

Disability Statement 2008 – 9

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Disability Statement 2008/9

Welcome to City College, Birmingham

Congratulations on joining our college, which brings together a group of high quality campuses to create one of the most significant educational establishments in the country. As a student of City College, you will have all the advantages of being part of one of the largest college in the West Midlands region while benefiting from the personal care and attention that each one of our local campuses provides. Every year we enrol over 10,000 students drawn from all sectors of the community and from all walks of life. They join us to make the most of their life chances and we work very hard indeed to help them achieve their ambitions. We may have 10,000 students but we serve them individually. I know that all my colleagues are dedicated to making you feel valued as an individual and to supporting you on your particular course.

In 07-08 our disabled students had their most successful year ever with success rates increasing at level 1 (including entry), level 2 and level 3. Enrolments at level 2 and 3 also increased. Nearly three quarters of all students with high support needs on long courses such as NVQs, achieved the full qualification. Getting the right support in place is crucial. You can feel confident in disclosing information to us and we will use this information to work with you to agree a suitable support plan.

It's great to have you with us. We'll do everything we can to make your time at City College enjoyable and worthwhile.

David Gibson Interim Principal

City College has a long tradition of success in supporting disabled students, and others with additional learning support needs, in achieving their educational goals. We were highly praised for our work by Ofsted in 2003 and we were pleased to receive similar praise when Ofsted returned in November 07. They identified our '*prompt action to identify and meet additional learning needs*' and our '*good provision for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties*' as two of the strengths of the college. Our disabled students also reported higher than average levels of satisfaction in a student survey conducted by an independent organisation with very high numbers saying '*I know the kind of support I can get from College*'.

Additional learning support is a central part of what we do. In 07-08 approximately 2,000 students studying at City College declared a disability and/or learning difficulty. Some of these students had high support needs but others needed comparatively little help to be successful.

We are, of course always working towards improving our services. We now employ over 50 staff whose main job role is to support students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

In 2007-8 over 1000 students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties received financial help from our Learner Support Fund. This fund can help students who are experiencing financial hardship with things like transport, essential equipment and course fees, provided they meet Learner Support Fund eligibility criteria.

In December 2006 we launched our Disability Equality Scheme which forms an important part of our Equality Scheme. The Scheme sets out how we plan to meet the new Disability Equality Duty including what our priorities are for the next three years.

We consulted with disabled staff and students in developing the scheme. This consultation included eight in depth interviews with students with a variety of support needs. We thought the information provided by the students was so interesting and important that we made a film in which they were able to present their views. The film was shown to all staff as part of a college development day on equality in March 2007.

The Equality Scheme (including the Disability Equality Scheme) can be downloaded from our website (www.citycol.ac.uk) through a link at the bottom of the page.

We are committed to ensuring that people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, are treated fairly and that we comply fully with our legal obligations. We will make all reasonable adjustments to provision to ensure that disabled students and other disabled people are not substantially disadvantaged. If you have a physical or sensory impairment, mental health difficulty and/or learning difficulty, please ensure that we know what you need so that we can make the necessary adjustments to help you succeed.

Alasdair Innes
Additional Learning Support Manager: Disability

1. Our mission and our policy

Our mission and our policy supports inclusion, widening participation and diversity. Our approach to equal opportunities is based on three practical principles:

- identifying barriers to inclusion
- working to remove them
- celebrating diversity

We take an essentially practical approach to a shared belief that all members of the community can benefit from education and training, and should be enabled to achieve their individual potential.

In one sense, therefore, students with physical disabilities and/or learning difficulties are not singled out in the college's published statements and plans, since the emphasis is on parity of treatment for all students. For example, the admissions system and the tutorial system are basically the same for all students. However, part of the strategy is to recognise that there are individuals, groups and communities who may require facilities, provision and targeted resources to enable them to become successful.

A natural consequence of this approach is that our policy states that all staff are responsible for developing and promoting inclusion, widening participation and diversity. However, there are named individuals with specific responsibilities to ensure the requirements of particular individuals and groups are met. Some of the implications of this approach are:

- Staff and students are expected to behave in a way that does not disadvantage other individuals or groups, and this is built into our College Code.
- Staff and students are encouraged to create an atmosphere of openness where people can make mistakes and learn from them, recognising that there are no simple answers.

- All staff are expected to take responsibility for all students when needed, so everyone is involved in trying to create an atmosphere of inclusion and in giving practical support when needed.
- We are committed to ensuring that people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are as far as possible integrated into all courses and all centres of the college. However, we recognise that some students may need additional support in a large college, and we may give this through discrete tutor groups, baserooms, personal facilities, where appropriate.
- All students will be aiming for recognised qualifications and their educational and career aspirations will be taken seriously.
- We are working to ensure disabled students are represented and supported at all centres, including our new Academies. We recognise that some students with learning difficulties benefit from discrete provision and we offer programmes at a range of centres including for women only at our Saltley and Golden Hillock Academies.
- We also offer programmes for people who use mental health services. These programmes can be accessed at a range of day centres and college sites. Women only provision is available at the Golden Hillock Academy and the Bordesley Centre.
- All possible funding routes will be explored to add value to provision.
- Whenever the college develops strategy, provision and services for specific groups of students, they are involved in planning and evaluation.
- Our professional development strategy includes an entitlement for any staff to be trained in understanding and supporting students better. Staff who work substantially with students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties will be supported to achieve relevant specialist qualifications.

2. Admissions

Our Charter entitles all students access to appropriate information and assessment by the college. We provide information to students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties about the college and our courses in a format that can be understood. Our information is available in Braille, large print, or community languages on request and a reader or sign communicator can be made available if required. Our college website has the option for changing the size and colour of fonts. Our course directories give general information on support available and our Student Handbook and Diary gives specific information on support services. As a potential student you are entitled to:

- a quick response to your initial enquiry

- information requested being sent to you in the appropriate format
- an appointment to discuss opportunities available to you with either a member of Student Services or a subject tutor
- an opportunity to discuss any support requirements that you may have
- an initial assessment to confirm whether the course or level is right for you, taking into account any qualifications you already have. We also carry out diagnostic assessments to identify any further support requirements that you may have

When you apply to join the college and when you enrol we ask you to tell us if you have a disability, mental health difficulty, and/or learning difficulty that we should know about. It is essential you provide us with any information, which will enable us to ensure your health and safety or the health and safety of others. Any information disclosed is treated with respect. It is used to assess and respond to any support requirements that you may have. If, for example, you need a specialist assessment to help us find out what equipment may be suitable for you or if we need to establish the extent of a sensory disability, we might bring in an external assessor to help. If for any reason we cannot meet your support requirements, we will try to refer you to an alternative provider who can meet them.

We aim to match you to the right learning programme and to provide you with the appropriate support. You will be asked to sign to confirm any support arrangements we agree with you. Once you are on your learning programme, we will allocate you a personal tutor who will ensure that you have an appropriate induction and who will monitor your progress.

3. Educational facilities

3.1 Student support

We try to ensure that all students are matched to their learning programmes through initial assessment procedures. Students' individual requirements are identified by personal tutors during this process, and then the appropriate support is put into place. We will arrange external assessment if necessary. Support can include things like reading, taking notes, providing and helping in the use of specialised equipment and personal support. Personal support is provided by teams of experienced staff, male and female. They are trained to assist with personal support needs and to support students in the cafeteria, the classroom and in getting around the college. Support staff also prepare materials for students, liaising with tutors as appropriate. This may include enlarging print and Braille learning materials. Support staff are available to assist students in workshops and classes that involve practical skills.

Students can also be supported in the work experience elements of their course and encouraged to take part in educational visits and residential.

Once you are a student, we can offer you support in a number of ways, through:

- **Your personal tutor.** You can let your tutor know if you think your college work may be affected by your disability, or medical condition. Your personal tutor will follow this up with you and other specialist staff if necessary.
- **Our Enabling Services Manager, Bill Bucknall,** who will arrange for specialist assessments and specialist support to be made available.
- **The Support Worker team** who operate across all college sites. Support workers can help with personal care, mobility needs and classroom support. This also includes assisting with practical activities, using equipment and preparing learning materials for you. We can arrange for a sign communicator to be made available if you require one.
- **Examination arrangements.** We can sometimes get permission for a student to have extra time or support for examinations. This needs to be arranged well in advance. If you think you may be entitled to adjustments to exams and/or assessments you should discuss this with your personal tutor.
- **Improving the college environment.** We regularly consult our students on what would make the college environment better. We are always interested to hear from you if you have a suggestion on how we can make our environment better for you. You can hand your suggestions in to reception at our main sites or any of our centres, or email them to your Head of Campus or Centre Coordinator.
- **Work experience, educational visits and residential.** You may require support to take part in certain aspects of your course such as work experience, out of college activities and residential. Our Enabling Services Manager will be happy to discuss your requirements. The support workers or student services team may be able to assist you or help with transport arrangements. If we cannot provide you with our own transport, we may be able to finance other options.
- **Additional support for literacy, numeracy or language.** This can be in-class, group or one-to-one support and is arranged through your personal tutor.
- **Dyslexia support.** We have a team of dyslexia support tutors who are available to offer you a dyslexia assessment and specialist support. Our Dyslexia Co-ordinators, Melanie Crowley and Helen Johnson, will be happy to discuss your requirements. Contact and support can be arranged through your personal tutor.

- **Learner Support Fund.** This fund provides financial support for students experiencing financial hardship, and can help with things like equipment, fees, travel costs, and childcare expenses (internal nurseries only). Application forms are available at reception at all main sites and at all local centres. Our Student Advisers can also offer advice on welfare benefits, other sources of financial help and personal issues. You must satisfy the residency criteria to be able to apply for the Learner Support Fund.
- **Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs).** This is a government scheme of weekly allowances and bonus payments for 16 -18 year olds on a full time course and whose family gross taxable income is less than £30,810 per year. You must satisfy the residency criteria to be able to apply for an EMA.
- **Adult Learning Grant (ALG).** This is a government scheme of weekly allowances for students who are 19+. To apply you must be over 18 years old, on courses of at least 12 hours pw and studying for your first full level 2 or 3 qualification. You must satisfy the residency criteria to be able to apply for an ALG.
- **Care to Learn.** This scheme is for young parents under 20 years of age. It will pay for your childcare costs and travel to your childcare provider. You must use a registered childcare provider.
- **Student Advisers.** Our team of trained student advisers can help you to make application to these and other funds available to support you whilst you are engaged in education and training. Further information is available in the booklet 'Cash College and You' available from Student Services.

3.2 Relevant staff experience

There are many individuals and groups at City College who can assist you. Job titles and roles are listed at the end of this statement. There is a large, experienced, team of tutors involved in delivering courses specifically provided for students with learning difficulties. Most have teaching qualifications, some in the field of special education. There are regular in-house training sessions to update staff. All course teams are encouraged to take part in these sessions in order to support students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in their classes, including mainstream classes. Students with dyslexia have the opportunity for individual and small group tutorials with specialist teachers and specialist software. We employ a number of qualified sign communicators and we contract other specialist support services from other agencies as needed. Many of the staff in our support worker teams already hold relevant qualifications and others are currently working towards them. All support workers undertake in house training including disability awareness and health and safety.

3.3 Technology and equipment

We have a range of equipment, including various computer aids and adaptations, to meet individual requirements. These include anti glare screens, joysticks, track balls, wrist rests, keyguards, large monitors, speech and zoom software, Braille embossers and Perkins Brailier. Induction loops and a cordless induction loop systems with radio transmitters are also available. We have some height adjustable tables and we can usually adapt furniture to suit individual needs. We take advice from external specialist organisations on appropriate equipment and support for individual students

4. Suggestions, concerns and complaints

We provide opportunities for you to make suggestions, express concerns and make complaints both informally and formally. **Informal** suggestions, concerns and complaints are normally dealt with through your personal tutor, the Students Union or Student Advisers. The procedure is described in both our Charter and our Student Diary. There is a list of contacts at the end of this statement. Contacts are also listed in our Charter which can be found on the college's webpage – look under “Entitlements.”

We also provide a clear and accessible system for you to make **formal** suggestions, concerns and complaints. The forms for this are available from reception at our main campuses and local centres. If you prefer, a member of the college management team will meet with you (and a friend if you wish), at a convenient place and time to discuss the matter fully. Your advocate may be a friend or relative or a member of the support worker team if you wish. We will investigate the matter thoroughly and report back on the outcome to you promptly, either in writing or verbally. This is explained in our College Charter. As part of our quality system, we monitor all student concerns and identify any commonly occurring ones for action.

5. Examinations and assessment

We encourage our tutors to discuss examination support needs with student with disabilities and/or learning difficulties early in their course. Tutors are then advised to contact the college examinations officers so that any arrangements students with disabilities are entitled to (e.g. extra time or someone to write for you) can be made with the examination boards. If an examining board requires written confirmation of the support required, Bill Bucknall, our Enabling Services Manager will liaise with appropriate agencies. It is very important that tutors check the dates by which applications for special arrangements need to be made to the examination boards. When tutors submit entries to the examinations team you are asked to indicate if special arrangements are required on the class list. We try to be as flexible as possible regarding other forms of assessment, enabling you to complete assignments, portfolios or records of competence in the most appropriate way and within an achievable time scale. We also use RARPA (Recognising and Recording Performance and Achievement), which means we can accredit a broader range of achievement.

6. Facilities and support

6.1 Advice

Student Advisers from the Student Services team are available to support you. You can book appointments through Student Services or the administration staff at the centre you study at. You can often get an appointment to see a Student Adviser without booking in advance.

Student Advisers - the role of Student Advisers is to support you throughout your time at the college. They offer impartial and confidential information, advice and guidance to students in the following areas:

- courses and careers guidance
- welfare benefits, grants and financial advice including specific advice for people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties
- information and guidance on personal issues

They will refer you to external sources of specialist support and help you access these if appropriate.

6.1 Retention and Achievement Mentors

There is a team of Retention and Achievement Mentors who support students with their learning. They are particularly involved with helping students who are experiencing difficulties with their studies because they have been absent and need help to catch up. They are available to offer individual or group support to students who for a whole range of reasons are experiencing difficulties with their programme of study. They also help students who are working successfully on their courses but it is felt that with some additional help the student could reach their full potential.

6.2 Information, advice and guidance on courses and careers

We have student advisers and qualified Careers Advisers to give course and careers information and guidance to individuals and groups. They work to Matrix quality standards. We have course directories and information sheets, computers and careers software at all our main campuses and many of our other centres. These offer a browsing facility within a well stocked careers library, up to date information on jobs and further/higher education, computers to help you write CVs and letters, a range of local and national newspapers and career magazines. This information is available in Braille, on tape, or in large print, on request and when not available efforts will be made by the Learning Resource staff to meet individual needs.

City College has also established links with the Connexions and appointments can be arranged for you to visit a convenient Connexions centre or for an adviser to visit the college.

6.3 Welfare benefits

Many students need advice about financial matters and each year we produce the Cash College & You booklet as a guide to finance at college. If you need individual advice on financial matters, benefit entitlements or information about grants, book an appointment with a student adviser through Student Services.

6.4 Personal issues

City College has trained student welfare advisers who are able to provide a confidential service in relation to personal issues. Although we respect confidentiality, we reserve the right not to be bound by confidentiality in exceptional circumstances where there is strong evidence to believe that a student is a serious danger to themselves or others.

6.5 First aid

City College has a team of trained first aiders who are on call on a rota. Arrangement can be made for further medical help as required. Where necessary arrangements will be made for the transportation of students to the nearest hospital or their home.

6.6 Childcare & Nurseries

City College has a limited number of places in our nursery based at our Handsworth campus. We also have a special arrangement with the Golden Start nursery in the Children's Centre at the Golden Hillock Academy. Priority is given to students on the second year of their two-year programme. Other places are allocated on a first come first served basis. Students can apply for Learner Support Fund for funding to pay their childcare costs for internal nursery places. Young parents can apply get support for both internal and external childcare costs through the Care to Learn scheme.

6.7 Child Protection

The college has a very rigorous Child Protection procedure. We are committed to working with all other agencies concerned with child protection. Whilst it is not the college's responsibility to investigate, we have a duty to notify the Social Services Department or the police if there is cause for concern. If you would like a full copy of our Child Protection Procedures, contact Julie Allder who is our named Child Protection Officer.

6.8 Canteens

Full details of the college's catering facilities are available in the student handbook.

7. Physical access to education and other facilities

7.1 Modern Accessible Centres

We are fortunate at City College to have been able to move a lot of our provision into our new purpose built centres which are all fully compliant with DDA

City Technology Campus
City Academy: Aston
City Academy: Golden Hillock
City Academy: Saltley
North West Skills Academy
Women's Academy

7.2 Older buildings

We have made substantial progress in improving accessibility at our older, East Birmingham and Handsworth campuses. We will be moving out of the East Birmingham Campus when our new Fordrough Campus opens in 2009. The Handsworth Campus includes a grade 2 listed building which means it does not always lend itself easily to re-adaptation. If you have any concerns about accessibility please contact Bill Bucknall our Enabling Services Manager who will be able to assess and advise on an individual basis.

7.3 Direct provision in partnership buildings

We also offer direct provision at the following centres where we have partnership arrangements

Bordesley Centre of Further and Higher Education
Nishkam Centre in Handsworth
The Pump in Kitts Green

The Nishkam and Pump centres are new builds which are fully compliant with DDA and the Bordesley Centre has had substantial investment in improving accessibility.

8. Partnership and franchise centres

We work in partnership with 9 community-based organisations and provide education and training on their premises. We do not own their buildings and they are responsible for physical accessibility issues. We do of course support our partners in making reasonable adjustments. For details on accessibility you can either contact the partnership organisation directly or contact the college to do so on your behalf. The list of organisations with which we work is always changing. At the time of publication (September 2008) the community-based organisations we work with are as follows:

8.1 Franchises

- Birmingham Counselling Centre
- Employment Needs Training Agency (ENTA)
- Rehab UK
- Security Industry Training Academy (SITA)
- Foyers

8.2 Partnerships

- Innovate Learning Centre
- Jama'At E Ahle E Sunnat UK (JAS)
- Real Help Education Welfare Trust
- Sikh Community and Youth Service

Contact Ghulam Vohra, our Learning Partnership Manager for contact numbers and further details about any of the above Partnership centres

9. Contacts

David Gibson - Interim Principal

City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
Birmingham B33 0TS
Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 722 3711 Email: dgibson@citycol.ac.uk

Monica Coke - Governor for Disability

Contact via Debbie Cole: Clerk to the Governors
City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
Birmingham B33 0TS
Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: dcole@citycol.ac.uk

Ian Campbell – Head of Faculty: Supported Learning

City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
Birmingham B33 0TS
Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: icampbell@citycol.ac.uk

Caroline Gray – Curriculum Operations Manager – Adults

City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
Birmingham B33 0TS
Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: cgray@citycol.ac.uk

Sue Pace Curriculum Operations Manager –Young People

City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
Birmingham B33 0TS
Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: space@citycol.ac.uk

Colin Jones Curriculum Operations Manager – Mental health

City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: cjones@citycol.ac.uk

Alasdair Innes - Additional Support Manager: Disability

City College, Birmingham
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: ainnes@citycol.ac.uk

Bill Bucknall - Enabling Services Manager

City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: bbucknall@citycol.ac.uk

Leanne Roth - Support Worker Team Leader

City College, Birmingham
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: lroath@citycol.ac.uk

Lorraine Romney – Manager Key Skills and Additional Support: Literacy & Numeracy

City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: lromney@citycol.ac.uk

Helen Johnson - Dyslexia Coordinator West

Handsworth Campus East Campus
Soho Rd Garretts Green Lane
Birmingham B21 9DP Birmingham B33 0TS
Tel: 0121 204 0000 Email: hjohnson@citycol.ac.uk

Melanie Crowley – Dyslexia Coordinator East

City College, Birmingham
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: mcrowley@citycol.ac.uk

Julie Allder– Head of Student Services (includes child/adult protection)

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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: jallder@citycol.ac.uk

Mark Pickering – Student Services – Operations Manager (guidance)

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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: mpickering@citycol.ac.uk

Alicia Doyle – Assistant Operational Manager- Welfare and Mentoring

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Lee Goodway – Financial Support Coordinator

City College, Birmingham
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: lgoodway@citycol.ac.uk

Gerry Begley – Health and Safety Manager

City College, Birmingham
East Campus, Garretts Green Lane
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: gbegley@citycol.ac.uk

Lynda Campbell – Exams and Achievement Manager

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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: lcampbell@citycol.ac.uk

Campus Management (Disciplinary Procedures & Suggestions, Concerns & Complaints)

Silbert McQueen -Head of Campus Management

City College, Birmingham
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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: smcqueen@citycol.ac.uk

Karen Curran – Head of Campus – Central Group

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Tel: 0121 204 0000 Fax: 0121 743 9050 Email: kcurran@citycol.ac.uk

Hanna Miles – Head of Campus – East Group

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10. Your views

If you would like to make any comment about this Disability Statement please contact Alasdair Innes, Additional Support Manager: Disability or Bill Bucknall, Enabling Services Manager. For example, you may feel that we have left out important information or that the layout is not helpful. Your comments will be very helpful when reviewing the statement next year. If you have any observations, suggestions or feedback about our services for people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties we would be pleased to hear from you. Copies of this Disability Statement are also available in Braille and large print on request.

**Alasdair Innes: Additional Support Manager: Disability -
ainnes@citycol.ac.uk**

Bill Bucknall: Enabling Services Manager - bbucknall@citycol.ac.uk