

The Higher Education Academy Building
Innovation Way
York Science Park
York YO10 5BR
Tel: 01904 717580
Fax: 01904 717505

Website: www.techdis.ac.uk
Email: helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk

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Dear Colleague

Re: TechDis Senior Management Briefing Packs

As the Head of the JISC TechDis Service, the leading support service with regard to using technology to support learners with disabilities or learning difficulties in post 16 education, I am writing to offer guidance and support from the TechDis Team, who are well placed to give advice on the ways accessibility can be embedded into mainstream practice and provision.

This will be of major importance within your College due to the fact that 'The Disability Equality Duty' comes into force on 1st October 2006 and all such organisations will be required to publish a Disability Equality Scheme, ensuring that the learners themselves have a strong voice and that their views are clearly listened to. These schemes will need to be produced by December 2006.

In order to assist you over the next 12 months TechDis, in association with a wide range of expert partners, are producing a series of Senior Management briefing packs. These packs will be sent in hard copy and will provide a synopsis of key issues and key sources for further information including many practical resources to be used as you develop your accessibility policies even further. Accompanying these briefings will be other resources to facilitate whole College engagement in accessibility awareness. These resources are targeted at different staff groups in order to develop the ownership of accessibility and inclusive practices across a range of functional roles. The first briefing, due to be disseminated in early summer, will highlight the role of e-learning as an accessibility benefit to Colleges.

I am sure you are aware that the thrust of the new Public Sector Duty and its defining characteristic is about long-term cultural change. Organisations such as your College will need to shift from a compliance-driven approach towards a more pro-active 'whole organisation' approach that relies on providing non-discriminatory practices as opposed to providing reasonable adjustments based on individual requests.

The TechDis approach is distinctly pragmatic, focusing on the mainstream benefits of accessible practice. I hope that you will find the briefings and supporting resources offer significant benefits to you and your staff and that you will find the TechDis materials to be influential in your development plans.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards



Sal Cooke
Head of TechDis