**Disability Forum**

**Terms of Reference**

1. **Purpose**

The Disability Forum was established in 2023 as a forum to engage with staff on issues relating to disability, and is inclusive of not only disabled staff members but also for anybody who takes an interest in improving conditions for people living with disabilities. The Disability Forum provides a space to discuss these issues, particularly relating to disability in the workplace, and to discuss ideas to further improve the College’s commitment to promote diversity and challenge inequalities. It is intended that the Disability Forum will play an integral part in engaging disabled staff members and carers.

1. **Scope, functions and activities**

The scope of the disability forum and its main functions will be related to ensuring that the College’s value of ‘respect’ and the associated behaviour to ‘promote diversity and challenge inequalities’ are embedded throughout the College. The aim is to create a more progressive and inclusive environment, not only for College employees, but also for visitors to the College.

One of the core functions of the Disability Forum is to support the SMT in its ongoing initiatives to fully embed a values-based approach across the organisation and to promote equality, diversity and inclusion for all employees.

Disability Forum members and SMT will aim to:

* Represent fairly and accurately the views of staff and management.
* Consider any recommendations for change and improvement.
* Share information and responses with staff and management
* Consider matters of consequence and relevance to staff but not air of focus on individual grievances which should be considered under the appropriate employment policies, such as the grievance policy.
* Work in full alignment with the College values to ensure that all individuals regardless of their position within the College are treated with respect.

The activities that will be carried out by the Disability Forum include:

* Reviewing relevant HR policies and procedures in development to ensure that they support equality and inclusion
* Working with HR to review any equalities monitoring forms (and any form that collects personal data)
* Working with HR to develop new policies and protocols relating to equality and inclusion for disabled people as needed
* Raising awareness to staff about disability through College-wide activities. This includes:
  + Working with SMT and the EDI Communications Manager and Senior Internal Communications Officer on planning and delivering staff events for disability awareness days. This may relate to disability in general, or a day/week dedicated to a specific disability (such as Crohn’s and Colitis awareness week)
  + Assisting with the planning and delivering of other events, such as College conversations on relevant topics
  + Writing blog posts to publicise other issues, as agreed with SMT.
* Offering consultative advice to SMT HR, SRC and College departments on any matters relating to disability
* Providing a safe space for discussions relating to issues and experiences relating to disability

The forum will be involved with any other activities related to disability as raised by the forum members, with approval of SMT.

1. **Out of Scope**

Interceding in issues relating to individual staff members as they pertain to disability (for example, personal grievances)

1. **Values**

The College has a clear set of values which drive everything we do. They support our leaders and staff to make values-based decisions and they enable the creation and reinforcement of our positive, empowering and enabling culture.

Our values are:

* **C**ourage
* **I**nnovation
* **R**espect
* **C**ollaboration
* **L**earning
* **E**xcellence

We expect everyone who works for and with us to live out our values every day.

1. **Forum organisation**

The Disability Forum will be led by a Chair who will set the dates of the meetings, set the agenda, and distribute the meeting papers prior to the meeting, and the minutes following the meeting. The Director of HR will be the SMT sponsor.

Forum meetings will take place every 2 months. The Chair will carry out communication with SMT, HR and the SRC.

Other members of the forum will take minutes of the meetings on a rotational basis, and may be asked to complete tasks outside the meetings.

1. **Forum membership**

The forum is open to all staff. It welcomes both those who are living with a disability, those who care for someone with a disability and those who have an interest in improving conditions for those with disabilities. There is no limit on the number of people who can join.

The forum is committed to ensuring that disability is considered within all relevant decisions made within the College.

The Chair is elected by ballot within the forum, and each Chair will serve for a term of two years. This term may be extended by a further year where it is necessary and/or appropriate to do so. The Chair will serve a maximum term of three years.

At the end of each term there will be an automatic ballot for a new Chair, and HR will carry out the ballot.

Individuals interested in becoming a Chair should seek approval from their director in advance of volunteering. This is to ensure that they fully understand the workload required in becoming a Chair and to ensure that there is no negative impact on their own workload.

SMT will sign off all nominations for the role of Chair.

1. **Conduct**

It is acknowledged that the topics considered and discussed at the Disability Forum may be emotive or personal to forum members. However, all staff are expected to uphold the College Values and in particular the value of Respect which must be adhered to for all members of staff regardless of where they are within the structure. Forum meetings are intended to be collaborative and provide a learning experience for members and SMT alike, and this is best achieved in an environment where respect is at the heart of any discussion.

We therefore ask that:

1. Participants in Disability Forum meetings are respectful in their written and oral communication, and act in a professional and collaborative manner.
2. Disability Forum members appreciate that they are ambassadors for the College Values and behaviours.
3. Where there is disagreement, Disability Forum members must aim not to personalise issues and must not disparage others.
4. Members should not use inflammatory, dismissive or accusatory language.
5. **Support**

The Forum members will be allowed two hours each month to carry out Disability Forum activities, in addition to attending the relevant meetings.

The College will also provide the forum a budget of £3,000pa in order to undertake activities which fall within the guidance on Financial Support for Forums. This document can be found on COLIN. The Director of HR signs off all requests.

1. **Governance**

The Chief Executive and the Director of HR will hold regular meetings with the Chair.

SMT will sign off all nominations for the role of Chair.

1. **Communication**

The activities of the forum will be communicated to all employees via the College Intranet- COLIN, through other online channels, such as the Staff Briefing and Stay Connected and Learn events, via the Senior Internal Communications Officer’s Friday News Roundup, and in person at Collaboration and Learning Days.

Any social events organised by the forum will be communicated on COLIN and will be open to all employees.

1. **Evaluation**

The forum will set its own measures for progress and success, which will be signed off and reviewed by SMT regularly.

1. **Reviewing the Terms of Reference**

To be reviewed every 12 months (last reviewed on 1February 2023). The College may amend these Terms of Reference at this review or at any time if appropriate and necessary.

**Current Organisation (updated February 2023)**

Chair: Katherine Lowther

SMT Representative: Marcia Cummings