

## **Examples of practice – flexible working scheme University of West of Scotland**

Equality and Diversity at the University of the West of Scotland is about treating everyone with dignity and respect and the University is keen to engender an inclusive culture which is outlined in its Dignity and Respect at Work policy. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on the University's policies and decisions in relation to the functions of the university, and robust data is actively collected, on which we can act. To date, staff and student data on the 9 protected equality and diversity characteristics has been collected, to enable the University to put action plans in place to address the issues raised.

One of the issues that cropped up from staff feedback data collection was around flexible working. From the feedback received it previously appeared that going over and above the statutory requirement was a major hurdle for University staff. This was particularly so because the policy document was 16 pages long, outlining the statutory and non statutory requirements. This policy has now been simplified and condensed to a one page statement which suggests that if you want to work flexibly and your line manager is ok with it then you can do it.

The philosophy behind this flexible working scheme is 'we don't mind where you do your work, what we are interested in is the work you produce.' The University has also extended the right to request flexible working to all staff. The University now has staff on term time contracts, job sharing, condensed working weeks (for example, a five day week worked over four days) and the opportunity to work from home. The scheme is being extended even now with the finance department and HR department suggesting that flexible working options can be a way of supporting and managing staff costs. For example, a staff member moving from full-time work to term time options means we are

- mainstreaming by putting policy into practice
- making flexible working contribute to meeting business needs, meaning we have a win-win situation.

### **Key learning/evaluation**

- Make Equality and Diversity practices work for the individual and the university
- Keep things simple
- Don't get an Equality & Diversity Manager to share key messages: get a Professor to do it, as this sends out a more powerful message.