1 Introduction

Oldham Lifelong Learning Service is committed to delivering excellent service to learners, whilst continuously improving the way we promote equality and celebrate diversity.

As part of our on going commitment, we collect relevant equality information about our learners. This information helps us to understand if we are meeting learner needs and how we can improve the services we offer.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discriminatory laws with a single Act. It simplified the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with. It also strengthened the law in important ways, in order to help tackle discrimination and inequality. (Source: “Equality Act 2010: Specific duties to support the equality duty….” Government Equalities Office)

The specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 require the Service, as an Educational Provider, to publish information showing compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually; and to set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

This document publishes information which demonstrates that the Service has due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The information the Service currently collects will help inform the Service’s equality objectives as part of the Equality Act 2010. The Service currently collects information on some of the protected characteristics, namely Race, Gender, Age and Disability. The Service will set objectives to ensure that information is collected on the remaining protected characteristics as relevant, by 2012/13 academic year.

This summary provides information on participation of learners from some of the protected characteristics as well as their attainment.

If you have any questions or comments about Oldham Lifelong Learning Service and equality and diversity please contact:

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2 The Service

Oldham Lifelong Learning Service is a direct deliverer of post-19 learning opportunities. The Local Authority is committed to providing learning in the most appropriate and convenient locations for learners.

The Mission Statement
Lifelong Learning seeks to create opportunities and reduce barriers enabling adults to study and learn.

It positively works to provide local learning opportunities to enable all learners to improve their confidence, develop their knowledge, skills and creativity and to realise their potential.

The service will consult its communities, learners and partners to ensure that it responds to changing local needs and demands whilst continuously improving the quality of its provision.

Strategic Objectives

- To develop a relevant and flexibly delivered curriculum as a foundation for lifelong learning to meet the needs of the target groups and to encourage non-participating adults to return to learning and develop employability skills.

- To maintain the service’s commitment to quality assurance in order to achieve a high quality of service delivery.

- To develop further collaborative partnerships with the statutory sector, voluntary agencies and local communities to ensure coherent provision and progression for users of the service.

- To ensure that staff deliver good quality teaching and learning and provide stimulating and challenging opportunities for all learners on vocational and non-vocational courses.

- To promote the Lifelong Learning Service ensuring that information, advice, marketing and publicity are relevant and accessible to the target groups.

- To ensure the delivery of a high quality and accessible service by the provision of appropriate resources.

Policies and Procedures
The Service operates a comprehensive range of policies and procedures including Equal Opportunity & Diversity, Harassment & Bullying, Safeguarding and Complaints. In addition, the Service assesses the equality impact of all decisions and policies regarding the services they offer.
3 Equality Data

3.1 Who uses our Service? Learners and groups who are protected by the Equality Act 2010

3.1.1 Race

In 2010/11 academic year;

- 32% of learners were from a black or minority ethnic (BME) background

Of these learners;
- 31% were in Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) and 43% in First Steps (non qualification courses)
- 46% were in Learner Responsive and 21% were in Employer Responsive (Now Adult Skills Budget)

The Oldham 2001 Census figures show that 9.8% of Oldham’s population aged 20 and over were from a BME background. However, the 2010 Mid Year Population Estimates for Oldham indicate that the ethnic composition of Oldham’s population aged 19 and over is as follows: 85% of Oldham’s population aged 19 and over are from white backgrounds; 15% are from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

The Service provides courses across Oldham and targets learners in the disadvantaged areas of Oldham which have high representation of BME heritage residents.

The Service also works in areas of deprivation where the population is largely White-British heritage, for example in the Fitton Hill and Medlock Vale areas. 29% of learners across the Service’s courses (from all ethnic backgrounds) came from the top five most deprived wards in Oldham as defined by the index of multiple deprivation; 46% of our learners came from the top 10 deprived wards in Oldham. The Service offers its provision in venues in deprived communities, with around 64% of its learners from these communities.

3.1.2 Gender

In 2010/11 academic year;

- 23% of learners were male
- 76% of learners were female

- 21% of male learners were in ASL and 25% in First Steps (non qualification courses)
- 26% of male learners were in Learner Responsive and Employer Responsive (now Adult Skills Budget)
Oldham 2001 Census figures show that 47% of Oldham’s population aged 20 are male. The 2010 Mid Year Population Estimates for Oldham indicate that of the population aged 19 and over, 48% were male and 52% were female.

However, men have traditionally been under-represented in Adult and Community Learning across the country. The percentage of male learners accessing the Service is in line with other Providers nationally. According to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning (IACL): Equality Impact Assessment, Revised Screening Document published in September 2011 25% of participants in IACL nationally are male.

3.1.3. Age

The Service statistics show that people of all ages accessed the service.

- 10% of learners are aged 19 – 24
- 26% were aged 25 – 34
- 22% were aged 35 – 44
- 14% were aged 45 – 54
- 14% were aged 55 – 64
- 10% were aged 65+

The Service attracts learners from a wide variety of age groups compared to the local population.

The Service percentages are in line with the BIS Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning (IACL): Equality Impact Assessment, Revised Screening Document published in September 2011, which states that 92% of learners funded by Adult Safeguarded learning are aged 25 and over.

3.1.4. Disability

- 12% percent of learners declared a disability
- 12% of these learners were in ASL and 14% in First Steps (non qualification courses)
- 12% were in Learner and Employer Responsive (now Adult Skills Budget)

In addition;
- 10% of learners declared a learning difficulty
- 9% of these learners were in ASL and 13% were in First Steps
- 11% were in Learner and Employer Responsive (now Adult Skills Budget)

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1 Statistical First Release DS/SFR12
According to the BIS Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning (IACL): Equality Impact Assessment, Revised Screening Document published in September 2011 2% of England’s population have a learning disability and 12% of IACL learners declared that they have a learning disability\(^1\).

### 3.1.5. Supported Learners

These are learners who are assisted by either the Learner Support Team or external support. Supported learners receive a wide range of support. A supported learner may have a Learning Support Assistant in the classroom or they may have one session with their tutor and an Assistant to plan how course materials can be adapted to suit their requirements. Support is also provided through specialist resources and assistive technology.

- 9% of learners were supported.

- 10% of learners in ASL courses were supported in ASL and 5% in First Steps (non qualification courses).

- 6% of learners in Learner Responsive courses were supported

The balance of supported learners in vocational courses shows that supported learners are being fully integrated into qualification courses, which is a key aim of the Learning Support function.

### 3.1.6. Deprivation

29% of all learners across the Service (from all ethnic backgrounds) came from the top five most deprived wards in Oldham as defined by the index of multiple deprivation. Overall, 46% of learners came from the top 10 deprived wards in Oldham. The Service offers its provision in venues in deprived communities, with around 64% of its learners from these communities. This reflects the Service’s efforts to work in the areas of most need.

#### Learners who received a concession

These are learners who either paid nothing for their course or received a discount.

- 68% of learners received a concession.

- 65% of these learners were in ASL and 94% in First Steps (non qualification courses)

- 81% were in Learner Responsive and 63% were in Employer Responsive.
3.2 How well do learners from different backgrounds achieve?

Oldham Lifelong Learning Service monitors whether learners complete their course, if they pass their exam or achieve their learning outcome at the end of the course. This statistic is called the success rate.

The Service continues to monitor success rates by equality groups. It looks at how successful different equality groups are, for example how successful are men compared to women. It also looks at learners grouped together by ethnicity, gender, disability, age, concessionary status, and supported learners.

There were no trends by equality groups that caused concern.

If managers identify significant variances, they put an action plan in place. This is to ensure that the reason for the variance is identified and that relevant actions are taken to ensure that the gap is narrowed.

3.3 Learner satisfaction

The Service’s Learner Satisfaction Survey gives more detail about how satisfied learners are with the Service. The proportion of learners by equality group who completed the Survey compares well to the proportion of learners by equality group who learn with us. In addition the English for Speakers of Other Languages and Skills For Life curriculums now use adapted surveys which have made the satisfaction survey more accessible to these groups.

The Service has in place a range of mechanisms where learners can make suggestions for improvements to the Service. Out of over 6,000 learners who attended courses in the 2010/11 academic year, there were four formal complaints received. All complaints were dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant and relevant improvements were put in place.

Complaints are analysed against the protected characteristics and there were no trends by equality groups that caused concern.

This reflects the diversity of the learners and is a good indication that the complaints system is accessible.

The Service operates an harassment and bullying policy and procedure and hate incident reporting system.

3.4 Equality planning, consultation and involvement

Learners and staff have been involved in the annual self assessment on equality and diversity every year. Equality Impact Assessments have included a review of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.

Other forms of consultation included consultation events for learners and partners to help to decide what courses we put on and where we put them on and also course feedback sheets and surveys.
3.5 Staffing / Employment

As the Service sits within Oldham Council, information on employment is collated and monitored corporately. The Service, in line with corporate policy, continues to operate a Positive Action Strategy for Staff Recruitment and Development.

3.6 Diversity celebration

The Service contributes to a number of diversity celebration events including Oldham’s Festival of Diversity, No Place for Racism, International Day Against Homophobia and Refugee Week.