             |             | 510         | 605         |
| One-to-one appointments                                |             |             |             |             | 88          |             |             |
| Number of formal assessments arranged for              | 9           | 31          | 45          | 52          | 69          | 73          | 91          |

|                                 |  |  |  |  |  |    |    |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|----|----|
| students with possible dyslexia |  |  |  |  |  |    |    |
| Number of Needs Assessments     |  |  |  |  |  | 11 | 10 |

8.3 The Human Resources Division has undertaken a number of initiatives for the disabled staff. It has achieved its target to reduce the number of staff on whom diversity data was unknown by undertaking a positive mailing to all staff. As a result, the proportion of disabled staff who notified us of their disability increased by 50%. See Table 2 for a breakdown of these figures for academic and non-academic staff with disabilities.

Table 2: Staff at LSE

| Academic Staff           | LSE Figures (2007/08) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Declared disabled        | 17 (1.2%)             |
| Not known to be disabled | 1393 (97.5%)          |
| Information not provided | 18 (1.3%)             |
| Total                    | 1428                  |
| Non-academic Staff       | LSE Figures (2007/08) |
| Declared disabled        | 25 (1.6%)             |
| Not known to be disabled | 1542 (98.0%)          |
| Information not provided | 7 (0.4%)              |
| Total                    | 1574                  |

8.4 The Academic Registrar's Division (ARD) provides the Disability and Well-being office with a monthly update on disabilities offer figures, in addition to an overall summary in September which included a student breakdown based on the disability code.

8.5 In 2008, LSE received a total of 19200 undergraduate applications, 2.4% (or 456) of which were from disabled students. Of 2703 applicants in 2008, 1.1% (or 30) were made to disabled students (which is slightly more than 1.0% in 2007). These figures show that LSE is making progress in trying to ensure that none of its applicants are in any way discriminated against on the basis of their disability. See Table 3 for a detailed breakdown of total undergraduate and postgraduate students registered at LSE.

Table 3: Total Students Registered at LSE

| Undergraduate Students | LSE Figures (2007/08) |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Disabled               | 123 (2.9%)            |
| Non-disabled           | 4101 (97.1%)          |
| Total                  | 4224 (100%)           |
| Postgraduate Students  | LSE Figures (2007/08) |
| Disabled               | 202 (3.8%)            |
| Non-disabled           | 5180 (96.2%)          |
|                        | 5382 (100%)           |

8.6 Over the next academic year, efforts will include developing a formal system/mechanism of equality and diversity monitoring, including the identification of specific indicators for data collection. The School will also review what information is currently available and, in the light of benchmarks or external comparators, what additional information is needed to improve staff/student data collection and analysis. Towards this end, the Planning and Corporate Policy

Division has made provision to employ a part-time Data Controller to help monitor School's efforts in this area.

**9. Contact Details for Further Information:**

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If you would like the report in another format or language then please contact: Planning and Corporate Policy Division Tel: 020 7955 7824.

LSE's Disability Equality Scheme and the Action Plan can be accessed at:  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/planningAndCorporatePolicy/pdf/disabilityEqualityScheme.pdf>