INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

British Quality FOUNDATION Member

LINKAGE
Community Trust

This strategy can be accessed through a variety of alternative methods, including Braille, audio and Easy Read or produced in a different language other than English.

☎ Telephone **01472 37(2332)**   🖰 Email **michele.swann@linkage.org.uk**

💻 Website **www.linkage.org.uk**

Document originated:	Fairness & Inclusion Team (FIT)	January 2012
Document approved:	SMT	January 2012
	Trustees	January 2012
Document review due:	FIT & SMT	December 2012
		December 2013
		December 2014
		December 2015

Funded by
ypla
Young People's
Learning Agency

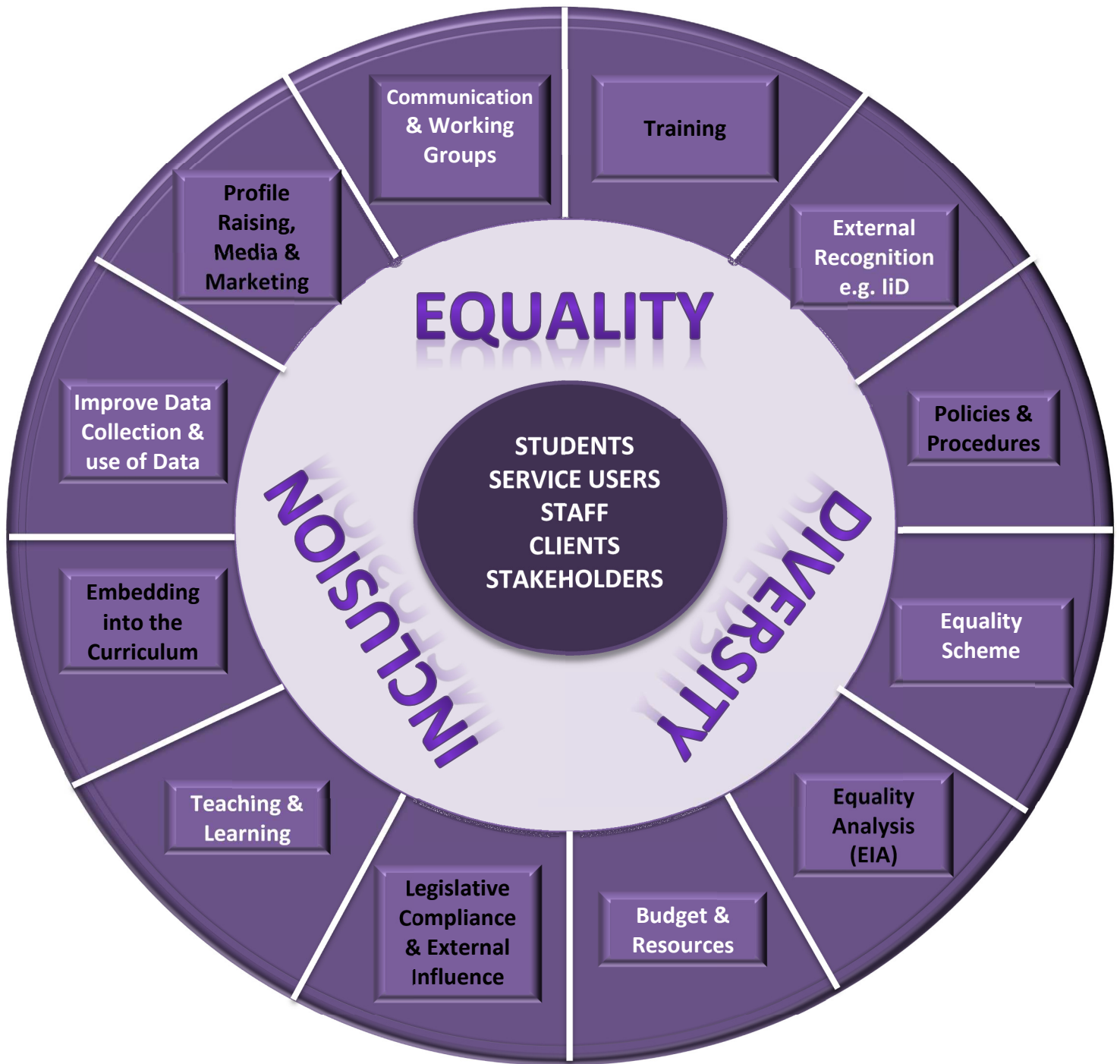Ofsted
Outstanding
2007|2008

EFQM
Recognised for excellence
4 star

The Trust's Vision

" A society in which people with disabilities are seen as people first and are able to live fully integrated lives **"**

The Trust's Mission

" To deliver excellent education, employment, care and support by providing flexible services to meet individual needs, reflecting individuals' uniqueness, their personal aspirations and goals and giving them optimum control over their lives **"**

Inclusion Priorities

EQUALITY

DIVERSITY

INCLUSION

STUDENTS
SERVICE USERS
STAFF
CLIENTS
STAKEHOLDERS

- Communication & Working Groups
- Training
- Profile Raising, Media & Marketing
- External Recognition e.g. IiD
- Improve Data Collection & use of Data
- Policies & Procedures
- Embedding into the Curriculum
- Equality Scheme
- Teaching & Learning
- Equality Analysis (EIA)
- Legislative Compliance & External Influence
- Budget & Resources

1. Introduction

Linkage Community Trust (the Trust) strives to provide a working and learning culture which celebrates diversity, promotes equality in all its forms and eliminate discrimination. The Trust is fully committed to adhering to the general and specific public sector duties and this strategy outlines how the organisation is doing this and our plan of continuous improvement.

2. Overview of general and specific public sector duties

The general equality duty as detailed in the Equality Act 2010 requires us to meet 3 aims:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The specific duties require us to publish information to show how we are complying with the general equality duty. This information needs to demonstrate the effect that our policies and practices have had, evidence of the analysis and engagement we have undertaken and details of the information that we have considered.

Further information about the general and specific duties can be found on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's website.

3. How the Trust meets the public sector duties

3.1 Policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures related to equality are in place:

- Age Equality policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Code of conduct
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Race Equality Scheme
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy

- Learner Full and Discretionary Bursary Guidance
- Student Disciplinary Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Statement of Purpose
- Privacy and Dignity Policy
- Religious and Cultural Observance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Sex Education Policy
- Student Charter

In addition there are a range of policies and guidance related to staff and student recruitment best practice, welfare and support mechanisms, risk assessment, safe working practices etc. All duties, schemes and policies are monitored regularly displaying the Trust's commitment to equality and diversity. The development and implementation of this strategy will be reviewed and monitored on a quarterly basis via the Fairness and Inclusion Team (FIT). This team is representative of all Trust directorates and Trustees including student and service users across the Trust.

Policies, procedures and practices are developed under consultation with stakeholders via the Fairness and Inclusion Team, Student Union, student and service user survey mechanisms e.g. student representatives, focus groups of staff, students and service users via survey's and questionnaires.

All policies, procedures and practices undergo an equality impact assessment (equality analysis) process which is documented. They are reviewed and updated in accordance with legislative changes and/or when changes in practice require updates to be made. All amendments are submitted to the Fairness and Inclusion Team, Senior Management Team and College Leadership Team for approval.

3.2   Data capture and analysis

Student data

The Trust captures, analyses and acts upon knowledge complied from the management information system (MIS) for students on the basis of age, ethnicity, gender, and learning difficulties/disabilities. A summary of data for 09/10 (10/11 data currently being finalized) for 83 new learners indicates the following:

- Age Range – 32.5% of 16-18 year olds, with 67.5% aged between 19 and 25 years.
- Gender – 59.0% of the Trust's student intake is male and 41.0% is female. Retention rates for males and females are equal at 93%. 81% males compared to 98% of females graduated from their learning programme.
- Ethnicity – The Trust operates within a demographic that has a small ethnic population. 6.0% of the college's student cohort that started in 2009/10 are non-White British with the ethnic minority cohort being made up of African, Indian and Mixed. Equal percentages graduated from their learning programme. The regional Lincolnshire County Council (2nd largest county in the country) BME profile is 1.5% of the population, with North East Lincolnshire BME profile of 95.7% White British, Irish and Other and 1.6% Asian, Black or Black British 0.6% Chinese or Other Ethnic Group 2% and Mixed 0.1% (ONS June 2009).
- Disability – learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) is the core demographic of Linkage College. The current national average for LLDD populations within further education colleges is 12.1%. Retention rates for students is 93%, with our severe learning disabled, 92% graduated, compared to our moderate learning disabled of 86%.

Retention data has been reported as a full set of success data for 10/11 will not be available until February 2012.

The MIS team is currently reviewing the information requirements for the learner data set against the current management information system used, Databridge. As part of the scope of the review, the future learner demographic reports will be based on a much broader and deeper level of data. This will include the whole college cohort instead of intake year only. Additions will be highlighted through the review of our information requirements and will include location delivery, domicile postcode, retention, success and achievement, performance by gender, age, ethnicity and disability by learner aim. We will also be recording the specific disability and/or learning difficulty to further understand the impact upon learning.

Staff data

The Trust captures and analyses data for staff via a management information system on the basis of gender, age, disability and ethnicity. A summary of data for 10/11 (786 staff members) indicates the following:

- Gender - 73% of staff are female and 27% are male. The regional population profile for Lincolnshire (2009 data) is 51% female and 49% male.
- Ethnicity - 99% of staff are White British, with North East Lincolnshire data for 2011 4% BME.
- Age – 8% are under the age of 25, with 47% between the age of 25 and 45. 38% are between 45 and 60, with 7% over the age of 60.
- Disability – 7.5% of staff have a declared disability. The average employment rate for the average UK working age population is 74% against 47% for all people with a disability. There is no single measure for disability within the regional population profile for Lincolnshire.

Service User data

The Trust captures and analyses data for service users on the basis of gender, age and disability. A summary of data for 10/11 indicates the following for a total of 139 service users:

- Gender – 38.5% of service users are female and 61.5% are male.
- Age - 1% of service users are under the age of 20, with 81% between the ages of 20 and 40. 18% are over the age of 40.

- Disability - 100% of service users have a declared disability, with 18% on the Autistic Spectrum.

Service user and staff data on sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, religion and belief are not currently captured and specific work around the particular barriers to collection will be part of our planned actions going forward.

This will also include analysis of the local labour market statistics, ONS and neighbourhood statistics to better understand our place in the market and reflect the defined local community norms and ultimately enable better planning and marketing strategies.

3.3 Consultation

The Trust commission a variety of consultation methods including:

- working with local representative expert organisations
- working with specialist national and regional further education and independent specialist provider organisations and working through:
  - it's managers and staff
  - the Learner Forum
  - the Student Union
  - the Staff Consultation Group
  - focus groups, including those for Equality Impact Assessment
  - Pointers
  - other types of consultation including in-house marketing, on-course and progression questionnaires, research projects and external audits
- Staff Consultation Group for staff to debate and analyse policies, procedures, practices and plans
- Staff survey, questionnaires and focus groups
- Monthly two way staff communication briefings to and from the College Leadership Team
- A complaints/grievance process and procedure for staff, students and service users
- A quarterly newsletter – Linkage News
- Staff and student focus groups
- Student Union, with specific duties for the student representative who attends the Trust wide Fairness and Inclusion Team
- Annual College Learner Voice conference and Learner Voice surveys and questionnaires. The college was recently nominated nationally for the quality of its Learner Voice initiatives.
- Service Users annual questionnaires and complaints data analysis
- Pointers

3.4 Equality analysis

Groups of students, service users and staff working across the Trust, who represent the diversity of our community, will look at our policies, procedures and other documentation when they are drafted or come up for review. They will see whether there might be any impact (neutral, positive or adverse) against the 9 protected characteristics and report on:

- effects on one or more groups
- shortfalls in provision
- more effective ways of doing things to help those from disadvantaged groups.

They will consider all types of disadvantage and combinations of disadvantage. Their discussions and findings will be recorded in an equality analysis, together with any actions that need to be taken. This will be published on the Trust's website.

The actions will be added to the Trust's quality improvement plan, with teams/persons responsible designated for completion.

Similarly, all Trust meetings use a pro forma which includes a final equality analysis to determine if any decisions that have been taken are likely to have an impact on groups who share a protected characteristic. Again this is reported as neutral, positive or adverse.

3.5   Tackling and eliminating discrimination

As part of our quality processes, staff, students and service users all have access to a complaints procedure. In addition the Trust also has specific policies around e.g. bullying and harassment, codes of conduct and dignity and privacy .

Any issues of harassment or discrimination are treated promptly and rigorously. As part of our planned actions, an analysis of the existing complaints received by the Trust will be further reviewed for trends. Further analysis in terms of equality will be undertaken for all complaints and harassment cases and monitored to enable identification of areas of concern for those with a protected characteristic.

4.0   The Trust's commitment

The Trust is committed to remaining an exemplar of good equality and diversity practice. Everyone in the Trust community has responsibilities for achieving these priorities. This strategy will help ensure we keep track of what we are planning to do and how well we do it. We will continue to make changes needed to ensure that we offer the best opportunities possible to students, staff, service users and stakeholders, whilst eradicating any discriminatory behaviour or practices.

4.1 Mapping

The Trust knows that if it is to improve outcomes for all of its stakeholders, follow the best employment practice and meet its legal duties it must monitor and assess what it does. It will do so as part of its continuing commitment to raising equality and diversity standards.

The Trust will track equality and diversity through:

- student records
- service user records
- MIS data
- monthly key performance indicators
- staff data
- lesson plans

- schemes of delivery, teaching and learning
- lesson observations
- termly cross Trust improvement reports to senior management team (SMT)
- tracking progress on the annual targets at all levels
- cross Trust self-assessment reports at all levels
- the improvement and support systems
- internal and external audits

When improvements are needed we will take action and also update this strategy for monitoring and review purposes. We respond rapidly to individual concerns whilst making longer term progress towards wider goals.

4.2   Action Planning, review and reporting

This strategy, like all Trust action plans, runs for three to four years with a review at the end of each year. The review may result in changes to the plan in the subsequent years. Actions that need to be taken to support people with protected characteristics and overcome disadvantages. The actions to be taken in any one year will also appear in the annual equality and diversity improvement plan which is part of the Trust's rigorous self-assessment process.

The strategy will be drafted by a sub group of the Fairness and Inclusion Team representing all areas of the Trust's operations and from discussions with colleagues, students, service users and external organisations, then amended and edited by the Fairness and Inclusion Team before being submitted to the Senior Management Team and College Leadership Team.

Changes will be made based on:

- internal, local and national research and guidance
- internal quantitative or qualitative information
- monitoring of performance against targets through service area self-assessment and quality improvement plans
- changes to national and local policy for the sector
- new legislation

Priority	Action Plan & Targets
Internal & External communication	1. Publish in accessible formats and promote the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan containing targets over a 4 year period, including an annual update on actions achieved 2. Develop and publish in accessible formats our equality information and analysis on an annual basis 3. Produce and disseminate 'Readability & Accessibility' manual for staff to ensure all written communication is correct format for all audiences especially service users and students 4. Produce a good practice guide for employers and work placement providers who work with our students/service users 5. Produce a good practice guide for staff who work away from college premises 6. Produce a good practice guide explaining the rights and responsibilities for external stakeholders 7. Review the accessibility of Trust information published on its website and intranet 8. Editorial of E&D update in quarterly newsletter with dissemination to all Linkage stakeholders
Training	9. Develop/purchase and implement Trustee & Snr Management annual training 10. Develop/purchase and implement annual staff, student & service user annual training 11. Provide training to the business community on equality and diversity 12. Provide training and guidance to staff on how to integrate E&D into their working practices 13. Engage all stakeholders and solicit feedback to improve future training annually 14. Review current training for usefulness and relevance for future needs annually
Investors in Diversity (IiD)	15. Appoint external assessors and self-assess against set IiD criteria 16. Collect portfolio of evidence for submission to assessors for level 1 17. Prepare submission of level 2 IiD Award in 2012 18. Review of the IiD action plan at FIT meetings and communicate progress to date to all 19. Seek external recognition of the Trusts equality and diversity working in 2012
Policies & Procedures	20. Redevelop and implement the equality analysis process for all policies and corresponding procedures with specific groups enabled to undertake the task 21. Draft revisions to the E&D policy after consulting staff, students and service users especially those with disadvantages 22. Ensure all policies and procedures are equality impact assessed as they \re introduced or revised, and by the end of 2012 they are all complete and published on the website and intranet
Equality Scheme	23. Draft the revision of the EDI Strategy, incorporating a detailed action plan, highlighting all data to be collected over the forthcoming year by December 2012 and update it each autumn and in subsequent years 24. Produce equality objectives for the Trust with effect from April 2012 and update each autumn and in subsequent years.
Equality Analysis	25. Conduct review of equality analysis of all policies and practices across the Trust – College, Business Development, Establishments, Care Services, Finance 26. Publish annually (from April 2012) equality analysis of policies and practices across the trust 27. Annually review all management decisions and their corresponding equality analysis for compliance and publication 28. Develop pro forma for meeting agenda's and minutes and disseminate to all Trust minute takers 29. Undertake an equality analysis on trends found in complaints data for students, service users, staff and stakeholders and publish 30. AIG Manager, LE Manager, LSM's and Care Managers, organize and run monthly student/service users equality analysis sessions

Finance, Budget & Resources	31. Cost out individual actions and embed into current budget structure ensuring resources for ongoing achievement 32. Cost out individual one off actions and apply for budget to demonstrate senior management commitment and promotion of equality and diversity 33. Prepare and submit 2 external funding bids for E&D projects annually 34. Ensure procurement meets the equality duties
Legislative Compliance & External Influence	35. Develop process to update and disseminate amendments in legislation and suggest adjustments to be made policies and practices 36. Brief Trustees and managers as necessary on legislative changes and their potential impact on the Trust 37. Ensure good feedback regarding equality and diversity from Care Quality Commission 38. Ensure good feedback regarding equality and diversity from Ofsted 39. Extend partnerships with local and national E&D organisations
Delivery of Teaching & Learning, Instruction and Skills Training	40. Develop training for staff to embed equality and diversity into the student and service user curriculum through the TLDG 41. Provide targeted courses for disadvantaged groups in the population 42. Provide an online site for developments in ILT in Teaching and Learning which supports students, staff and service users 43. Review and update T&L Observation process to ensure measurement of equality and diversity
Embedding into the Curriculum	44. Develop and publish an E&D focused calendar of cultural events, both local and national 45. Individual curriculum areas to plan schemes of work and lesson plans in conjunction with the calendar 46. Review and update T&L observation & T&L audit processes to measure equality and diversity embedded into lessons across the curriculum 47. Appoint a lead in ILT in the Teaching and Learning Development Group 48. Provide an online site for ILT developments in Teaching and Learning for staff to embed into all learning opportunities

Improve Data Collection & Use of Data	49. Develop our equality information and analysis of protected characteristics to include for service users & students (e.g. admissions, attendance, and punctuality, participation in activities, trips and visits, retention, achievement, success rates, complaints. For staff (promotion, retention, leavers, grievance, discipline training etc.) and stakeholders for publication on an annual basis
	50. Expand MIS capabilities to enable reporting on a combination of e.g. disability and disadvantage.
	51. Research and develop external qualitative information to include in our published analysis of equality information i.e. ONS, Labour Force Survey etc.
	52. Develop a centralized complaints process to enable better equality analysis, use of data and quality improvement processes
	53. Explicit E&D focused questions to all staff, student, service user and stakeholders via existing questionnaire and survey processes
	54. Review of staff data capture system to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of declarations of disability
	55. Review of the barriers to data collected for students and services users to be expanded across the 9 protected characteristics
	56. Embed all E&D into all Quality Improvement practices
	57. Prepare reports for Fairness and Inclusion Team consideration to include:
	  • Attendance rates analysed against 7 protected characteristics by College Programme Area with gaps/trends identified
	  • Termly College performance reports analysed against 7 protected characteristics and gaps/trends identified
	  • Trust progress update on EDI Action Plan Targets
	  • Trust meetings 'decision making equality analysis'
	  • Update on Equality Analysis of Trust policies and practices

Profile Raising, Media & Marketing	58. Review all existing approaches to marketing and implement positive action for underrepresented groups 59. Develop a bi-annual Trust wide Cultural Diversity Day to coincide with the World Cultural Diversity Day – 21 May 60. Challenge stereotypes in the marketing and promotion of all Trust business 61. Liaise with at least 2 organisations annually who have won awards for E&D good practice and disseminate findings across the Trust 62. Represent the Trust at meetings of local special interest groups in E&D
Fairness and Inclusion Groups	63. Further develop staff, student, service user fairness groups to ensure all areas of the Trust are consulted on advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't. 64. FIT to monitor, track and oversee the implementation of the EDI strategy and action plan and the achievement of annual objectives 65. Review and monitor the effectiveness of the Trusts EDI strategy and action plan 66. FIT to review and monitor the IiD action plan 67. FIT to develop E&D KPI's by Trust Directorate 68. FIT to monitor, track and oversee performance by disadvantaged groups 69. AIG Manager, LE Manager, LSM's and Care Managers, organize and run monthly student/service users equality impact sessions 70. With the staff consultation group chair, organize and run termly staff equality analysis sessions with the Chair of the FIT 71. Prepare an Annual Report on E&D work in the Trust, the progress of the action plan, targets and KPI's for consideration by SMT, the organisation and publication 72. ILT lead to provide an annual report to the FIT on additional support provided in the classroom and its impact upon learning