

Equality and Diversity Policy

Last reviewed: January 2024

Next review date: January 2025

1. Policy statement

The Tommy Flowers SCITT (TFSCITT) is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality and diversity across all aspects of the partnership. We aim to ensure equality of opportunity for all trainee teachers, staff and pupils, in an environment in which all individuals are recognised as being of equal value and are able to make best use of their skills through equality of opportunity.

This Equality & Diversity Policy complements those held by our partner schools and by our partnered HEI (Northumbria University) and as such supports the rights of our own staff, our trainee teachers and pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies across the training partnership.

The TFSCITT values the diversity of the trainee teachers and staff within the partnership by recognising and celebrating differences and valuing everyone. The TFSCITT also acknowledges that embracing and valuing diversity is fundamental to securing equality of opportunity for all. The SCITT will endeavour to ensure a continued diversity of placement settings to enhance the training programme and meet the needs of all schools within the locality and region. We aim to welcome and treat both staff and students fairly and equally regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnic origin or nationality as our workforce should be representative of the communities we serve.

We strive to understand, appreciate and value the differences in each individual; we aim to make people feel valued and supported so that they may achieve their full potential. We also want to create a positive ethos where issues of racism, stereotyping and discrimination can be discussed openly, with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing these issues and to encourage good relations between people of different groups. Therefore, firm action will be taken to redress inequality and eliminate all forms of discrimination.

2. Scope and principles

Equality of opportunity and inclusivity are fundamental to the vision and values of the TFSCITT. The commitment to equality and diversity is implemented through appropriate policies, procedures and good practice which reflect the following key principles:

- Respect for others and recognition that all members of the community are of equal value
- Removal of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging
- Recognising and respecting diversity
- Active challenge to stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist
- Commitment to inclusive education and a working environment which enables and supports all students and staff to flourish and meet their potential
- Compliance with equality legislation
- Recruitment policies should benefit all potential trainees
- Accountability for compliance with this policy by all members of the TFCITT, school communities and all those engaged in SCITT or school activities;

This policy covers the following protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010:

- Age – a person of a particular age or belonging to a particular age group

- Disability – a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Gender re-assignment – a person who has undergone the process of transitioning from one gender to another. Transgender is a term used to describe people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from that usually associated with their birth sex.
- Being married or in a civil partnerships – regardless of between a man and a woman or same-sex couple
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex – biological status as male or female
- Sexual orientation – whether a person’s sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

The Equality Act 2010 has a single equality duty of positively combating inequality. In order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act, the TFSCITT and its partners including staff, trainees and partnership schools has a responsibility to support the implementation of this policy. Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), each partner will give ‘due regard’ to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This policy may be amended at any time following consultation with the Executive Board.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to identify and promote accountability in relation to the SCITT’s commitment to:

- Develop an ethos which respects and values all people;
- Prepare trainee teachers for life in a diverse society;
- Promote good relations amongst people within each school’s community;
- Eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment or other oppressive behaviour;
- Deliver equality and diversity through the SCITT’s policies, procedures and practice;
- Monitor the implementation of equality and diversity within the TFSCITT;
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that our facilities, resources and communication methods are accessible to all, considering the diverse needs of our staff and trainees;
- Ensure that recruitment and selection procedures and practices within the SCITT are open and transparent and ensure that fair and equal selection criteria is applied. See Safer Recruitment policy.

4. Responsibilities

The Accounting Officer of the TFSCITT has the ultimate responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of the equality and diversity policy.

The Director of SCITT has a responsibility to ensure all stakeholder groups are aware of this policy’s existence and the appropriate action needed to carry it out. The TFSCITT will take all reasonable steps to

ensure that the trainees' training environment and placements in partnership schools are in line with this policy.

Each member of the TFSCITT, whether staff or trainee, has a responsibility to support the implementation of this policy. Any person instructing, inducing or encouraging others by inaction or action to behave in a manner which is inconsistent with this policy will themselves be in breach of this policy.

Each member of the TFSCITT has a responsibility to report breaches of this policy or the Equality Act to the Director of SCITT (see section 8).

5. Our partnership within the wider context

The Tommy Flowers SCITT undertakes ITT training in a city that is diverse and wide ranging with a variety of different socio-economic groups and a broad range of communities. Each of our partner schools will have their own Equality Policy. Trainee teachers will be expected to conform to the requirements of – and indeed be protected by - the individual policies of the schools in which they are training.

In all other aspects of their training they will be subject to the conditions and expectations defined in this policy.

6. Our vision statement about equality

The Tommy Flowers SCITT seeks to foster welcoming and respectful environments across the partnership, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot always achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

7. Our duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve all members of this partnership in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of partnership life.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities and national priorities:

- all partnership policies and handbooks
- the implementation of the Safer Recruitment policy, including ensuring each recruitment panel includes at least one person who is Safer Recruitment trained
- the implementation of the Occupational Health and Reasonable Adjustments policy

- all interaction with trainee teachers - and the pupils and parents/carers and teaching and non-teaching staff in placement schools
- the promotion of the Equalities Act and understanding of protected characteristics through induction training for trainees
- all central training programmes, including PSHE and the promotion of British Values (see section 9).
- the mentoring and other professional support on offer within placement schools
- the teaching experience and the planned curriculum within placement schools
- access to both placement school and partnership facilities
- activities to enrich the training experiences, through two diverse placement schools and additional school visits
- arrangements for assessment and accreditation (both formative and summative)
- disciplinary, capability approaches and sanctions
- the partnership's arrangements for working with placement schools and other agencies
- employees' and staff welfare, including access to school nursing team and school counsellor

8. Breach of this policy

If a trainee, staff member or partner believes that they (or another trainee, colleague, pupil or partner) may have been treated in a way that is inconsistent with this policy, they are encouraged to raise the matter with the SCITT Director in the first instance who will take appropriate action. If the concern relates to the actions of the SCITT Director, the matter should be raised directly with the Accounting Officer of the Tommy Flowers SCITT. The Complaints and Appeals Policy explains the procedures for making a complaint, including about equality and diversity.

9. Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice based bullying behaviour can be driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour. If such incidents occur whilst trainees are undertaking placements in our partner schools then we will work with the appropriate personnel in the school to investigate and take appropriate remedial action.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our partnership ethos and the training we provide, we want our trainee teachers and the pupils they teach to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. To that end there are number of programme training sessions which cover issues related to equality and diversity. For example:

- Induction, including responsibilities under Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards
- Mental Health
- Adaptive Teaching including SEND, Pupil Premium and EAL
- Prevent
- Safeguarding
- PSHE/Citizenship
- Relationships and Sex Education
- SMSC and British Values

10. Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy will be actively reviewed (annually and as required) and promoted to partnership schools through the Partnership Steering Committees. It will be available to trainees and our staff through the SCITT One Drive portal.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Partnership Managers and consequentially the Executive Board and the Partnership Steering Groups. If appropriate, this policy will be identified and reviewed during the annual Improvement Planning and Self Evaluation processes.

The SCITT Director will report half-termly to the Executive Board any issues related to equality and diversity and a review of the policy will be undertaken as appropriate.