



## Introduction

City Lit is committed to being an open-hearted and ambitious organisation where what we do supports all to realise their ambitions. Everyone should have the opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential, characterised by equity of respect and prospects. We commit to supporting all, including, but not limited to those with protected characteristics.

This review is published in support of our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equity of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.
- provide an environment that welcomes and supports all without exception and promotes inclusion, respect and equity of opportunity as well as being proactive in reducing inequality. We foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our legal duty is protection from discrimination or harassment based on nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Race
- Disability
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion and belief

This review covers the academic year 2022/23:

## How we support the Equality Duty

### What we do

We have a national and international reputation as a leading provider of part-time learning for adults. Established in 1919, we currently offer over 5,000 courses to approximately 24,000 students a year. Our wide range of courses are delivered by our four Schools –



Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Languages and Humanities, Skills, Employment and Wellbeing and the Centre for Deaf Education. We also deliver a wide range of student support and services through our Student Centre and Access, Inclusion & Support teams.

Through this provision we work with a diverse student body and communities across London targeting disadvantaged groups including immigrants and refugees. We are proud that we attract a diverse range of students such as older learners, adults with mental health support needs or learning disabilities, professionals, and those with specialist needs such as Deaf people or people who stammer. We are legally a further education college; however, we also have charitable status.

Since 2016 our purpose has been *Bringing people together to enrich lives through learning*. In 2019 City Lit's strategy was updated considering the impact of the Covid pandemic with the following strategic drivers:

- Placing students at the centre of curriculum and service decisions.
- Building back sustainably to reflect our diverse communities' needs and maximising our community, social and charitable impact.
- Contribute to shape the future of lifelong learning by demonstrating our impact on the lives of students and society at large.

These drivers ensure that at least two of the specific duties described in the introduction (advancing equity of opportunity and fostering good relations) are at the heart of our operations. The second strategic driver places emphasis on our work with communities – both geographic and social. Our social communities include groups that share protected characteristics.

Staff who work at City Lit are committed to improving the lives of others. We are a charity, and our sole motivation is providing lifelong learning that is accessible to and impactful for all. City Lit is inclusive.

As a college, we:

- Operate on a personal level where community matters. We believe that there are significant social and mental wellbeing benefits by bringing students together so they can interact with each other and their tutor.
- Foster personal growth, independence and creativity that enables people to recognise and fulfil their potential.
- Open new opportunities in education and employment and provide the highest quality education and learning experience.



- Are committed to maximising social impact by providing learning opportunities for those who are disadvantaged due to physical ability, mental health, or finance.

A particular strength of City Lit is the wider benefit students gain in terms of their social, mental, physical, creative, and intellectual fulfilment. We excel at developing students' self-confidence and understanding of their potential to be successful.

In 2022/23 current data shows that students who declared a disability or a learning difficulty on non-accredited programmes, are achieving less well in comparison to those without, with the achievement gap being 4%; 89% v's 93% for enrolled students who have completed their courses. If students still on programme achieve, then this gap will reduce to 2%; 95% v's 97%. Both retention and attendance are broadly similar for both groups and in year retention for those students who declared a disability, or a learning difficulty has improved since 2021/22; 97% v's 96%. The achievement gap on accredited courses at this point for students between the groups shows that students who have completed who have declared a disability or a learning difficulty are achieving better than those without; 75% v's 66%. Maximum achievement, once all programmes have completed shows, that overall achievement will be the same for both groups at 93%. Final data will be available in the next academic year once all assessments are complete, exam results published and resits completed. Reducing achievement gaps between these groups of students has been a focus of quality improvement initiatives and will remain so in the next academic year.

## Our areas of operation

### English, Maths, ESOL and Digital Skills

Courses in English, Maths, ESOL and Digital Skills advance equity of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not and support the fostering of good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The profile of students is a mixture of unemployed or low paid or part time/shift workers, some working locally, most seeking to gain essential skills to access work and study. 55% of students are BAME and 65% are female. Many have returned to learning after a significant break, having previously had a poor experience of education or having learning difficulties or disabilities and are able to develop employability skills. Within English, maths ESOL and Digital Skills, 19% of courses are accredited and range from Entry 1 to level 3 including GCSE English and maths, this advances equity of opportunity.



### Centre for Deaf Education

Our range of courses advance equity of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not and support the fostering of good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. By providing educational and employment opportunities that enable Deaf students and those with an acquired hearing loss to play a full part in society.

We have one of the country's leading adult Deaf Education capabilities, supporting:

- Deaf students at City Lit to develop skills in English, Maths, BSL and Digital Skills. We have developed a bespoke BSL teacher training course to address the national shortage of BSL teachers. All students on the course are Deaf and use BSL as their first language, and all tutors on the course are also Deaf BSL users.
- Deaf students at City Lit to access wider curriculum courses through the provision of BSL interpreters, notetakers, communication support workers and additional one-to-one time with subject tutors.
- people with acquired hearing loss to access lipreading courses from beginner to advanced level. We have a Lipreading Teacher Training course to address the national shortage of lipreading provision.
- those who work with Deaf adults and across the Deaf community (including teacher training) through CPD courses.
- those who need to communicate with Deaf people with British sign language and Deaf awareness training.

### Courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities

Our Learning Disabilities Education department offers a bespoke programme of non-accredited courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) that advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not, allowing students to develop important creative, independence and self-advocacy skills. Working with partner organisations, we have strengths in range of creative disciplines including visual arts, music, and drama.

We challenge misguided perceptions of what people with learning disabilities can achieve and provide a positive image of what is possible to others. Our Learning Disabilities Education department students are fully integrated in the college, with provision taking place in our main building and students performing and exhibiting at key City Lit and external events. This fosters of good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. 51% of our students in this area are BAME, illustrating that we also support people with multiple protected characteristics.



## Speech Therapy

Unique to City Lit, our Speech Therapy department has a national and international reputation as a centre of excellence for innovation in stammering therapy that advances equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not. Our courses enable powerful, life-changing benefits for students in overcoming their communication difficulties and developing a positive approach to managing communication, leading to major improvements in well-being, as well as their social and vocational life.

We are the only adult education centre offering speech therapy courses to adults with aphasia (acquired communication difficulties following stroke or head injury). This group of students benefit significantly from the opportunity to learn within a supportive and caring atmosphere.

Our provision supports:

- people who stammer
- people with aphasia
- qualified speech and language therapists

## Other provision that supports the Equality Duty

Most of our provision is open access, mixed ability courses, meaning people from all walks of life mix, learn and socialise together, fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

All our programme areas attract older students – 28% of students are aged over 60. Our courses help older people to stay active, maintaining participation and community cohesion and supporting mental and physical health. The benefits of learning for an ageing population are invaluable. Our courses provide intellectual stimulation and real opportunities to continue being an active member of society, such as volunteering, taking part in group activities and socialising. This advances equity of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

## Supporting students to participate and achieve

We advance equity of opportunity by offering many activities to support our students who need, or can benefit from, additional support. This benefits people with protected characteristics, particularly disability. Examples include:

- students with disabilities in all classes are supported by teachers who understand their responsibilities and make reasonable adjustments where necessary.



- we offer a programme of training and support to tutors to ensure they can make reasonable adjustments with confidence.
- we offer scribes, note takers or learning support assistants to students.
- for deaf students we have an onsite team of British Sign Language interpreters and communication support workers.
- many students have multiple learning needs and benefit hugely from a wide range of specialist additional learning support.

### Partnerships and events

We also organise and host events that advance equity of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not. Many of these events are undertaken in partnership with other organisations and charities; examples include:

- Deaf Day is a key annual event at City Lit and in the Deaf community, bringing Deaf people together and showcasing groups, facilities and opportunities that Deaf people can access, putting them on an equal footing to hearing people.
- Our Mental Wealth Festival, in collaboration with the charity Beyond Words, brings together the public alongside education, health, charity and corporate sectors promoting positive learning for mental health and wellbeing.
- Our partnerships with the Royal Academy of Music provides unique opportunities for our students with learning disabilities to produce original compositions and performances.
- Our Malorie Blackman Unheard Voices Writing Scholarships provide financial support and access to Creative Writing programmes to aspiring writers from underrepresented communities.

### Our teaching and learning model

Our teaching and learning model advances equity of opportunity, fosters respect for difference and supports the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. We offer classes that:

- are mostly open access, reducing the barriers to entry for adults from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- use inclusive teaching methods and differentiation to support students to learn effectively from their starting point and according to their learning style.
- offer concessions and senior fees that draw students from across London, both geographically and socio-economically.
- value and promote equity and diversity in the classroom where stereotypes, discrimination etc. are challenged.
- promote participation by all students.



- promote British Values appropriately.
- support equity of outcomes for students, irrespective of any protected characteristic, which is supported by our data.

### Our financial model

We operate a successful cross subsidy model that allows a very diverse student body to study here. Our cross subsidised business model gives people access to a second or further chance at education, including those who struggle to afford fees. Students can access an outstanding range of courses, which attracts people from across London to unite in a shared passion or curiosity.

In this way City Lit is a hub that builds social cohesion and celebrates the diversity of London life, ensuring that those who are at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing educational opportunities can participate in learning and benefit fully. Just under half of our income is received through fees, which, along with funding from the GLA and ESFA, can then be used to support:

- specialist and socially valuable courses, such as those run with disadvantaged groups and regeneration projects, all in local communities across London.
- non-geographic communities including people with learning difficulties and disabilities, ESOL students, Deaf students, people who stammer.
- reduced concessionary fees on 80% of our courses. Our concession policy is generous, and this reduction in potential fee income is cross subsidised internally by our higher fee yielding provision.
- a senior fee discount enables this group to attend more courses and become part of a vibrant community helping their wellbeing through learning and staying active. We subsidise our senior fees despite having no legal obligation to do so.
- the transfer of a proportion of any surplus each year into our bursary, supporting disadvantaged students who cannot afford course fees. The bursary scheme is also funded by donations. In the last academic year 526 bursaries were awarded totalling £69,348.

### Our student experience model

Our student experience model fosters good relations and supports the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. We were the first further education college to embrace a customer-focused student experience model that covers a student's whole experience, including inside and outside the classroom, pre-enrolment, and post completion. The promotion of equity and diversity is central to this.



All our staff receive appropriate information and training, and it is integrated into our monitoring and quality processes. As a result, City Lit is an inclusive and welcoming college where students and staff feel welcomed, safe, and valued. We have clear standards and expectations and robust, integrated procedures that are followed if an incident occurs.

### Our equality and diversity standards

Governors agreed the following standards in 2016:

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leaders and managers who all times:

- respect and value difference
- promote and advance equality and diversity
- promote an inclusive and supportive environment for students and staff
- empower people, treating them fairly and with respect and dignity
- work to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation  
implement statutory and other initiatives in support of our equality and diversity aims.

#### USER ACCESSIBILITY

Sites, facilities, and information that are, as far as is reasonably practicable:

- safe and welcoming
- fit for purpose
- accessible
- conducive to learning and working.

#### CURRICULUM ACCESSIBILITY

An inclusive curriculum:

- that is accessible to all who meet any appropriate entry requirements
- where the diversity of our community and the student body is reflected, valued and promoted
- where for people with a disability and from minority groups feel included
- where students are appropriately supported
- where students and a wide range of people are involved in the development of our curriculum
- that promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs.

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES

A learning experience:

- that is inclusive and free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation, extremism and radicalisation





- where the diverse needs of our students are, where possible, anticipated, understood and integrated into teaching to enhance participation, learning and achievement
- where there is equality of outcomes across diverse groups
- that supports a diverse society, wellbeing and an ageing society.

#### EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

A workplace:

- that is inclusive and free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, extremism and radicalisation
- where the diverse needs of employees are, where possible, anticipated, understood and actioned
- where the working environment is flexible, fair and supportive
- where the diversity of our workforce is valued
- where staff are appropriately supported to deliver an accessible curriculum and high student participation and performance
- where activities celebrate and promote the diversity of our staff body.

In 2023/24 we will update our college policy and publish our Equity and Inclusion aims, objectives and plan for that academic year. Work is already underway regarding advancing ED&I in teaching and learning with several initiatives launched in 2022/23:

- Start of year staff conference focussed on ED&I
- Role of Access, Inclusion and Support Champion introduced.
- ED&I training rolled out to curriculum teams.
- Sharing best practice events for tutors focussed on ED&I.
- ED&I in teaching and learning working group established.
- ED&I a key discussion point with Tutor Advisory Group
- ED&I a key discussion point with Student Panel.

Wider college initiatives planned:

- Full end-to-end external audit of HR processes planned for August 2023
- HR expanding recruitment partners to attract greater volume of applicants from underrepresented groups.