

**South Cheshire College**

**The Disability Discrimination Act 2005**

**Disability Equality Scheme  
December 2006**

## **Introduction**

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) is an important new duty aimed at promoting disability equality across the public sector. The DED, also referred to as the general duty, sets out what public authorities must have due regard to in order to promote equality of opportunity.

Most public authorities are also covered by specific duties, which set out a framework to assist authorities in meeting their general duty. All public authorities covered by the specific duties must:

- publish a Disability Equality Scheme (including within it an Action Plan)
- involve disabled people in producing the Scheme and Action Plan
- demonstrate they have taken actions in the Scheme and achieved appropriate outcomes
- report on progress
- review and revise the Scheme

*(The Disability Rights Commission Introduction to the Disability Equality Duty)*

South Cheshire College and its board of governors fully endorse this scheme and its associated plan and will continue to monitor its effect on the success of our students and the well being of our staff.

## 1 The College

- 1.1 South Cheshire College was designated a tertiary college in September 1982. Since Incorporation in 1993 overall recruitment has risen by over 50 per cent. The College is now a large college with a diverse curriculum. Within its tertiary remit it is the sole provider of post-16 education in Crewe. In addition, the College complements school provision with a wide portfolio of A level and vocational courses throughout South and East Cheshire, notably in Nantwich, Alsager, Middlewich, Sandbach and Congleton. In September 1996 the College achieved a major objective of being located on a single campus. The College utilises a wide variety of centres to provide an extensive programme of community education throughout South Cheshire and has developed specialist links with North Staffordshire and North Shropshire – areas with direct communication routes to the College. In 1996 and 1997 the College opened high street locations in Middlewich and Congleton to help widen participation for those unable to gain daytime access to college provision within these areas and since 2002 basic skills courses have been offered at local libraries.
- 1.2 During the 12 years since Incorporation the College has established effective working relationships with all sectors of education within the area. Approximately 1,300 primary pupils, for example, attended 'Primary College 2006' – the thirteenth annual Primary College. Relationships with partner secondary schools have been enhanced with the provision of an annual Secondary College. The College is currently expanding its linkages with higher education. It is part of the Cheshire and Warrington Consortium of Colleges, which co-ordinates the approaches of all Cheshire colleges to HE work in the Local Learning and Skills Council area.
- 1.3 Since Incorporation the College has played a major role in the life of the community beyond formal education and training. Individuals and community groups use the services provided within the wide range of facilities within the College. This provision includes Training Restaurants, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Salons, a Motor Vehicle Garage and an ABTA bonded Travel Agency. During 1993 and 1994 the College embarked upon the first phase of a major programme of resource enhancement. A 250-seat College Theatre was opened in September 1993 and a major new Training Restaurant in October 1994. In addition, enhanced social facilities, a College Shop, new Reception Area and specialist Childcare provisions have been introduced. The College completed a major Engineering refurbishment programme which opened, together with a state of the art 'Media Suite', in September 1995. A 200-seat Food Hall was created during the summer of 1996. A purpose designed multi-functional Conference Centre opened in June 1997.
- 1.4 A Fitness Centre and associated Dance Studio commenced operation in April 1999. In summer 1999 General Physics Corporation leased accommodation on the campus. To improve the environment for staff and students a full replacement programme for the front windows of the tower block took place in summer 2000. In summer 2001 a major extension of the dining facilities for students was completed and in the summer of 2002 a new ground floor kitchen was built to replace existing facilities on floor six of the Dane Bank building. The rear windows of the tower block were also replaced. In the summer of 2005 major alterations were undertaken to ensure that the College was DDA compliant. Plans are currently being drawn up for a new £47m build, replacing the entire existing campus estate.

- 1.5 During 1995/96 the College received its first full FEFC Inspection. The gradings indicated in the report placed the College in the top 15 per cent of colleges inspected. In May 1996 the College received its 'Investor in People Award' and in summer 1996 the College gained BSEN ISO 9002 registration in recognition of its quality assurance systems. These awards were re-confirmed in 1999 and 2002. In 2004/05 Investors in People was re-awarded under the new standards and the College's ISO 9001:2000 registration re-confirmed. The College also received an award for its Careers provision. In February 1999 the College was inspected in the second round of FEFC Inspections. The formal report, published in the late spring of 1999, placed the College at the highest level of colleges inspected in the second round. The College was subsequently awarded Accredited College and Beacon College status. In 2003/04 the College's first OFSTED report placed it as the leading FE/Tertiary College nationally with 13 out of 16 areas judged to be outstanding and the remaining areas judged to be good. The College repeated its previous success with Beacon status being awarded in the autumn of 2004.
- 1.6 As part of its wider strategy of enhancing participation in education and training, the College has developed a range of community-based training partnerships. Working largely with voluntary groups, small and medium-sized enterprises and a range of public sector bodies, these partnerships have successfully generated European Social Fund grants and a major DfES/New Opportunities Fund award to develop community-based access points. This has resulted in access points being made available in the Victoria Centre and Crewe and Nantwich libraries.

## 2 Definitions

2.1 "*Disabled people*" includes disabled students, staff, and other disabled users of the college such as visitors to conferences, parents at open days and award ceremonies, and users of leisure services such as the fitness centre, theatre and restaurant. A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A physical or mental impairment includes:

- sensory impairments
- impairments relating to mental functioning, including learning difficulties/disabilities
- long term health conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis

"*Functions*" means our duties and powers and extends to cover internal and external functions, including service delivery.

"*Group*" means any and all relevant stakeholders

"*Policy*" means the full range of formal and informal decisions we make in carrying out our functions, and the ways in which we carry out our duties and use our powers.

"*Relevant*" means affecting the 'general duty'. Any function or policy will be relevant if it has, or could have, a negative impact on the promotion of disability equality.

### 3 Abbreviations

DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DED	The Disability Equality Duty imposed on public authorities by the DDA 1995 as amended by the DDA 2005
SENDA	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
RARPA	Recognising And Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning, or providing recognition for those unable to complete a course of study to formal qualification

### 4 Introduction to the scheme

#### 4.1 Current Position

4.1.1 The College welcomes the introduction of the DDA 2005 and the approach it has taken to promoting equality for disabled people. This Scheme and the Action Plan (Appendix 1) will consolidate the work and best practice with regard to disability equality which the college has been implementing since the introduction of the DDA 1995, SENDA and the Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Regulations 2003.

Throughout the past ten years the college has worked to ensure that the spirit, as well as the letter of the law has been implemented across the institution.

4.1.2 At the time of producing this scheme, in 2006/7, the college has 2933 full time, registered students. Of these registrations 186, 6.3%, declared a disability at enrolment. In addition the college has 2233 part time registrations with 179, 8%, declaring a disability. It is known that some students and staff do not wish to declare a disability on entry to the college. Others are not aware of forms of disability such as dyslexia. These conditions are often uncovered in the students' initial assessment and are not included in these statistics.

4.1.3 The college is committed to ensuring that students and staff have appropriate resources available to ensure access to the curriculum and to work. The Learner Services team continually reviews its staffing profile to match our incoming student profile. At present it comprises the following specialists:

- Dyslexia coordinator
- Hearing Impairment Coordinator
- Visual Impairment Coordinator
- Assistive IT Specialist
- Aspergers Support Worker
- Learning mentors covering support for the above range plus assisting with a wide variety of physical impairments.

In addition the Health and Welfare Manager in Organisational Development has a background in Mental Health Care.

4.1.4 In addition to the above specialisms the college has an Equality and Diversity advisory group comprising disabled and able-bodied members meeting regularly to review matters of equal access to the college and its facilities. The group is convened by the college Equality and Diversity Coordinator

- 4.1.5 All marketing materials are checked to ensure a broad implementation of the college's equality and diversity principles. Braille versions are available on request and this is advertised in Braille on the cover of the prospectus for the current year. With the college website we support and are working towards the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and this website is constantly being reviewed with accessibility in mind.
- 4.1.6 The college has hosted a training course on web and online learning content development and accessibility. All staff responsible for the coordination of web and lesson content design and development attended the course.
- 4.1.7 The college has in place supportive Performance Management and Attendance Management schemes to ensure that staff have every opportunity to review any support requirements with their line manager and that any absence is reviewed in the context of potential support requirements.

## **5 How disabled people have been involved in developing the scheme**

- 5.1 In order to eliminate disability discrimination it is important that disabled people are fully engaged in the production of the scheme and its resulting plan. It is also important that they are able to describe the inequality they experience in all its forms.
- 5.2 Disabled people have been involved from the outset with the development of this scheme from collecting research data in a variety of creative means through to assessing the priorities in the action plan.
- 5.3 Students
- 5.3.1 The college believes that certain disabilities predispose those with those disabilities to preferred communication channels, not normally accessible through traditional surveys and statistical analysis. In the production of this scheme therefore individuals and groups of disabled students have been given a variety of recording media, video cameras, still digital cameras, voice recorders and more traditional art materials, to record their experience of life in college and their reaction to it.
- 5.3.2 In the electronic version of this scheme an additional appendix will be available showing the results of that research in its original medium. Disabled students were responsible for producing the reports and presenting them to the Scheme organising committee in the form of visual media.
- 5.3.3 Administrative support to the Scheme development was provided by one of our visually impaired students.
- 5.4 Staff
- 5.4.1 Disabled staff have not responded to invitations to participate in the initial scheme production. The action plan will indicate ways in which they will be encouraged to contribute in the future.

5.4.2 An area on the college VLE was set up to enable staff to comment on issues raised by the introduction of the Scheme.

## **6 The action plan.**

6.1 The plan arising from the baseline survey of staff and from student research is found in Appendix 1.

## **7 Arrangements for gathering information about the college's performance on disability equality**

7.1 Student Disability data is collected by the enrolment process. Reports from this data will be presented to the Equality and Diversity group and the Quality and Standards committee of the governors. Reports will show:

- Student by level and mode of study
- Success rates
- Progression rates
- Withdrawal rates

7.2 Monitoring of the Student voice on disability issues is by:

- Student video and photographic diaries research methods
- Student Satisfaction Survey
- Complaints and other procedure monitoring
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms

7.3 Staff and potential-staff data is collected by Human Resources, within Organisational Development. The following information relating to disabled staff will be extracted from this data, reported to the Equality and Diversity group and to the college's Senior Management Team and the Organisational Development committee of the Board:

- Numbers of staff in post with and without disabilities
- Application rates
- Short-listing rates
- Numbers of staff involved in disciplinary and grievance and procedures
- Numbers of staff leaving employment

## **8 Arrangements for assessing the impact of the college's policies on disability equality and improving these when necessary.**

8.1 The college has already carried out a 2 surveys of staff to provide a baseline for future impact assessments. Appendices 2 and 3 show the questions posed and an analysis of the results.

8.2 The college has pioneered new research methods to ensure the "voice" of the disabled student has been heard from the outset of the development of this scheme. These methods, 8.1 and 8.2, will continue to be refined and used with future student and staff groups to inform the review of this scheme.

8.3 The Equality and Diversity group will review statistical reports and provide advice on improvement measures

- 8.4 Senior Management Team members will ensure the strategic review of their area of the action plan and report on improvement measures annually.
- 8.5 The Board will receive an annual report on the scheme and its associated plan.
- 8.6 An impact assessment will be carried out on existing policies and procedures as part of our general, regular policy review.

## **9 Further Consultation**

- 9.1 If you have any comments on this scheme please email [nigelp@s-cheshire.ac.uk](mailto:nigelp@s-cheshire.ac.uk) or write to The Director of Curriculum Support, South Cheshire College, Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe CW2 8AB.

## Appendices

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## Appendix 1

Actions Resulting from Research by Staff and Students and from the staff Equality Impact surveys

Number	Action	Responsible Person	By When	Monitoring
<b>1</b>	<b>Leadership and Management</b>			
1.1	Ensure that the DED is embedded in strategic developments	Principal and SMT	Ongoing	SMT Board
1.2	Include DED in the annual policy review to ensure embedding of the duty.	Director of Quality	August 2007	SMT Board
1.3	Adjust the annual Self Assessment Report template to include a DED self-assessment measure	Director of Quality Director of Studies	August 2007	SMT Board
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning</b>			
2.1	Ensure that teaching staff are regularly updated on disabilities and on developments in appropriate teaching methods and technologies	Director of OD Director of CS	Ongoing	Staff Development Record
2.2	Encourage the inclusion of electronic versions of all teaching and learning materials and handouts	Director of CS	Ongoing	Staff Survey
2.3	Review arrangements for handouts and teaching material conversion and disseminate the arrangements to all staff	Director of CS	March 2007	Staff Survey
2.5	Through the online Student Tracker make information on special arrangements and adjustments available to all staff teaching disabled students, through the ILP	Director of CS	August 2007	Staff Survey
2.6	Review communication arrangements between class teachers and support workers and encourage the use of the tracker to ensure good communications	Director of CS	June 2007	Staff Survey

<b>Number</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>
2.7	Include in the Self Assessment Report a review of new disability statistics and enable them to advise course development and improvement	Director of Quality Director of Studies Director of CS	June 2007	SMT Board
2.8	Develop the Student Tracker and e-portfolio to include the principles of RARPA (Recognising And Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning)	Director of Studies Director of CS	August 2007	SMT
2.9	Disseminate accessibility principles to staff developing lesson content for distribution via the college online learning environment	Director of OD Director of CS	August 2007	Staff Development Record
<b>3</b>	<b>Staff</b>			
3.1	Review teaching staff induction arrangements to ensure the duty is understood and that areas supporting the duty are involved in the induction process: 1 Equality and Diversity Coordinator 2 Head of Learner Services 3 Learning Resources Manager 4 Online Learning Coordinator and Manager	Director of OD Director of CS	March 2007	Staff Survey
3.2	Review support staff induction arrangements to ensure the Duty and the impact of the support function on it is understood	Director of OD All Managers	March 2007	Staff Survey
3.3	Ensure that the policy of reasonable adjustment, as a key lever in the DDA, is communicated to all staff	Director of OD All Managers	December 2006	Staff Survey
3.4	Devise a programme of training on Impact Assessment and ensure all necessary staff undergo the training.	Director of OD	September 2007	Staff Development Record
3.5	Embed impact assessment into policy reviews	Director of Quality	September 2007	SMT

<b>Number</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Monitoring and Review</b>			
4.1	Disaggregate supported student statistics to allow the review of the range of disabilities	Director of CS	September 2007	SMT Board
4.2	Disaggregate disabled staff statistics from general HR reporting to enable specific monitoring	Director of OD	March 2007	SMT Board
4.3	Continue to use and refine a variety of research methods to capture the student and staff voice	Director of CS Director of Quality Director of OD	Ongoing	SMT
4.4	Review the appropriateness of equality targets in informing the development of this scheme	Director of OD	March 2007	SMT
<b>5</b>	<b>Facilities</b>			
5.1	Ensure plans for the new campus fully embrace British Standard code of practice BS 8300:2001 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people	Director of Marketing and Operations	Throughout Campus Project	SMT Board
5.2	All major changes to the current building fabric, including, for example, changes of colour scheme, are assessed for their impact on Disability Equality	Director of Marketing and Operations	Ongoing	SMT
5.3	Consult with disabled students to establish further details regarding appropriate social and social-learning spaces in the existing and new campus design	Director of Marketing and Operations	March 2007	SMT Board
<b>6</b>	<b>Marketing</b>			
6.1	The college web site will offer a version of the site accessible to screen readers for those with visual impairments and will investigate alternative colour and contrast schemes to assist those with dyslexia	Director of Marketing and Operations	April 2007	SMT Board

## Appendix 2

### Survey questions

*Initial surveys questions to teaching and non-teaching managers, June 2006  
Respondents marked their response to these statements on a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.*

Disabled students realise their potential  
Disabled Retention, Achievement and Success rates compare favourably  
Equality targets are set and met  
Disabled students progress to FE, HE or employment  
The College is socially inclusive  
The College is educationally inclusive  
Views of disabled are used to inform planning  
RARPA is embedded in QA processes  
Tutors use a range of strategies and teaching styles  
Tutors differentiate teaching & learning  
Disabled students understand how well they are progressing  
Disabled students can discuss adaptations in advance  
Assessment informs students of progress  
Teaching methods are sensitive to disabled needs  
Teaching materials are available in different formats  
Courses on offer are socially inclusive  
Educational and social inclusive policies in place  
Policies effective in widening participation  
Disclosure and confidentiality procedures followed  
Sensitive environment for disclosure  
Confidential settings are available  
There is effective assessment of learning support requirements  
Students receive effective additional support if required  
Additional support requirements are reviewed regularly  
Additional support is monitored and evaluated  
Information on courses is available in a variety of formats  
Marketing materials etc easily accessible to disabled  
Materials effectively communicate support available  
Disabled applicants have access to all courses  
Disabled performance analysis guides course development  
Students have many opportunities to disclose a support need  
Communications between teachers and support is effective  
Additional support has no negative connotations  
If students need support they receive it  
Impact of additional support on success is assessed  
Take up & impact of additional support is assessed by different groups  
I forward plan to account for DDA  
I promote equality of opportunity  
Culture is open and welcoming to disabled people  
Disabled students are very satisfied  
I respond to disabled students' feedback  
All staff are trained on DDA  
Complaints procedure is effective for disabled  
Measures are in place to eliminate harassment  
Accommodation allows disabled people to participate fully  
Adapted learning resources are available  
Disabled people have access to auxiliary aids  
Attendance, Retention, Achievement and Success are analysed for disabled students  
Disability equality targets set and met

Induction programme includes DDA  
Disability Equality Scheme (DES) is in place  
DES is effectively implemented  
All staff are aware of DES  
Governors and SMT regularly review DES  
Clear vision for disability equality understood by all  
Disability equality is promoted at every level  
Development plans reflect and promote disability equality  
You are committed to running an inclusive college

*Initial surveys questions to lecturers, June 2006  
Respondents marked their response to these statements on a five point scale from  
strongly agree to strongly disagree.*

I use a range of teaching styles  
I ensure teaching is differentiated  
I enable disabled learners to participate fully  
Learners can try different methods of learning  
I regularly review and inform learners of their progress  
I use a variety of assessment methods  
Learners are made aware of additional support  
I review additional support during the course  
I identify an ILP for each learner  
I access additional support for learners  
I provide opportunities to disclose a disability  
Materials & handouts are provided electronically  
I am up to date on good practice  
I ask disabled learners about adjustments

## Appendix 3

### Analysis of the Disability Equality Duty Surveys of Teachers and Managers - June 2006

#### 1.0 Introduction

During June 2006 staff were either asked to complete a Teachers or a Managers Disability Equality Duty (DED) survey.

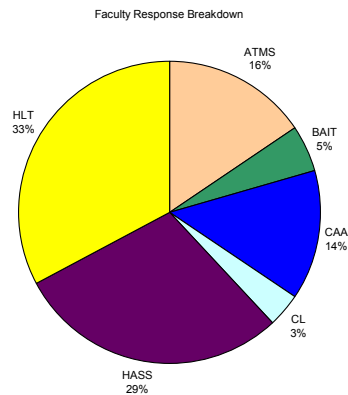
The scope of the Teachers survey was limited to just 14 questions on DED along with an opportunity to supply their views on the issues involved. 281 surveys were sent out and 62 responses received (22%).

The scope of the Managers survey was much greater with 58 questions on DED with a free text evidence box to fill in for each question along with an opportunity to supply their views on the strengths, weaknesses and overall comments. 56 surveys were sent out and 29 responses received (52%).

#### 2.0 Teachers Survey

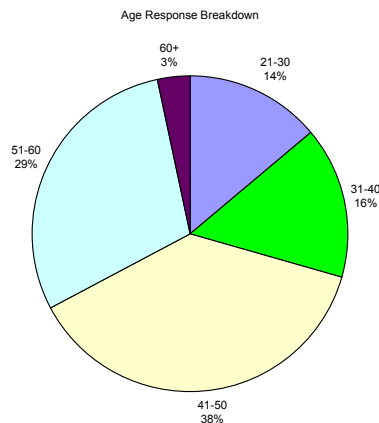
##### 2.1 Response Analysis

The response breakdown from the Faculties was as follows



There was an almost exact split in gender response breakdown – 31 males to 30 Females

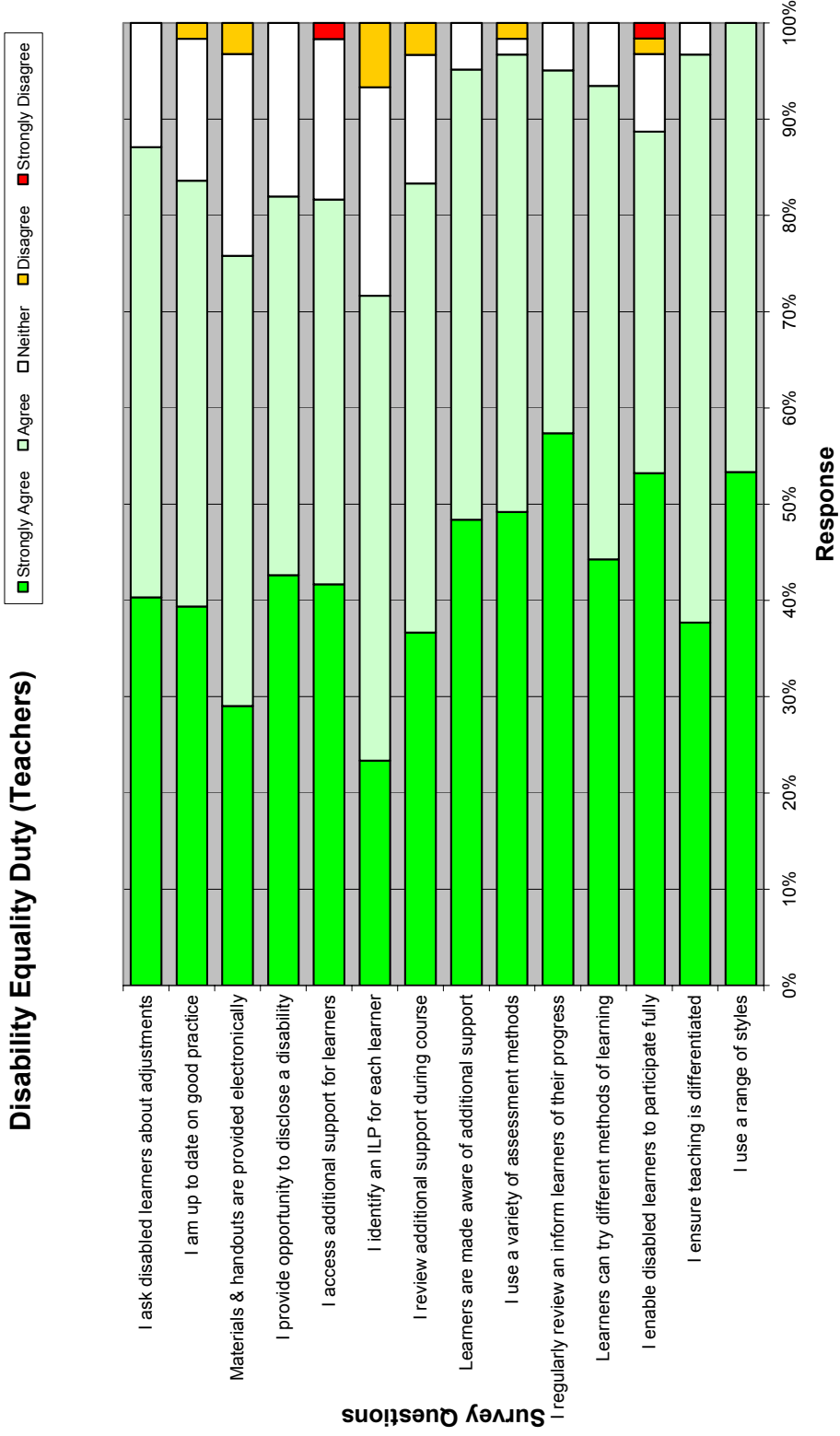
Age response breakdown was



## 2.2 Survey Analysis

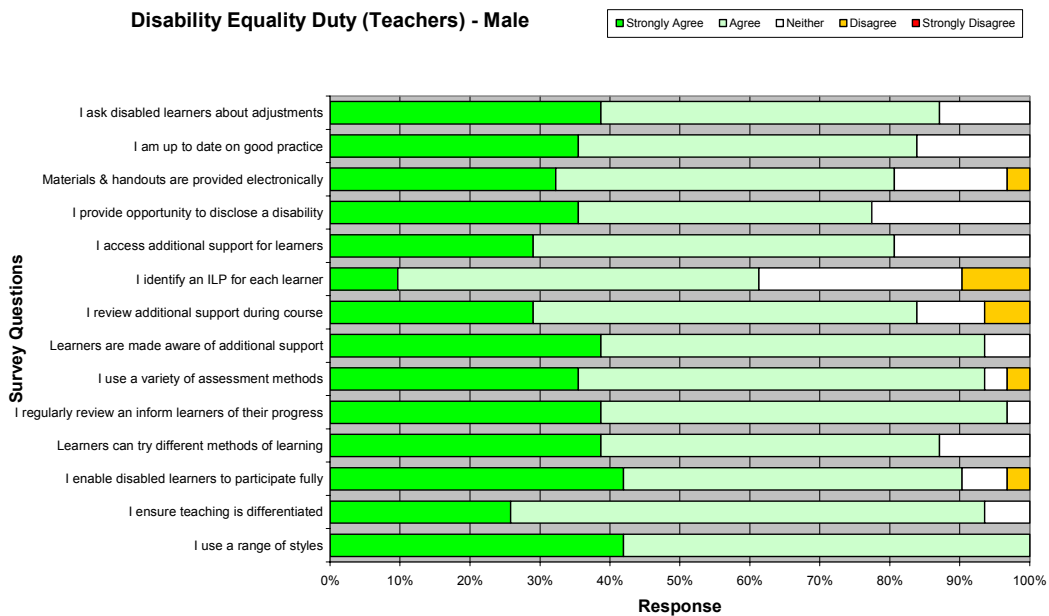
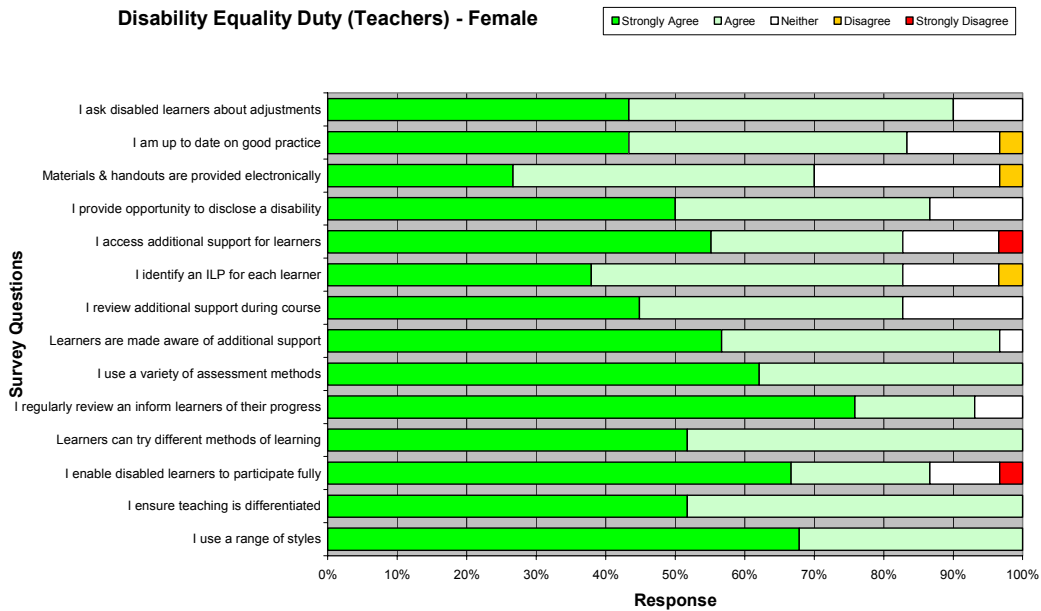
Overall response by question

### Disability Equality Duty (Teachers)



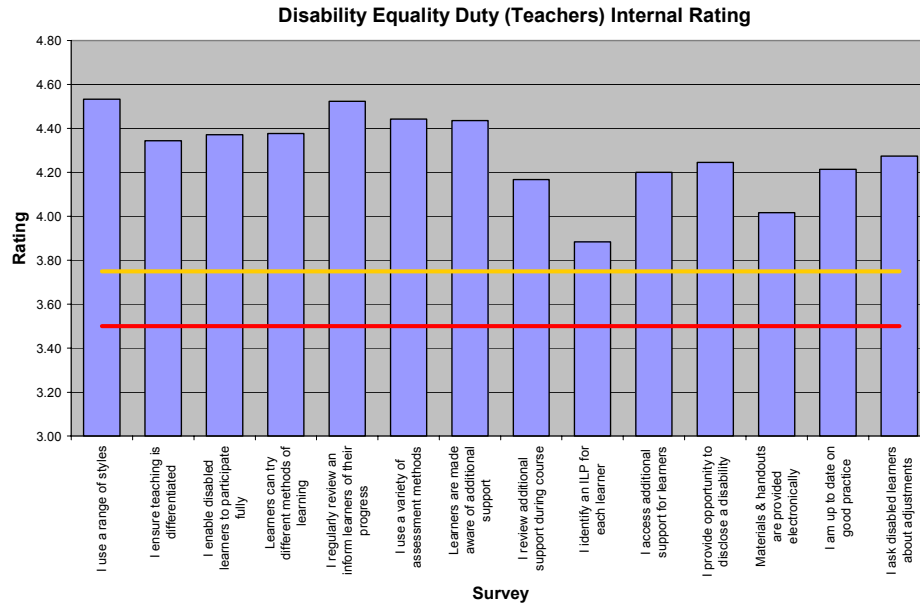
It can be seen that there is very little disagreement and that on the whole teachers consider they fully take into account their Disability Equality Duty. The Red “Strongly Disagree” areas represent the views of a single respondent for both questions.

The response breakdown indicates that it is valid to analyse female and male responses separately



On the whole it would appear that females are rather more positive than males and that the males are responsible for the dip when considering the question “I identify an individual learning plan for each learner to help gather information about a learner’s knowledge and experience and any learning requirements” This Male/Female trend is present across all faculties and appears more significant than any Faculty based trends which indicate that ATMS and BAIT are most concerned over this question

With no significant differences discernible when analysing by age, an internal rating comprising of a weighted average of the responses was used to help pick out any questions of concern along with the overall response s shown above.



All responses fall above the 75% and 70% thresholds. Average rating of females is 4.4 and males 4.18, confirming the slightly more positive view of females to males. When this analysis is viewed for Faculty and gender breakdown no further trends below threshold are obvious other than those already reported, however the female breakdown shows that for only two questions were they less positive than the males – “Course materials are available electronically”, “I keep up to date on good practice”

### 2.3 Comments

Whilst all the comments volunteered by teaching staff are interesting a common theme highlighted by several is that some students are reluctant to admit to problems which would entitle them to learner support. There remains a view amongst some teenagers that there is a stigma attached and they would prefer not to be singled out as different.

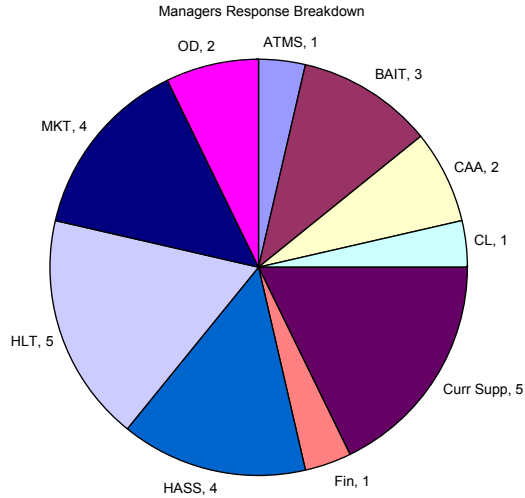
### 2.4 Conclusions

Overall the response is very positive. It is clear teaching staff consider they fully take into account their Disability Equality Duty. The male/female trends are interesting but what is more important is that the only areas of minor concern are that staff think the individual learning plans could be improved in this area and that we could improve the provision of electronic course materials so that different formats can be produced in advance if required. There is a continuing need and desire to keep up with best practice but most are happy they are up to date at present.

### 3.0 Managers Survey

#### 3.1 Response Analysis

The response breakdown from managers was as follows

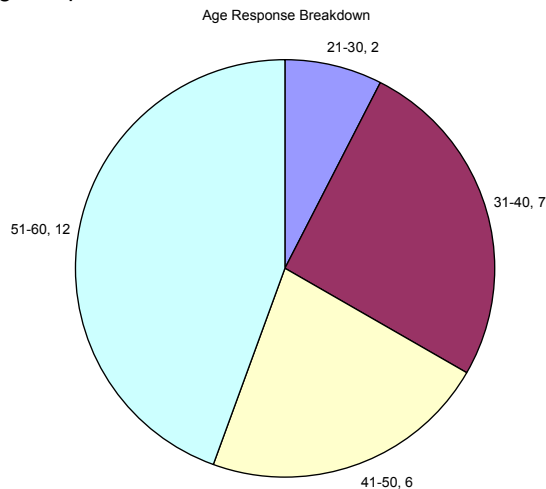


In this case actual numbers responding are shown rather than percentages. The diagram shows the areas that contributed to the survey and also that the numbers are so low that no statistical breakdown by area is possible.

However, if broken down into Academic: Support the numbers are 16:12 (one respondent failed to volunteer their area). These numbers support an Academic Area: Support Area analysis although of course some managers in support areas will be drawing on their time in academic areas to answer the questions.

Gender response breakdown was 11 Females to 18 males, just allowing valid gender analysis

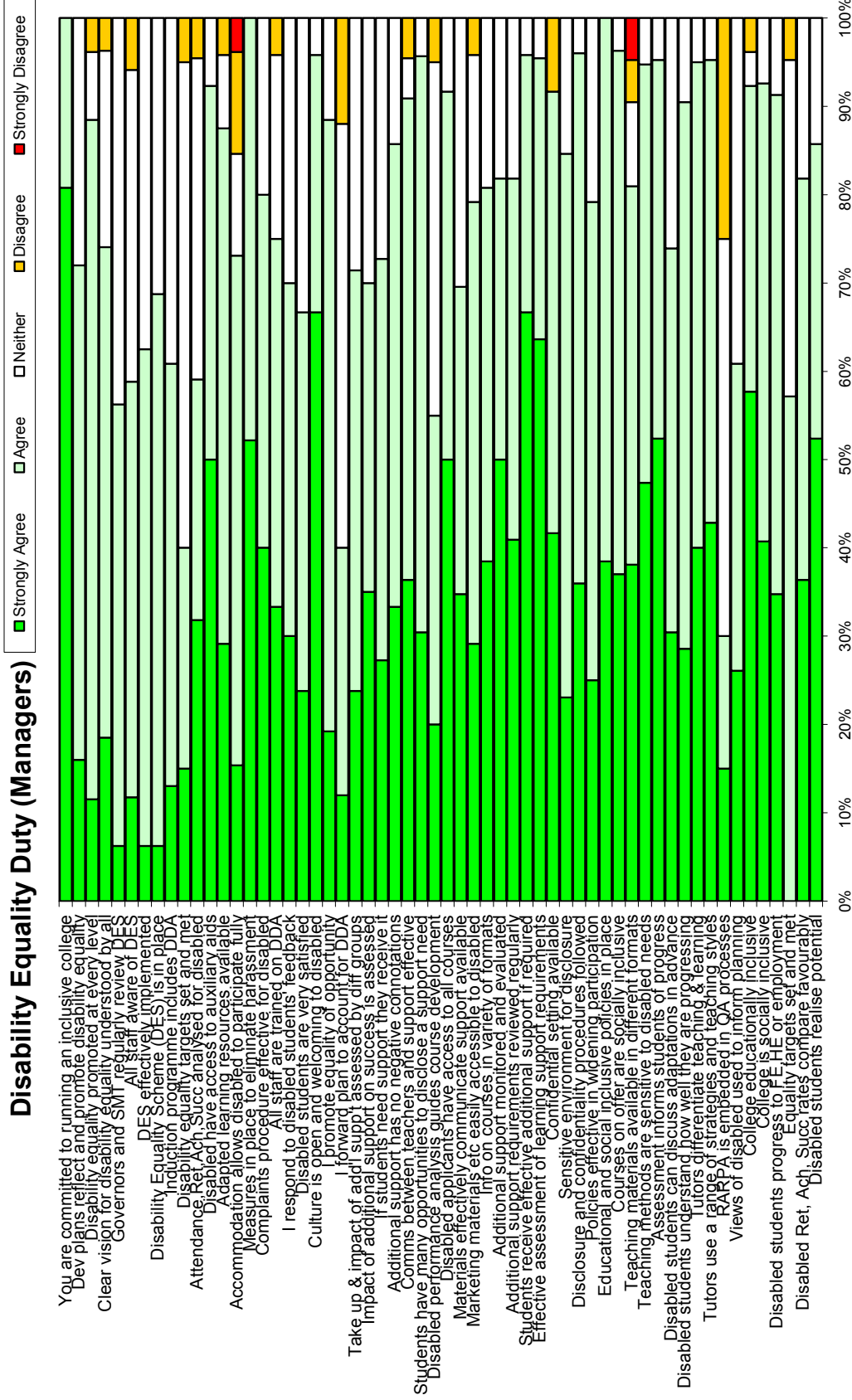
Age response breakdown is as follows



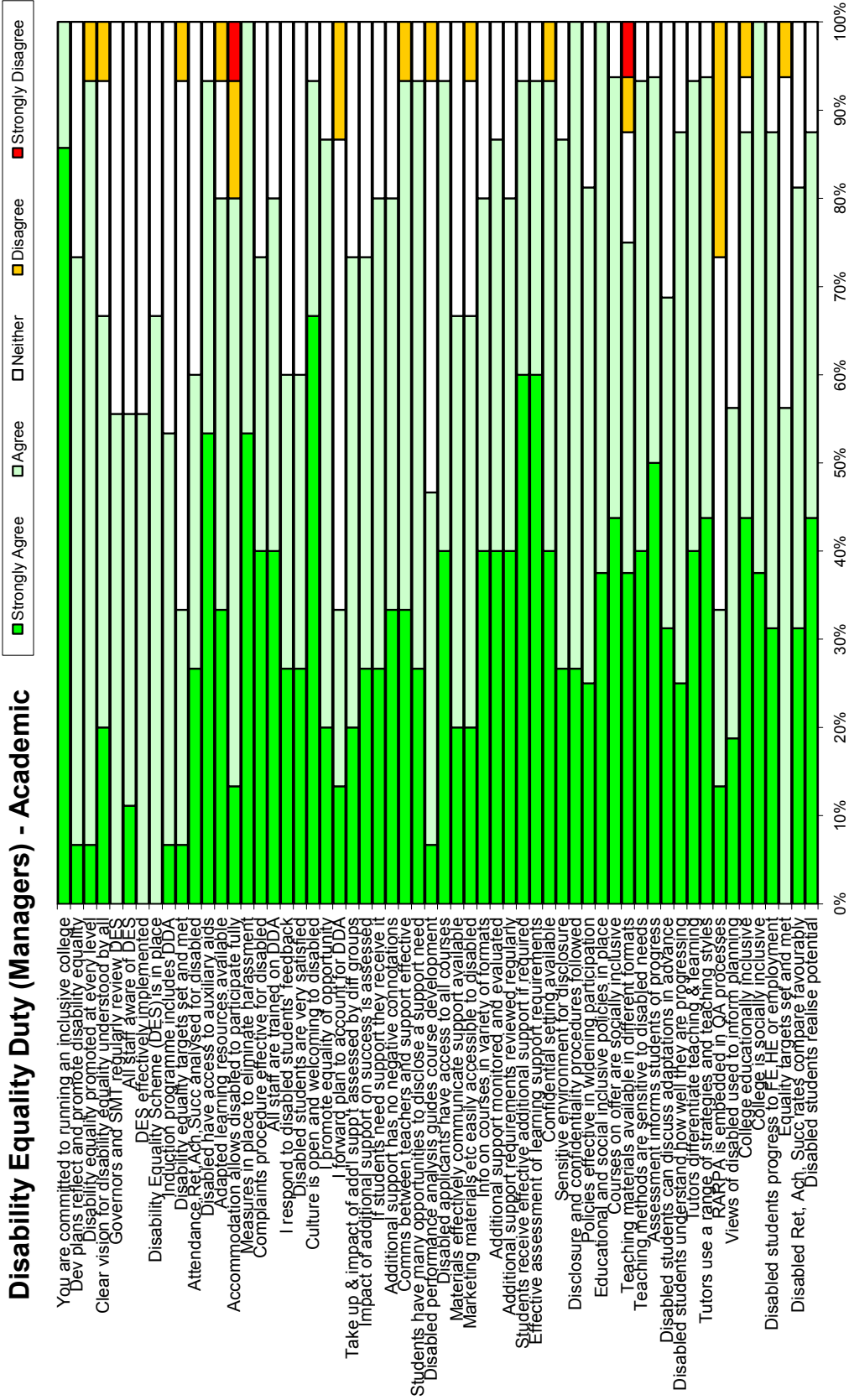
indicating that no firm age based conclusions could be drawn given such small samples.

### 3.2 Survey Analysis

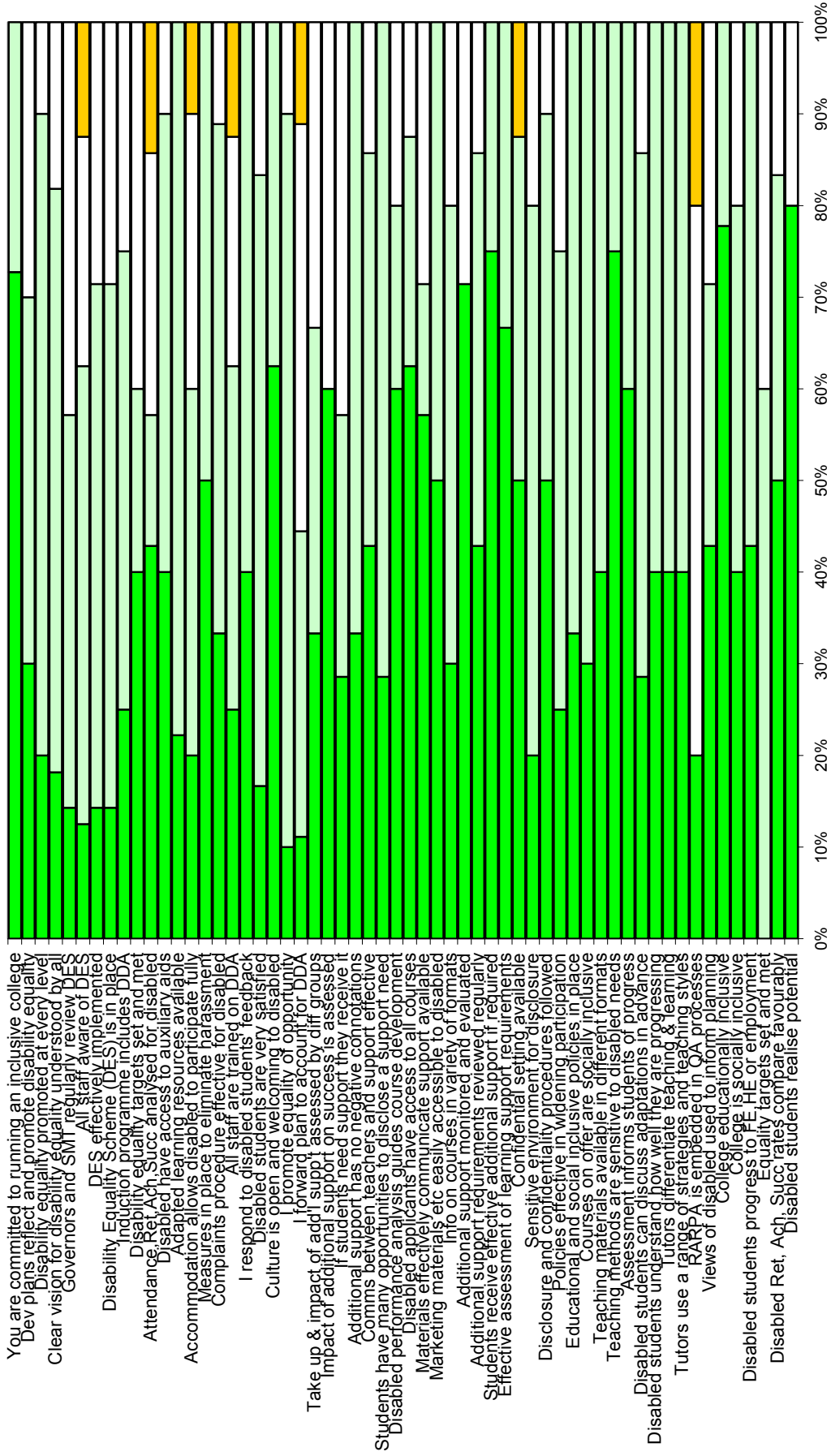
Overall response by question



There is a little more variation in the answers within this survey and consequently more views on the data are required in order to tease out the differences. The following diagrams show the academic staff / support staff split

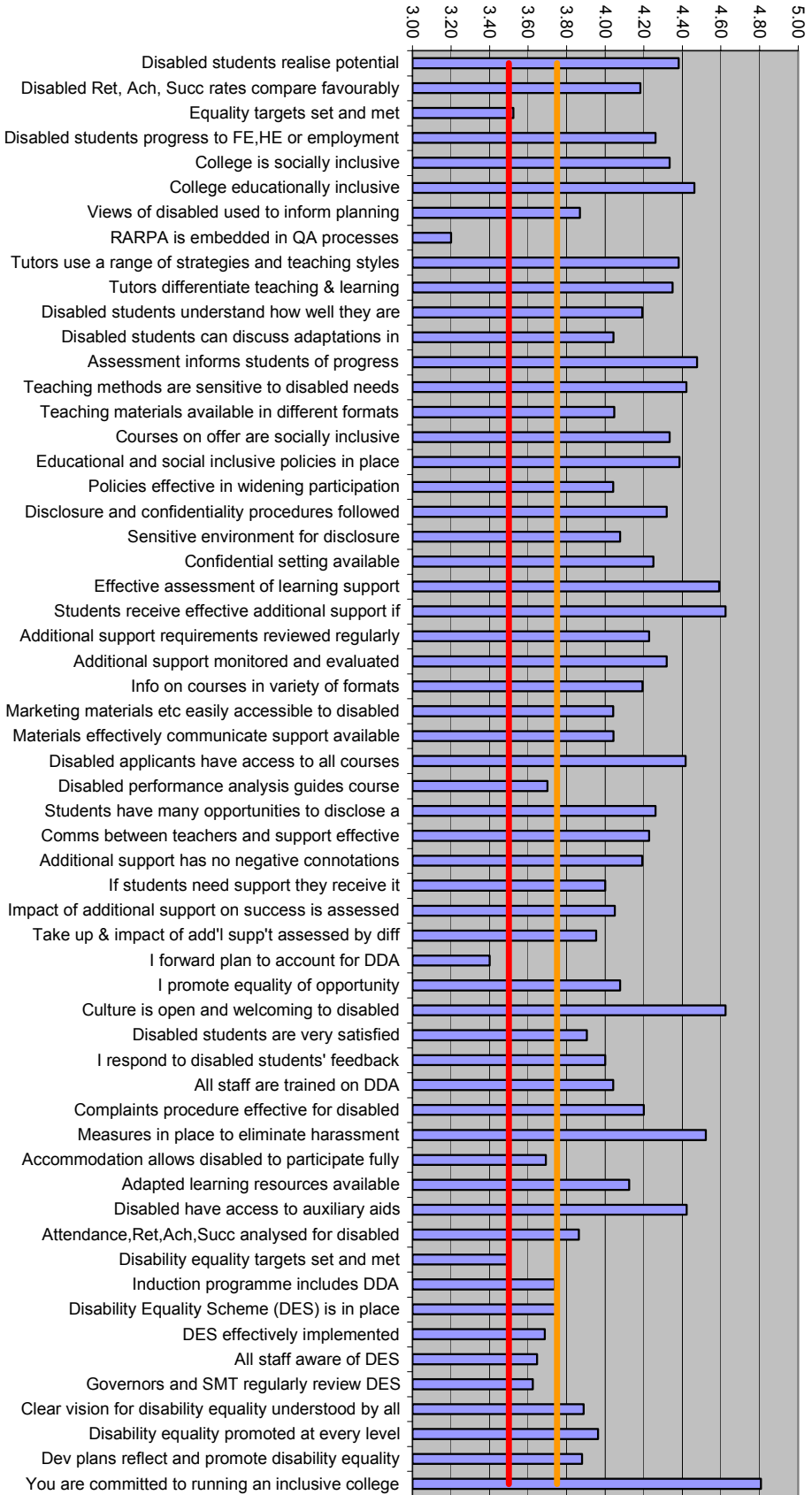


## Disability Equality Duty (Managers) - Support

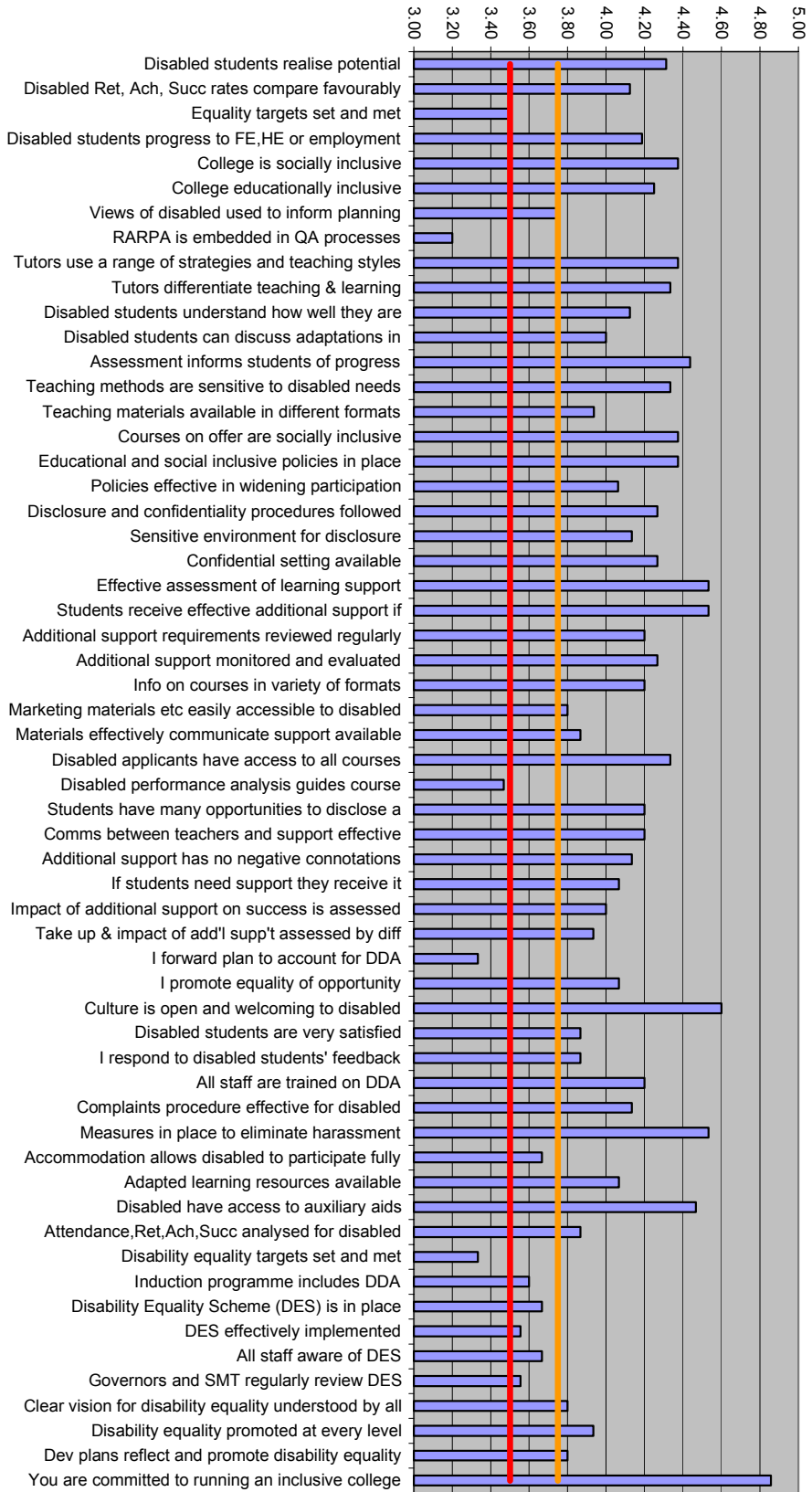


The internal rating diagrams for all, academic and support staff follow

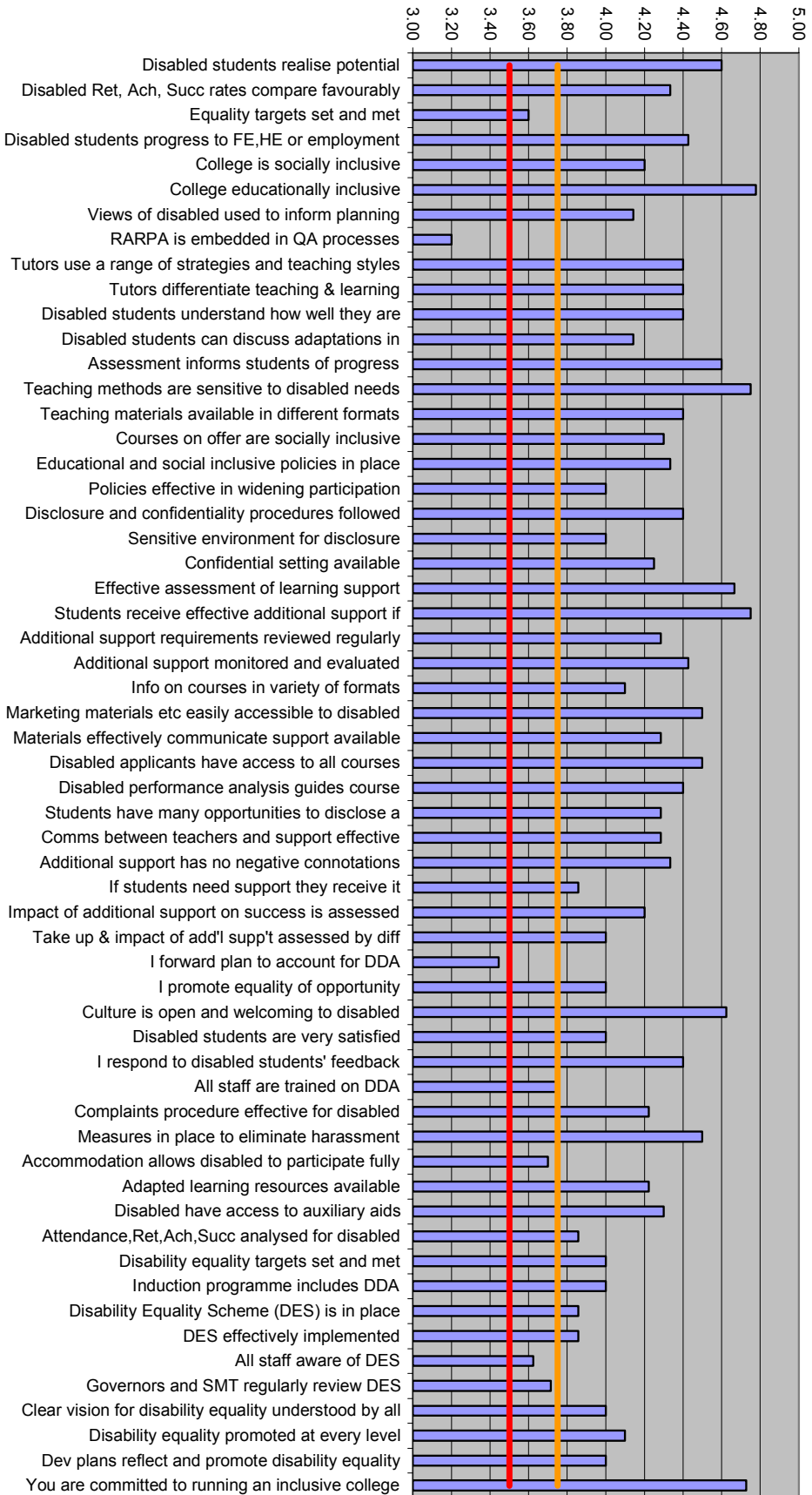
**Disability Equality Duty (Managers) Internal Rating**



**Disability Equality Duty (Managers) - Academic - Internal Rating**



**Disability Equality Duty (Managers) - Support - Internal Rating**



As in the Teachers survey the predominant view is very positive with relatively little disagreement that we are fulfilling our Disability Equality Duty. The two questions with Red “Strongly Disagree” responses come from two different academic managers – the “teaching materials available in different formats” issue again and the “accommodation allows disabled students to participate fully” issue which is being addressed in the new build.

Looking at the questions that managers seem least confident about, the following 6 cause most concern

- 1) Equality targets are set and met
- 2) RARPA is embedded in QA processes
- 3) Disabled performance guides course development
- 4) I forward plan to account for DDA
- 5) Accommodation allows disabled students to participate fully
- 6) Disability equality targets are set and met

The additional questions

- 7) DES effectively implemented
- 8) All staff aware of DES
- 9) Governors and SMT regularly review DES

were from the part of the survey that is there for future reference in that at this stage there is no existing Disability Equality Scheme (DES) in place to review. In some respects, the fact that so many answered Strongly Agree or Agree to these questions is an indicator that they were responding without factual experience of the question and using general beliefs about the college approach to such matters to fill in these gaps in knowledge. Unsurprisingly, Support managers are most guilty of this. The overall reliability of the response to the whole survey is reduced by this finding. Nevertheless the 4 of the 6 questions highlighted above are issues with both academic and support staff with the 2 other questions issues to academic staff only.

Over the whole data set, females and males hold similar views; however within academic staff once again females are predominantly more positive than males with the overall female internal rating being 4.26 and male internal rating 3.98. Within support staff the inverse relationship holds with females being more negative than males in a relative rating of 3.8 to 4.37, interestingly female support staff also appeared less ready to answer all the questions implying a more selective approach to answering questions where no direct experience is available

### **3.3 Comments**

The evidence volunteered by staff to justify their responses to the survey questions is very comprehensive. The discussion of key strengths highlighted that policies and systems are already in place, a wide range of support is available and that the inclusion of students with learning difficulties & disabilities at all levels is clear measure of the opportunities available in the college. Key weaknesses highlighted were mostly about accommodation issues, facilities and access to areas. Some concern was raised at how well we deal with students with mental health issues and in getting work placements for students with severe disabilities.

### **3.4 Conclusions**

Overall the survey is very positive. It is clear managers consider they fully take into account their Disability Equality Duty. The male/female and academic/support trends are interesting but what seems more important is that there are a few common areas of some concern that will need review.

- 1) Setting and meeting Disability and Equality Targets
- 2) Embedding RARPA into Quality Assurance processes

### 3) Forward planning for DDA

Assuming that accommodation worries will be met with the new build, this leaves the question of whether the performance of disabled students should guide course and programme development or whether an approach based on the needs of all students is more appropriate,

## **4.0 Overall Conclusions and Recommendations**

Overall the response to the survey has been very positive and can be backed up with cited evidence. Teachers highlighted a few areas of slight concern, whilst managers found a few more areas that should be reviewed and improved upon. If the survey is repeated periodically it will be interesting to compare how views change as the Disability Equality Scheme is presented to staff.

## Appendix 4

### Accessibility Adjustments to the Estate

In May 2003 the college commissioned a full Accessibility Audit which prioritised the work and adjustments to our existing buildings required to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The prime focus of the adjustments to the physical features of the buildings has been to provide an accessible environment for all. Consideration was given to the legislation including SENDA 2001.

Over the past three years a considerable number of adjustments have been made to the buildings and all urgent and essential work has now been successfully carried out. Support in the form of the Accessibility Improvement Grant from the Learning and Skills Council has made a significant contribution to the cost of these adjustments.

A brief description of the work completed is listed under the appropriate categories below:

- Approach – improvements to pathways, signage, external lighting, ramps and rails,
- Car Parking – appropriate numbers of disabled parking and located conveniently near to doorways. Works to the front of the Dane Bank Building to provide a disabled drop off zone for cars, coaches and taxi's
- External ramped access – all external doorways have ramped access with grab rails
- Entrances – clear signage to entrances and acceptable pressure on doors
- Reception areas and lobbies – external and internal appropriate seating, signage, low desks and induction loops and vision panels.
- Corridors – colour contrasts, Braille and tactile signage, improved light levels, vision panels
- Internal doors – replacement of all doors to acceptable width measurements for wheelchair access, vision panels, proximity locking system and DDA door furniture/handles.
- Internal stairs – colour contrast to stairs, walls and banisters, enhanced lighting to main stairwells. Evacuation chairs on every floor of the buildings.
- Passenger lifts – adjustments made to DDA standards, rear mirrors, Braille and tactile buttons, recorded message.
- Platform and stair lifts – platform lifts to LRC and Staff lounge, theatre lift to be installed currently being specified.
- WC's: General provision and wheelchair users – all WCs have been remodelled to DDA standards. Disabled toilets on each floor of the teaching spaces.
- Internal surfaces – where appropriate colour contrasts have been used and a matt surface. Carpets to floors where appropriate.
- Way-finding – new directories and signage erected with Braille and tactile lettering. Appropriate large scale external signage and to entrances. No unauthorised entrance signs clearly stated to each appropriate room
- Lighting – internal and external lighting enhancements
- Means of escape – clearly signed and evacuation procedures for disabled people clear with refuge points and evacuation chairs.