

## Module 2: Reflecting on Equality and Diversity as Teachers in a Diverse Scotland

### 2.1 Module 2 Introduction and Recap of Prior Learning

Welcome to the second of the Equality and Diversity modules provided by the General Teaching Council for Scotland. You are encouraged to engage with the professional reflections and other activities, and to consider how your learning through the module will have an impact on your practice. You are also encouraged to consider including your learning from this module as part of your ongoing record of Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL) for Professional Update or, if you are a probationer teacher, your evidence towards meeting the Professional Standard for Full Registration.

#### 2.1a Self-care and support for teacher wellbeing

Please take a few moments to refresh yourself with the advice from the first module around self-care and support for teachers. Some of the content in this learning resource may challenge your thinking, or it may trigger memories which may be distressing. Similarly, you may discover new aspects to your own values that you feel uncomfortable about, and which are not in alignment with those expected of a teacher, which have given you cause for further reflection. Your long-held values and perceptions may indeed be changing and adapting because of your learning and professional reflections. Any or all of these may mean that you wish to seek support and advice from professionals or peers. The General Teaching Council for Scotland wellbeing resources <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/News/news/teacher-wellbeing-resources-covid-19.aspx> for teachers are a helpful resource which you may wish to access. The Education Support helpline <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/helping-you> is available for you 24 hours, 365 days per year via phone or text. Their phone number is 08000 562 561 or text on 07909 341229. There are various helplines and websites listed in the Resources section towards the end of this module.

#### 2.1b Reviewing our learning from Module 1

In the first module, we learned about the requirements and expectations of us as registered teachers with the General Teaching Council for Scotland, and the Professional Standard for Teachers regarding equality and diversity. We looked at the definitions of equality and diversity, and the United Kingdom Equality Act (2010). We also considered our responsibilities for ensuring equality and diversity, and the implications of the 'Teaching in a Diverse Scotland' report for us as teachers. We finally considered some barriers to equality and diversity, and how teachers can challenge and address these.

## 2.1c Topics covered in Module 2

In this module, we will look in more detail at:

- factors which can contribute to barriers to equality and diversity, and the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010;
- what equality and diversity means for teachers and learners with protected characteristics, and the implications of intersectionality and unconscious bias;
- the role of teachers in challenging discrimination, assumptions and stereotyping;
- next steps for career-long professional learning in equality and diversity; and,
- reflecting on this professional learning as part of Professional Update or, for probationer teachers, meeting the Professional Standard for Full Registration.

## 2.2 Equality and Diversity in the General Teaching Council for Scotland Professional Standard for Teachers

As we discussed in the first module, the first section of the Professional Standard for Teacher sets out a clear expectation for teachers about the values and commitment for which they should be a role model. The Professional Values encompass social justice, integrity, trust and respect, and alongside the Personal Commitment, should underpin all the work that we do as teachers.

Teachers are expected to understand and promote social justice in their interactions with pupils, parents/carers, and other partners, and to ensure that social justice informs planning and teaching.

This means being actively aware of the factors which may impact on social justice and equality, such as pupils' ethnicity, poverty, home circumstances, religion or belief, and additional support needs (whether this be a long-term or short-term additional support need, and including consideration of the additional support needs of members of pupils' families). All these factors should be kept in mind when we consider how to teach aspects of the curriculum, and particularly in the examples that we choose to use. To confidently approach issues of equality and diversity in our classrooms, we need to have a clear understanding of these issues in practice and to know our roles and responsibilities in relation to them.

## 2.3 Equality and Diversity: Implications for Scotland's Teachers

As we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Scotland is becoming an ever-increasingly diverse country to live and work in. It is known for its welcoming approach and ethos, such as the work done to support and welcome refugees who chose Scotland as their home to settle in, and as teachers we reflect this welcoming approach and ethos in our schools and wider education system. While

Scotland is a welcoming country, we must not think that all the issues around prejudice, stereotyping and so on have been resolved. It is very much the case that some people from minority groups, including teachers, continue to experience discrimination, stereotyping and assumptions being made about and to them. This reflects what is happening in wider society globally, and as teachers, we are in a position as role models in society to challenge discrimination and assumptions when we encounter them. We contribute towards normalising the values and attitudes which Scotland aspires to, although it is important to acknowledge that these are complex issues and as teachers, we cannot solve these in isolation. The resources section contains some helpful links to helplines and resources which teachers may find helpful in addressing these and in obtaining support should they be victims of prejudice, discrimination, or inequality.

## 2.4 Factors contributing to Barriers to Equality and Diversity

### 2.4a Prejudice

The word 'prejudice' comes from the Latin word 'praeiudicium', meaning prior, pre-set judgements. This describes when one person makes a judgement about another, and this is based on preconceptions, negative attitudes or opinions about people from similar backgrounds or with the same protected characteristics. We all make pre-judgements about people, whether positive or negative, especially those we are meeting for the first time. Our prejudices can be formed from our own preferences, such as: the music we like; the way we choose to dress; past experiences in our lives; and beliefs passed down to us from family and society. For example, we may like their tattoo or their shoes, or we may dislike that they are wearing a rock band t-shirt because we either don't like the band or feel that wearing a tour t-shirt is too informal for work. Other examples may be not liking someone's hair colour or that they have a body piercing. Usually we are flexible in our thinking to allow our first impressions to be changed as we receive new or different information about that person or group of people. For example, as we get to know and like these people, it doesn't matter that their personal choices such as their hair colour, piercings or the bands that they follow are different to ones we would choose. As we get to know people, we may change our judgements based on our increased and accurate knowledge of the person, and in remembering that it is the person inside that matters. Prejudice happens when we base our views on incorrect or unreasonable evidence and are unwilling to change those views. Prejudice is predominantly a thought, rather than an action. When it is combined with discrimination, acting in a biased way, or oppressing someone, it is likely to cause harm or for a person or population to be treated unfairly. An example of prejudice leading to discrimination is if a teacher who has a tattoo is not appointed to a job, and a member of the interview panel openly states that they don't think they would be a good teacher because they have a tattoo, and that is why in their view they shouldn't get the job.

Often, prejudices are formed because of family, societal or community values, or a combination of these. We may hold prejudices against people with a protected characteristic because our family believed that about them, and we have not been challenged about those views. An example of prejudice is when a family do not approve of a new partner introduced by their 30-year-old child, because one of the parties is from a different ethnic or religious background. The parents may assume that the new partner will not understand or respect their values and views even when presented with evidence that this new partner has taken steps to learn about these values and views. Their prejudice may be visible and they may express this dissatisfaction; or they may keep it hidden to allow their child to make their own life choices.

Our prejudices can remain hidden. We may consciously keep them secret, or they may be unconscious prejudices that we are unaware we have. Often the hidden prejudice of someone in a position of power can be used to influence against those who have less power through acts of discrimination or bias. It can be challenging for a person to acknowledge that they are prejudiced against a person, or group of people, in society. We discuss unconscious bias later in this module.

## 2.4b Discrimination

Discrimination is described as the actions that people take because of their prejudices. How a person's prejudices have developed is not important. Discrimination happens when a person, institution or society has the opportunity and the power to enact their prejudice against someone with a protected characteristic. This discrimination results in people from a population with a protected characteristic being treated less fairly or less well than others. This unfair treatment can also extend to those who do not share the protected characteristic but are connected to those who do.

Giddens (1997) suggested that discrimination included activities which denied resources or rewards to people with a protected characteristic. Examples of this may include not promoting a colleague because they were due to commence maternity leave in the next few months or refusing to purchase essential equipment to support a colleague with a disability to carry out their job fully. Examples of essential equipment include: screen-reader software for a colleague with a visual impairment; voice recognition software so that a colleague with dyslexia or repetitive strain injury can dictate rather than typing or writing; and specialist seating which allows a colleague with a back injury or with fibromyalgia to sit at their desk without increasing the pain they experience. Another example would be scheduling essential training on a Friday at a time when Muslim colleagues attend the mosque for prayers, with no alternative time provided. This example may be discriminatory not

only because of a person's religion, but also if a person works part-time due to having caring responsibilities for a family member with a disability. This short YouTube video by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) discusses protected characteristics and discrimination. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxkC8A648JA>

#### 2.4c Stereotyping

Stereotyping happens when a person assumes that because someone belongs to a particular group or has a certain protected characteristic, they will either have specific preferences or behave in a certain way. An example of this is assuming that anyone in a wheelchair is not capable of expressing their own views and speaking instead to the person who is pushing the chair while ignoring the person in the wheelchair. Another example is the statement 'all girls love horses and take ballet lessons', or 'all boys want to be footballers when they grow up'. Clearly, it is inaccurate to say that every single girl in Scotland loves horses and takes ballet lessons, or that all the boys growing up in Scotland dream of being footballers as a career choice. Some stereotyping is visible, such as some clothing retailers marketing clothes with princesses or which are the colour pink as 'girls' clothes', or the packaging of a toy being blue and showing only boys playing with the toy. Stereotyping also continues to be found in schools, although not as frequently as in the past. For example, in the mid-20th century it was not uncommon for only boys to study metalwork and technical drawing, while girls studied textiles and home economics, whereas today all pupils are given the opportunity to study all subjects regardless of whether they are male, female, non-binary or transgender. Societal stereotyping can mean that individuals are stereotyped into certain categories when a person in authority or power makes decisions based on their own views. For example, pupils not given the experience of all the different subjects were possibly unaware that certain career paths were possible.

In schools, pupils are sometimes stereotyped because of their ethnic background or perhaps where they live, with teachers not having high expectations of them and holding the view 'well, what would you expect from a pupil with that background?'.

Teachers who have been in post at the same school for many years may assume that younger siblings, or the children of the pupils that they taught, will be the same. For example: 'why aren't you as clever as your sibling?' or 'Your sister was good at football, why aren't you?' Parents may also stereotype and assume that their child will have similar views to them, for example 'I was never any good at science, I still hate the smell of the labs' or 'I can't understand why my child doesn't make better progress with learning a language, I loved learning Spanish at school.'

As teachers, it is possible that there is also more subtle stereotyping taking place, for example, encouraging girls at nursery to play in the home corner or asking them to make a cup of tea for you, while boys are encouraged to play with the toy cars and multi-storey garage.

An example of stereotyping in a secondary school may be trying, with the best of intentions, to make Science more relevant to females so as to encourage them to take Science Highers or consider pursuing careers in science, by basing a unit on the science of make-up. As explained in the 'Improving Gender Balance Scotland' resource <https://education.gov.scot/media/khsi24hr/gender-stereotyping-intro.pdf>, this makes assumptions that all females are interested in make-up and that males are not, which is not the case. You may find it helpful to access the action guides provided for your school stage on the above resource, to think more about where this may occur in school and how to avoid it. We need to be mindful of our own underlying stereotyping which may well arise from our own life experiences, so that we do not inadvertently deny our learners the full range of activities and opportunities offered. It is our responsibility as teachers to ensure that we encourage the children in our care to experience and become involved in all learning, and wider extra-curricular opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme <https://www.dofe.org/> offered in many secondary schools, or the Children's University <https://childrensuniversity.scot/>, so that they are able to make informed choices and decisions, especially about possible career choices when they leave school.

### Case Study

Think about this case study of prejudice and stereotyping in relation to the Gypsy-Roma Traveller community.

You learn that a pupil from a Traveller community will be joining your class on Monday. You have no experience of this community, other than the rather negative stereotypical image of Travellers that you have seen on the television and the negative way in which your family referred to them when you were a child. You also assume that she will only be with you for a few weeks before the travellers move on. On Monday, a smartly dressed little girl and her father, who is dressed in a suit, appear in your classroom doorway with the school receptionist. This can't be your new pupil, surely?! Dad explains that he is a trainee Educational Psychologist and they have moved to a permanent Traveller site while he is in training to give the family stability. During the day, the little girl makes friends and you are impressed with her social skills. After the first day, you reflect on the prejudice with which you had anticipated your new pupil's arrival, and feel somewhat ashamed of the way in which you let your limited knowledge of the Traveller community lead you to making stereotyping and prejudicial assumptions. You also realise that all the resources in your classroom

reflect children who live in a house with a garden. You've never thought about this before, but that doesn't reflect the living circumstances of most of the children in your class. With no positive images of children living anywhere other than in a house with a garden, it is difficult for most of the children in your class to feel positive about where they live, and you resolve to request to purchase new resources to address this and to make the resources reflect the diversity of living accommodation that the children have.

## Reflection

Take a few minutes to reflect on the learning opportunities offered in your classroom, and the potential for inadvertent stereotyping to occur, either by yourself, your learners, or visitors to the classroom. How might you plan to avoid these? Are there actions that you will need to take? For example ensuring that posters portraying various occupations reflect a broad range of people with different characteristics, and that they do not stereotype. For example: a poster about the NHS showing a female nurse and a male doctor; or a poster about working for an airline showing a male pilot and a female cabin crew member.

## 2.4d Oppression

Oppression is the outcome of the unfair treatment received by a person due to discrimination (Thompson, 2012) and it can take various forms. It may be restricting or removing opportunities, treating people in an inhuman or degrading way, or disregarding the rights of a person or population who share a protected characteristic. Through this discriminatory treatment, hardship can occur for a population because of the way in which they have been treated by someone in a position of power over them.

## 2.4e Reflecting on these barriers

As we have thought about each of the factors which contribute to inequality, we have reflected how these may impact on us in our practice, and whether we have existing prejudices and experiences of stereotyping that we may not have consciously acknowledged in the past. Some of us may have had memories, whether from long ago or more recently, of being discriminated against or experiencing oppression. This may have caused you some distress or a dawning realisation, or perhaps both. If this is the case, before we move onto explore what is meant by the protected characteristics, take a few moments to revisit the General Teaching Council for Scotland wellbeing resources, <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/News/news/teacher-wellbeing-resources-covid-19.aspx> and ensure that you have taken some self-care time. If you need to speak with someone about how you are feeling, or to gain some support, please visit the resources section towards the end of the module where there are helpline details given.

## 2.5 Exploring Protected Characteristics

### 2.5a What are the protected characteristics?

The United Kingdom Equality Act (2010) defines nine protected characteristics, against which it is illegal to discriminate or deny equality of opportunity. These are:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex,  
and
- sexual orientation.

### Reflection

Before you engage with the resources provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission below, take some time to reflect on your own personal situation. You may be a teacher who has one protected characteristic, or perhaps you have several. Answer the following questions and then make a mind-map of the protected characteristics that you identify as having. You will use this mind-map later in the module for another task too.

- Are you female / male / non-binary?
- Are you transgender?
- Do you have a disability? Is this a hidden disability, for example dyslexia or epilepsy, or a visible disability such as cerebral palsy or being visually impaired?
- Do you think of yourself as being young / old / middle aged? Do you still think of yourself as being 21 years old?
- Are you married or in a civil partnership? You may be in a long-term relationship and feel that you don't need to get married, or you may be widowed, divorced, or separated.
- Are you in a same-sex relationship or are you exploring whether you may be gay or bi-sexual?



- Do you have children, or you may be thinking about starting a family, perhaps adopting, or fostering a child? You may have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth, and the associated grief and stress which surrounds these.
- Do you have religious beliefs? How would you describe these?
- What ethnicity would you describe yourself as?
- What culture would you identify, if any, as belonging to?

In thinking about all these questions, does it matter? Some protected characteristics may be more important to you than others, and some may have a positive or negative impact on the way in which you live your life.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission have produced a series of guidance on each of the protected characteristics <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics> As you scroll down the page, there are resources and advice for each protected characteristic, as well as helpful examples of how people with this protected characteristic may be discriminated against. To learn more about hidden and visible disabilities, this is a helpful resource from Citizens Advice Bureau which you may wish to access <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/protected-characteristics/what-counts-as-disability/>

### 2.5b Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a state where a person has more than one protected characteristic, and so that person is more likely to experience discrimination and oppression. Thompson (2018) discusses how inequalities related to one protected characteristic may intertwine with those inequalities related to another protected characteristic that a person has, describing this as intersectionality. He goes on to describe how discrimination and oppression rarely exist in isolation. For example, an elderly black woman is more likely to experience ageism and racism, as well as sexism.

This TEDX talk

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en) by Kimberle Crenshaw addresses some of the issues of intersectionality. It lasts for about 19 minutes and explains her view on how if a person has multiple protected characteristics then their experience of exclusion and discrimination is likely to be greater than for someone who has only one protected characteristic. Watch video

### Reflection

Think about the learners that you teach, and the colleagues, parents, visiting professionals in your school or educational establishment, and members of the wider school community. How many of them have protected characteristics that may leave them more at risk of discrimination or oppression due to intersectionality? An example may be an Indian girl who has a cochlear implant (an operation to support people with moderate to profound hearing loss where an implant is placed in the inner ear to provide a modified sense of sound). She may be at risk of discrimination due to racism, sexism, the religious beliefs that she is perceived to hold, or her disability. In comparison, it could be argued that a girl of the same age who is from a white Scottish background with no disability would be at less risk of experiencing discrimination due to racism or disability, although she may still be at risk of sexism.

### 2.5c Reflecting on the protected characteristics

Now that you have engaged with these resources and thought about the examples of how discrimination may occur, revisit your mind-map and reflect on these two things.

Firstly, have you ever experienced discrimination? You may not have realised it at the time, but you may be recognising it now.

Secondly, are you realising that you have been prejudiced in your thinking or actions towards another person? If we are all truly honest with ourselves, we all can probably answer 'yes' to this question. This may have been when we were much younger, for example not inviting a neighbour's children to play with you and the others from your street because they were from a different nationality or went to a different, non-faith, school.

As children, we often follow the example of our elders in our family or social circle, and you may find, looking back, that what you now recognise as discrimination or stereotyping, was something which was commonplace. This links back with Thompson's conceptualisation of personal, social, and cultural influences on us as we are growing up, and how our value systems are formed through our own experiences and the examples set for us. Think about whether any of the memories you have are counter to the values that you hold now, as an adult member of society. We will discuss this further when we look at our responsibilities as teachers to challenge discrimination and prejudice.

## 2.6 Equality and Diversity for Teachers with Protected Characteristics

For many teachers, we will identify with having one or more protected characteristics. The United Kingdom Equality Act (2010) protects us from discrimination and enables positive actions to take place to support us in living our daily lives and carrying out our jobs as teachers. One way in which the Equality Act supports teachers with disabilities is through the requirement for reasonable

adjustments to be made. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) state that a reasonable adjustment is 'a change to remove or reduce the effect of an employee's disability so they can do their job, or a job applicant's disability when they apply for a job.' Examples of reasonable adjustments include providing an assistant to carry resources and books from one classroom to another or installing push pads to allow for smooth transits around the school building for a teacher who walks using crutches or has a wheelchair. It may be in allowing for a reduced timetable for a teacher returning from a serious illness, so that they can have a phased return, or providing voice recognition software for a teacher with dyslexia, dyspraxia or with repetitive strain injury. The Access to Work organisation offers support to employers and you can find more information here <https://inclusionscotland.org/what-we-do/employability-and-civic-participation/employability/employability-guide-menu/access-to-work/>

There are several organisations which support teachers with protected characteristics, and some of these are listed in the resources section towards the end of the module.

## 2.7 Equality and Diversity for Learners with Protected Characteristics

As mentioned in the first module, there is a duty on public sector employers (the Public Sector Equality Duty) to consider how we meet the needs of people with protected characteristics. This is known as 'anticipatory planning' and applies both at school and local authority / employer level. We must consider what reasonable adjustments our learners may need and ensure that we build in inclusiveness and accessibility when we are designing our teaching and learning opportunities. This is often referred to as the 'reasonable adjustments duty' and the Equality and Human Rights Commission includes guidance on this in their downloadable advice 'What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools' <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/what-equality-law-means-you-education-provider-schools>

When we design our curricula and learning opportunities, we must consider whether all our learners can recognise themselves in what they are being taught and asked to engage with. When you are choosing new resources for your classroom or school, you should choose those which reflect the diverse global society that we live in, and which reflects a range of people with protected characteristics. This links back to the earlier discussions about considering the resources that we provide and whether they reflect the diversity of our learners today, or whether they reflect the learner population that we were teaching 10 or more years ago, and which may have been very different and less diverse. The resource may have been published before the Section 28 legislation was repealed in 2000 in Scotland. Section 28 was United Kingdom legislation, in force from 1988 as part of the Local Government Act, which banned the 'promotion of homosexuality' by local

education authorities, so schools could not teach about it. While it is now about 20 years since this legislation ceased to be in force, there are still effects from this legislation, including LGBT+ teachers who feel uncomfortable about being open about their sexual orientation or that they are trans.

Catherine Lee discusses this in her article for The Conversation <https://theconversation.com/uks-lgbt-teachers-still-scarred-by-the-legacy-of-homophobic-legislation-more-than-30-years-on-118618>.

There may be teachers who were in service at the time of Section 28 being in force who still feel uncomfortable about discussing same-sex couples, bi-sexual or non-binary individuals or transgender people in their lessons, or perhaps newer teachers who remember the negative attitudes towards same-sex couples due to this legislation. As teachers, we have a duty under the United Kingdom Equality Act to ensure that we include the LGBT+ community as part of our inclusive practice, and that we include positive examples in our teaching of people with this protected characteristic. The LGBT Youth Scotland website has some helpful resources

<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/national-programmes/schools-and-teachers/lesson-activities-and-assemblies/>, as does the Schools Out website [http://www.schools-out.org.uk/?page\\_id=159](http://www.schools-out.org.uk/?page_id=159).

You can find resources to support inclusive education here which were produced by the European Agency for Special Needs in Inclusive Education <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/new-resources-for-inclusive-education/> and these from Education Scotland <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/support-for-all/>

## 2.8 The Role of Teachers in Upholding the Principles of Equality and Diversity

As we discussed in the first module, as teachers we have a responsibility to uphold the principles of equality and diversity, and the broader principles of social justice which work alongside these, in all aspects of our everyday lives. It is not enough for us to only uphold these in the classroom, there is a clear expectation that as teachers who are recognised as positive role models by wider society, that we live out these in our daily lives. The General Teaching Council for Scotland Code of Professionalism and Conduct (COPAC), as discussed in the first module, is the standard by which we are measured, with Section 5 on equality and diversity being particularly relevant for this context. The 'Professional Guide for Equality and Diversity' has clear expectations of teachers that we will be able to open conversations and 'sensitively challenge' bias and discrimination when we encounter this. It can be easier said than done to challenge others, but as we discussed in the first module, being a passive bystander means that by not challenging bias and discrimination, we are implicitly sending a message that this behaviour is acceptable.

In challenging instances of bias and discrimination, and stereotyping, especially in our classrooms, we actively encourage our peers and learners to reflect on why their views and actions are not

appropriate. By challenging these, we are stating that expressing these views is a serious breach of the principles of equality and diversity. In some instances, a person's views and actions may be illegal and in challenging them we are, hopefully, intervening before their views see them being challenged through the legal justice system. As we move through the remainder of the module, we will consider ways in which we can prepare ourselves to challenge effectively instances of bias, discrimination, and inequality when we encounter them.

## 2.9 Unconscious Bias

As well as challenging discrimination and prejudice, and associated assumptions and stereotypes, we have a responsibility to reflect on, and challenge, our own views and to be aware of unconscious bias. This is sometimes referred to as 'implicit bias', where we might not think about the possible consequences of our words or actions for some people. For teachers, we need to be mindful of unconscious bias and ensure that we have a good understanding of this. To be able to challenge discrimination and prejudice in others, we need to be able to recognise it and acknowledge this in ourselves. For example, our own upbringing may not have exposed us to the ways in which others live, such as families where both parents work but they are in poverty (known as 'working poverty'), or where someone is living on the minimum or living wage, and relying on food banks to provide meals for their young children who are in your class. We have to make sure that we don't assume that our learners have had, or will be able to readily access, the same life experiences that we did as children, or that some children in our classes are able to access. The General Teaching Council for Scotland have a set of resources available to support teachers' professional learning in the area of unconscious bias in their Equality and Diversity Hub <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/equality-diversity-resource>

## 2.10 Equality or Equity?

Often, equality and equity can be mixed up in people's understandings of equality and diversity. Equality relates primarily to the protected characteristics found in the United Kingdom Equality Act (2010), where having equality of opportunity means that individuals are not unfairly disadvantaged on the basis of their protected characteristics; whereas equity is more focused on whether people are able to have equity of experience, and that this is underpinned by fairness and impartiality, such as the Pupil Equity Fund (known as PEF funding) in Scotland, which is discussed later in the module.

Ensuring that everyone has equality of opportunity is not the same as ensuring that they have an equitable experience. The cartoon on this blog

(<https://sputniksteve.wordpress.com/2019/03/28/climb-that-tree-differentiating-differentiation/>)

shows a range of animals, birds and a goldfish in a bowl, all grouped around the base of a tree; with the caption 'For a fair selection, everyone has to take the same exam. Climb that tree'. While it may look as though all the creatures have the same opportunity to take the exam, some of the animals are physically unable to climb the tree due to their size (elephant) or inability to survive out of water (the goldfish). For others, such as the bird, reaching the top of the tree is easy! It is the same with human beings. We can provide equal access but without thinking beyond this to consider whether everyone has the best possible experience, equal access may not be equitable. The blog post critiques this cartoon in the context of secondary teaching and differentiation, and you may find it interesting to read and reflect on.

You may be familiar with another graphic which shows three people standing on boxes to see over a wall to watch a baseball game. Paul Kuttner, author of the blog 'Cultural Organising', has critiqued this graphic in a blog post which you may like to read <https://culturalorganizing.org/the-problem-with-that-equity-vs-equality-graphic/>. He states that the problem with the graphic for him is where the inequality and inequity first begins. By focusing on solving the immediate issue by providing different numbers of boxes to stand on to see over the fence, the inherent inequity in society which has led to people of colour or people with disabilities being oppressed and denied the same opportunities as their peers is not addressed. His blog post sees him redrawing the graphic to illustrate some of the issues, such as people not all starting from the same place, but as he points out, these rarely, if ever, deal with the real issue of the fence being there in the first place and causing a barrier that people need to find strategies to either remove or work around.

Now visit this webpage from the Interaction Institute <http://interactioninstitute.org/the-4th-box-sparks-imagination/> where the authors have revisited this graphic and added two more illustrations.

The third box shows liberation where the fence has been removed, and the fourth box is left empty so that you can use your imagination to think about how you might ensure that equality and equity happens for the learners that you work with. There is a toolkit available

<https://www.storybasedstrategy.org/the4thbox> that you can engage and interact with as you consider how to move beyond thinking in two dimensional terms of equality and equity, and start to think about how to remove the barriers completely and how this may happen.

## 2.11 Reflecting on Challenging Barriers to Equality and Diversity

Take 10 – 15 minutes to reflect on the mind-map of your beliefs and values that you created earlier. Think again about the questions that you responded to.

- Why do you see yourself in this way?
- Until you engaged with the mind-mapping activity, had you ever consciously thought about these characteristics before?
- Do you think that the way in which you see yourself is the way that others see you? Why? Has the way in which you see yourself changed during your lifetime?
- What might the differences be both in how you see yourself, and how others see you?

Is there anything that you would add to your mind-map now? Think about how your values and views were formed. Think about where you grew up, and the culture and society that you experienced as a child. Was this in Scotland or in a different part of the world? What jobs did / do your parents do? Was / is one of them a stay at home parent? Can you trace back through the influences that you had growing up to identify whether these were social or cultural, or perhaps a mixture of both? Are there any of your views and values that you have deliberately changed, perhaps since being at university or becoming a teacher? You may, through engaging with these modules, have identified views and values which do not align with those of the General Teaching Council for Scotland Code of Professionalism and Conduct (COPAC), and be actively addressing these through professional reflections.

### Reflecting on learners and colleagues with protected characteristics

Think about the learners in your care this academic session, and the colleagues with whom you work. Some of them will have visible protected characteristics, for example wearing religious clothing. Pupils who have a visual impairment may have a cane or use texts with enlarged print, those with a hearing impairment may have a visible hearing aid. Those from BAME backgrounds are often also identifiable from their skin colour or facial features. A person who is in the process of transitioning may have features of the gender that they were assigned at birth depending on how far in the process they are. For many protected characteristics, however, these are invisible. For example, a teacher with well-controlled epilepsy may not have disclosed this to colleagues. A teacher in early pregnancy may not wish to disclose this to colleagues due to having experienced prior miscarriages, so not want to 'tempt fate'. A colleague who chooses to not wear a wedding ring is not visibly identifiable as being married or not, and those who wear a ring may be in a marriage or a civil partnership, which may be same-sex or opposite-sex. At parents' evening, you may inadvertently cause offence by mistaking an older sister for a pupil's mother or mistake a parent's

spouse for their own parent due to a visible age difference between them. Without asking, we cannot be sure, and so we need to ensure that the language that we use and the examples that we give are inclusive. What actions can you take to ensure that you build in reasonable adjustments and ensure that your teaching and learning activities and resources reflect the diversity in our society? When we consider other ways in which we need to ensure that we are inclusive in our practice, an example of this would be a parent who mentions to you (you are their child's Guidance teacher) that they won't be able to attend the school prizegiving as he will be working off-shore, and wonders if there is a chance that the prizegiving can be live streamed or recorded? By facilitating this, not only is this parent being included but this gives the opportunity for other families where both parents may not be able to attend in person to see their child receiving their prize.

### Case Studies and Reflections

Consider the following scenarios and examples. How might you respond or what advice would you give if a peer brought this to you? Think about the policies and procedures that you might need to refer to, and whether you would need to consider safeguarding and reporting processes if this was a child protection issue. From your reflections as you engage with the scenarios, what implications might this have for your own professional learning about equality and diversity?

1) You have been teaching for about 10 years and have been a Principal Teacher for Guidance for the last 3 years. At your last PRD meeting, you chatted with your Headteacher about having completed a Master's degree where you focused on inclusion and pupil wellbeing, which they were very enthusiastic about. Your Headteacher comes to chat with you about a vacancy for an Assistant Head's post which they have learned about. It's to lead the Young Mum's base which is located in another secondary school in the local authority, and they think that you would be ideal due to your experience as a Principal Teacher and your Master's degree specialism. You aren't convinced, partly because you have no experience of being a parent, partly because you are a male teacher and privately think that a female would be better at that role, and also because you were brought up to believe that 'girls only get pregnant so they can get a council flat and benefits'. As you think about this, you realise that some of these beliefs aren't in alignment with the beliefs and values that you are required to have as a GTC Scotland registered teacher. You know that you have some professional learning to do, as you want to challenge these.

What professional learning do you think would be helpful in challenging your beliefs and values, and developing your understanding of equality and diversity? Do you think it matters whether the Assistant Head of the Young Mum's base is male, female, transgender or non-binary? Why?



2) You are a Guidance teacher and a Sixth-Year pupil comes to ask your advice before he goes for a nursing interview. He's worried that they won't think him serious about wanting to be a nurse because he is male, and that they will judge him for the way that he dresses and that he wears make-up. He says that he knows that it shouldn't be an issue but that when he was on work experience a couple of months ago, a nurse commented on his make-up, even though he had followed the guidance sent to him about only wearing light make-up, saying that just because the guidance mentions it, doesn't mean you have to do it. What do you say to him?

Firstly, you should reassure your pupil about equal opportunities and that the university interviewers will take him just as seriously as they would a candidate of another gender. The interviewers should not take his wearing make-up, or the way that he dresses, into account. You may wish to have a chat with your colleague who organises work experience, so that this can be fed back to the placement as they may have a colleague in need of a refresher course on equality and diversity. When you are thinking about how you may respond, think back to the section in the first module on cultural assimilation and how we as teachers can be positive role models for people with protected characteristics. Sometimes, individuals from minority backgrounds or who have protected characteristics, or in this case the potential nurse, may feel that they wish to fit in and not stand out, so will amend aspects of their appearance or behaviour in order to do so.

3) You are an initial teacher education placement tutor and this year you have two students in your tutor group who follow their faith devoutly. When you are planning the school visits, you inadvertently plan to visit one of them on the same day as an important religious festival. The class teacher phones you the week before the planned visit. They say that a colleague who shares your student's faith has been given the day off for the religious festival and they had offered this to your student too, which is when they mentioned the clash with your planned visit. The school suggested that your student ask you if the visit can be changed, but your student feels that they can't ask you themselves in case it looks as though they are not committed to their placement. What do you do?

Firstly, it's a shame that this situation arose in the first place. As an inclusive teacher educator with students who follow their faith devoutly in your tutor group, finding out if there were any religious festivals or celebrations during the placement visits and avoiding planning a visit for these dates would have avoided this clash. It's important to reassure your student that this doesn't have any

impact on your view of them as a committed future teacher and, if possible, to change the visit date so that they can take the festival day off school.

4) You are a Probationer Manager in the Local Authority and one of your probationers, a quietly spoken older probationer teacher, who you know has teenage children, asks if he can get some advice from you about his personal life. He has met another man and they have fallen in love. He didn't realise before now that he was attracted to the same sex and is extremely worried that his children may not want anything more to do with him if he comes out to them. You happen to believe that being gay is fundamentally wrong and feel very uncomfortable about your probationer's situation. In fact, you would rather not be the one to provide support and guidance to them about this. What do you do?

Firstly, by not providing the support requested, you may be inadvertently reinforcing your probationer's belief that being gay is 'wrong'. Your personal beliefs should not interfere with carrying out your job. When thinking about your own belief which is not reflected in the Equality Act 2010, what would you need to do to ensure that your own personal beliefs do not impact negatively on the support and guidance that you give to your probationers? Do you have some professional learning to do yourself?

What would you advise your probationer, and what sources of support and guidance would you signpost them to? Think about sources of support and guidance for his children as well as for him.

5) You are a student on the 'Into Headship' course, which prepares teachers to achieve the Standard for Headship, and are the only student from a black and minority ethnic background in the cohort of 15. When you first chatted about applying for a place with your Headteacher and local authority colleague, one of your worries was whether Headship would be the right route for you, as there are very few black and minority ethnic colleagues in leadership positions in your local authority. You know from the 'Teaching in a Diverse Scotland' report that this is not dissimilar to the national picture. Now that you are on the course, you are enjoying it and feel that you get on well with the other students. On one of the last university days, a peer brings cake as they have just got their first Headship and wish to celebrate with you all. At breaktime as you are all enjoying the cake, a colleague says quietly to you, 'I thought you'd have been the first of us to get your own school, seeing as how you're black and they need to get the numbers of black Headteachers up.' You are

too taken aback by what has been said to respond at the time, but afterwards you begin to wonder if this is the only reason you were accepted on the course. You haven't actually applied for any Headships yet, as you haven't seen a vacancy that appeals to you, and now you begin to wonder if Headship is really the right route for you if this colleague's view is shared.

There is an issue here with what your colleague said to you, as this surfaces possible discrimination and prejudice against people with your protected characteristic. This reflects more about them than about you, and although you didn't respond at the time, it isn't too late to discuss this with the course tutor or student rep and ask that something be done to resolve this mistaken belief about why people may get Headships.

This is a similar view to those sometimes held, that males are given places on initial teacher education courses only because the Scottish Funding Council has set targets to reduce the gender imbalance on these courses through its Gender Action Plan, and so universities need to recruit more males onto their courses. Be reassured, your place on the course was by merit and not 'to fill up the numbers' or to 'tick a box' for equality and diversity purposes.

Who might you seek advice from about how you are feeling? The university will have an Equality and Diversity office which may provide advice to students, and your local authority colleague who is responsible for the course would also be someone to approach. Your professional association may also be able to support you or may have a group for BAME teachers which would offer peer support. The organisation Scottish Association of Minority Ethnic Educators (samee) can provide peer support and resources to support you too.

6) An S3 pupil, 'James', who has a visual impairment and uses Braille, tells you with great excitement one day that he will be getting a guide dog. Can he and his parents have a chat with you after school about it please? They explain that they would like the guide dog to accompany James to school as this will help with his independence and mobility and get him ready for moving on to university in due course. You ask the Headteacher as it is their decision, and they are very enthusiastic and ask you to take the lead in ensuring that all goes smoothly.

What policies would you need to check and what conversations would need to happen so that school is ready to welcome a guide dog? What would you do if there is a pupil or colleague who is allergic to dog fur? Is there a Qualified Teacher for the Visually Impaired who is already working with James and school who can support this process? The Guide Dogs for the Blind charity may also

intend to include training for James and his guide dog in school as part of their induction and familiarisation process.

7. You are the Principal Teacher for Support for Learning at your secondary school, and as such, you make sure that pupils have reasonable adjustments for their external examinations as well as for during lessons. One pupil, who has dyslexia, uses a laptop with voice recognition software, and a screen-reading package, as part of their reasonable adjustments. They have chosen to take a Modern Foreign Language next year as one of their optional subjects, and you have asked the teacher to look at the pupil's existing software package to make sure that it is suitable, so that if not, you can look at purchasing different software that is suitable. The teacher hasn't taught this pupil before and hasn't had a pupil with screen-reading or voice recognition software reasonable adjustments before. When you explain that the pupil has dyslexia, the teacher says, 'well I have dyslexia too and I manage just fine.' They are surprised when you say to them that the pupil needs to use the laptop and software in lessons as they will be allowed to use them if they progress with the language to National 5s or Highers as they move up the school. As you chat with them, the teacher mentions that they wish they had known that this sort of software was around, as it takes them a long time to read things due to their dyslexia.

What would your response be to this colleague? There is possibly a misunderstanding about what the software can do and how much work it does for the pupil. What professional learning might the teacher need to do so that they have updated their knowledge of their responsibilities under the United Kingdom Equality Act 2010 around reasonable adjustments? What could you do on a wider basis to ensure that teachers have a good understanding of what the software can – and can't – do, and why some pupils have reasonable adjustments? Is there a possibility that the teacher isn't aware of their having a protected characteristic due to having a hidden disability, and so they aren't aware that they could have reasonable adjustments put into place? What could you do in collaboration with the school leadership team to ensure that all colleagues are aware of how the United Kingdom Equality Act 2010 can support them?

## Reflections

1. Think about colleagues who may be transgender but not yet have shared this in their workplace. The number of teachers who are transitioning or who have transitioned is small, and sensationalist media reporting where teachers such as Lucy Meadows (a transgender teacher in England who sadly took her own life) have transitioned with the support of their schools is not helpful in eradicating

bias and discrimination against transgender people. This article from the Guardian gives a first-hand account of a teacher's experience of transitioning

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/nov/10/transgender-schoolteacher-children-judgment-pupils>

Reflect on the barriers that the teacher in the article faced. If this were a colleague in your school, do you think they would face the same barriers and need to make the same choices as Andy Johns did? What might need to change in your school to support transgender pupils and colleagues? Think about not only the language that is used, but resources, facilities such as toilets (some schools do not yet have gender neutral toilets) and so on.

2. As teachers, we may be one of the central figures in the team around a child or young person who is transitioning from the gender they were assigned at birth. As such, we have a key role to play in supporting them and ensuring that they are not discriminated against inadvertently or deliberately. This dissertation which received a commendation for its quality, makes for interesting reading on how teachers in the study felt prepared to meet the needs of a transgender pupil in their class <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/research/2017-george-d-gray-commendation-abigail-stirling.pdf>

Think about how prepared you feel to support a trans pupil in your class. Might you need to amend some of the teaching materials you use? Reflect on the language that you use, especially when addressing the class, as discussed earlier. Do you say 'boys and girls', which inadvertently excludes transgender and non-binary pupils, or use more inclusive language such as 'children' or 'pupils'?

3. The 'Teaching in a Diverse Scotland' report (2018) contains vignettes, on pages 51 and 52, from teachers who took part in research in Glasgow, about their experience of being a BAME teacher in Scotland. Here is one of them:

"In my experience, I feel that people in management tend to hire others in promoted posts that they feel comfortable with. Having things in common with the person interviewing or the person who is in authority will mean that those people will feel more secure in giving you that promoted post. If you are from a different ethnic background you may have less in common, therefore they may feel less inclined to give you the post as they feel less comfortable with you." (Scottish Government, 2018, p.52).

What does this tell you about white privilege and institutional racism? If you are a BAME educator, does this resonate with your own experience or are things starting to change? What can we do as teachers to encourage this situation to change?

## 2.12 The Impact of Poverty on Equality and Diversity

### 2.12a The Link between Poverty and Inequality

There is believed to be a clear link between poverty and inequality. Did you know that 1 in 4 children in Scotland live in poverty? Of these, 70% are in a home where at least one person is in employment. These statistics are from the Poverty and Inequality Commission <https://povertyinequality.scot/> and you may find it helpful to spend a few minutes reading their key facts page. The Commission also state that there are established links between poverty and having a protected characteristic, with 35% of minority ethnic people living in poverty (almost twice the percentage of White British people at 18%), and 23% of people in a family where there is at least one adult with a disability being in poverty (Information correct as at 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020). These statistics mean that it is very likely that, if you are teaching in a Scottish school, you will have at least one pupil whose family is living in poverty. In some areas, almost all or perhaps all the pupils will be living in poverty. This is measured using the Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). As well as the Index for Multiple Deprivation data, which does not capture all families in poverty, other sources of data which may be helpful are free meal entitlement levels and local ward child poverty estimates which can be found at <http://endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019>. It is not always obvious that a family is living in poverty, for example, a family with no recourse to public funds or families who do not claim free school meals or who perhaps earn £10 above the threshold to be eligible for their children to have free school meals. Families may find themselves living in poverty due to job losses, and there is some truth in the saying that any of us are only one or two pay packets away from being in poverty. Despite the data which is provided about families living in poverty, it is difficult to know for sure which children this is, as financial situations change over time, and there is still stigma over needing to claim benefits meaning that families may not disclose to schools that they are in this situation.

### Reflection

Review and update your knowledge on how many families with pupils attending your school live in postcodes which have a low score using the Index for Multiple Deprivation. Reflecting on your

learning in this section of the module, and perhaps accessing additional data, do you need to rethink any of your assumptions in your teaching and in the expectations that you have of your pupils? What might be the subtle signs that a family is living in poverty which you may become aware of, and be mindful of?

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation also work to eradicate poverty, and you may find it helpful to read their most recent reports on poverty in Scotland <https://www.jrf.org.uk/our-work/scotland>

### 2.12b The Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 by the Scottish Government in response to rising levels of poverty and inequity amongst children in Scotland. The attainment of children in the lowest performing localities was overall much lower than for those in the highest performing localities, with a link between attainment and levels of poverty as measured by the SIMD. Funding provided by the Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to raise levels of attainment in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing, so that pupils can have increased positive life opportunities. There are several strands of intervention and support provided, and in May 2020 there were nine 'Challenge Authorities' identified by the Scottish Government. There were also several primary and secondary schools in addition which are supported by funding through the 'Schools Programme', and the 'Innovation Fund' supports specific projects.

If you are not already aware of actions and interventions undertaken in either your school or Local Authority under the umbrella of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, take some time to find out. You can find out more information about the School Attainment Challenge here <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/scottish-attainment-challenge/>

### 2.12c The Pupil Equity Fund

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF funding) is part of the wider work of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It is provided by the Scottish Government to all schools, with a remit to spend this funding to improve equity and life chances for the pupils in school. Many schools have used their Pupil Equity Funding to respond to the rising levels of poverty through providing facilities such as food banks and clothing banks at school reception areas, breakfast clubs, and clothes washer/dryers for families without working washing machines. Other schools have engaged with third sector partners to meet the needs of families in their schools, for example: providing motor skills groups for pupils with delayed motor skills development; organising walking busses to and from school; becoming a rights respecting school; engaging with domestic abuse charity partners to provide prevention work in

school; and counselling services for pupils who have emotional and social needs. This is in addition to using funds to support pupils directly in their education.

Other uses of Pupil Equity Funding include enabling pupils to participate equally, for example funding the cost of a P7 residential visit or providing resources such as revision books for S4 pupils where parents have been asked to make a contribution if possible. In using the funding in this way, it is supporting the removal of financial barriers to education for pupils whose families are on low incomes.

### Case Study

You are a Principal Teacher for Nursery and Early Years in a large urban primary school with high levels of poverty and deprivation. Many of the children arrive at school not having had experience of playing outside with peers, or of visiting the local play park and you have observed that their knowledge of outdoor games and social skills are limited. Most of the staff agree that it is important for the children to learn social skills and that this will support their health and wellbeing. To take this forward, from this term, a half hour of the lunch break will be used to encourage outdoor play and to teach the children the social skills associated with outdoor games. Nursery and P1 staff will facilitate this on a rota basis alongside the lunchtime welfare staff. Pupil Equity Funding has been used to provide additional staffing so that Nursery and P1 staff can still have a lunchbreak as well as facilitating the outdoor play opportunities. A teacher and a pupil support assistant approach you and say that they don't agree that they are forced to give up part of their lunch break to teach the children how to play outdoors. They believe that it's not their job to teach the children this and it should have been done at home by parents. They feel that even though you have made sure that they will get a proper lunch break, they don't want to be on the rota. How do you respond?

It is important that the underlying ethos of curriculum developments such as this one is discussed and agreed with colleagues, so that you can explain the values that underpin your work and why you feel that this is important. The possible discrimination here is in the views around it being the job of parents / family to teach their children play skills and how to use various pieces of equipment found in local parks. This could be discrimination due to lack of regard to poverty and family circumstances. For example, a one-parent family where the recently widowed parent holds down two jobs around school drop-off and collection times may not have had time or spare money to purchase outdoor play equipment. It may not be that they cannot be bothered to take the children to the park, but that their energy is taken up with doing the essential things and keeping their children fed, clothed and safe, and managing their own grief too.



## Reflection

Reflect on how the Pupil Equity Fund is used to support pupils and families in your school. How does this support the school to create the conditions in which children can learn? Does this funding support families beyond the school or is it only used within school? In thinking about this, you may wish to look at the resources provided by the Cost of the School Day project run by the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland <https://cpag.org.uk/cost-of-the-school-day> How might your increased knowledge influence the learning opportunities that you plan for your learners?

### 2.13 Meeting the Needs of All Learners: Equality and Diversity

As teachers, we have a collective and individual responsibility to meet the needs of all our learners. The General Teaching Council for Scotland Professional Standard for Teachers makes specific reference to aspects of planning and delivery such as differentiation, being able to select the most appropriate teaching methods and so on. 'A Curriculum for Excellence' (Scottish Government, 2004) <https://scotlandscurriculum.scot/> – and the refreshed narrative (2019) – gives us responsibility for supporting our learners in schools to have the best start possible in life so that they can attain to their greatest extent the capacities of being successful and confident learners, responsible citizens, and effective contributors to society. [See additional Curriculum for Excellence resources.](#) (<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/resources-to-support-the-refreshed-curriculum-for-excellence-narrative/>)

While over 10 years old, the document 'Building the Curriculum 3' (Scottish Government, 2008) is a helpful reminder of the way in which we can design our curricula to encompass meeting the needs of all learners while ensuring that this reflects the diversity of learners in Scotland, and globally, today. Together with the [GIRFEC](#) (Getting it right for every child) principles, these expectations mean that teachers have a responsibility to be aware of each child's unique learning needs and to meet them as far as possible. For most of our learners, we can meet their needs through universal provision, but for some learners this will require a more focused programme of support and intervention, known as 'targeted provision' (Scottish Government, 2017).

#### 2.13a The Additional Support Needs (ASN) (2004) Act

The introduction of this key legislation saw the conceptualisation of the term 'Additional Support Needs' replacing 'Special Educational Needs' in Scotland. This may seem like a simple change of phrase. The underpinning conceptualisation, however, saw a focus moving away from formal diagnoses and medical conditions where barriers to learning and special needs were life-long, to one

where all barriers to learning were regarded as an additional support need which required to be addressed. Examples of these include pupils experiencing bereavement, those who are being bullied, and those with broken limbs. We are required to consider how these shorter-term as well as longer-term barriers to learning have an impact on a pupil's learning, and how we can support learners to overcome these. In summary, the underpinning ethos of the Additional Support Needs legislation is to meet the needs of all children and young people.

### Reflection

Take a few minutes to think about the range of additional support needs that you may find in your classroom and school, especially the wide range of factors that may be barriers to a pupil's learning. How many times have you experienced a barrier to learning in your own educational journey? This may be: a long-term barrier (such as a hidden or visible disability, a learning difficulty, or the ongoing impact of a disrupted early life attachment due to family breakup or being a foster child) or a short-term barrier (such as bereavement or settling into life as a boarder at a boarding school after having attended as a day pupil).

### 2.13b The Scottish National Framework for Inclusion

This is a framework developed by the Scottish Teacher Education Committee (STEC), now the Scottish Council of Deans of Education, supported by the Scottish Government, and which outlines their commitment to inclusive education. The Framework provides a guide for teachers at all stages of their career to consider their practice through the lens of inclusive education. It offers a set of principles for inclusive education, linked with the General Teaching Council for Scotland Professional Standard for Teachers, with examples based on the key inclusion benchmarks from the Professional Standard.

### Activity

Spend some time exploring the Framework and thinking about the challenge questions posed, and how inclusive your practice is. You can find the Framework here

<http://www.frameworkforinclusion.org/index.php>

As a result of engaging with the Framework, what aspects of your practice might you wish to revisit to enhance the inclusiveness of? This may form a focus for your career-long professional learning in the coming year.

## 2.14 Equality and Diversity: Developing as a New Teacher

As a newly qualified teacher undertaking your probationer year, and first two or three years in post, there will be times when you are faced with challenging situations where you are unsure how to respond. Hopefully as you have worked through these modules, you will be feeling more confident about your understanding of equality and diversity, and you will be able to recognise situations where you witness inequality or discrimination occurring.

One of the most positive ways in which you can encourage social justice and equality in your classroom is through your behaviour as a role model for the children that you teach. By getting to know the features of the school and its community, and the individual characteristics of your children, you will be better placed to ensure that your teaching is inclusive and takes account of the children's unique circumstances. For example, if you know that one of the children is from a family where there are two Mums in the home or lives with foster parents, you can ensure that when you give examples of 'family' you include ones that all of the children can recognise and identify with. Similarly, knowing the languages spoken at home and trying to learn a few words of greeting can help parents to feel that they and their child belong and are valued in your classroom. Other factors such as working with Local Authority services to ensure that communications from school can be translated into home languages also assist with ensuring that your teaching is inclusive.

Unfortunately, teachers sometimes experience discrimination from learners or from the wider community. This is sometimes deliberate and sometimes inadvertent. Examples of this include:

- being treated with less respect by some parents because you are not from their community;
- being unable to attend an evening or weekend training course due to childcare commitments as a single parent;
- assumptions being made that a teacher will be less able to manage a class because they are a wheelchair user;
- assumptions being made that a male teacher would find it awkward to teach in P1 or Nursery because usually women teachers have the little ones;
- A teacher from a black or minority ethnic background being treated differently by colleagues or viewed as being less competent and so overlooked for positions of responsibility or opportunities that arise.

Can you think of any instances where you have witnessed discrimination or stereotypical comments? You may have heard them in television or radio programmes, or perhaps plays that you have seen at the theatre. Think about how you might respond to these if you heard them in your school. What policies would you be able to refer to? What does the school code of conduct (or school 'rules') say

about equality and treating each other with respectfulness? You should be able to turn to your probationer supporter in school or the Local Authority probation manager, as well as senior colleagues in school such as the Principal Teacher for your department, for support if you feel that you have been discriminated against in your job.

## 2.15 Equality and Diversity: Supporting New Teachers; advice for probationer managers and supporters

As a probation manager or supporter, you are likely to be the first point of contact for new teachers who are grappling with issues around equality and diversity in their classrooms. Some of the learning in this module may have made teachers question whether they have underlying prejudices or have inadvertently stereotyped in their classrooms. In supporting probationers to develop their teaching craft in relation to professional values, you are in a unique position to gently challenge and support them in reflecting on their values. You can also support them in developing a full understanding of how they can live out a teacher's professional values and be the most positive role model for equality and diversity in their classroom that they can be.

There is guidance provided on the General Teaching Council for Scotland website which you may wish to use in professional learning sessions to support probationers in engaging with the Professional Standards for Teachers and considering how they can transform their professional values from beliefs into actions. <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-values-into-action.aspx>

As well as knowing what you would do to provide practical support to colleagues, take time to ensure that you are up-to-date with Local Authority and/or school policies around equality, dignity at work, inclusion and so on.

## 2.16 Activities to Support Career-Long Professional Learning

Our values and beliefs can, as we learned earlier, change and develop over time. Our earliest beliefs and values as taught to us by our families and social circles growing up, may not be our beliefs now. For example, a scientist may have been brought up within a faith community and have shared that community's beliefs but questioned these as they developed in their professional knowledge and now identify as an agnostic or atheist. Conversely, you may have converted to a faith introduced by your life partner and have become a member of that faith community. Many of us will have grown up and lived our adult lives through periods of change in society, such as the repeal of the Section 28 legislation in Scotland in 2000 (see section 2.7), or when the presumption of mainstreaming first came into being. Indeed, we may have begun our careers at a time when most children with

disabilities and additional needs attended specialist schools rather than their local mainstream school. Similarly, many of us will remember when gay marriage first became law in the United Kingdom, and the discrimination that occurred for gay, bisexual and / or lesbian people before that, for example not automatically having rights to make decisions about hospital treatment for your partner if not married or in a civil partnership.

Some questions that you may wish to ask yourself about your teaching are:

- Are the role models of my subject a representative range of society, including male, female, non-binary, transgender, black and minority ethnic, disabled (both hidden and visible), pregnant / new parent, a range of religions and ages?
- In my school, is there visual representation of gay / lesbian / non-binary / transgender people? Is this present in my classroom and in the learning and teaching opportunities that I provide?
- Do I make assumptions about my learners in terms of hidden protected characteristics? Do I assume that they will all be attracted to the opposite sex? Do I assume that they all identify as being male / female? What about those who identify as non-binary, those who are questioning whether they are attracted to someone of the same sex and those who are questioning if they were born in the right body?
- What improvements can you identify in the examples used in your own resources and lesson planning that are needed to give a better gender balance?
- Does your school / institution give a visible welcome to children and their families from all ethnic backgrounds?
- Are you aware of the different cultures that the children in your class are from and the faiths (if any) that they follow?
- How do we ensure that all parents and carers, wherever possible, are given the opportunity to participate in decision making and consultations about school and their child through the Team around the Child process?
- Do we ensure that our anticipatory planning, under the Public Sector Equality Duty, includes designing in accessibility and reasonable adjustments for parents/carers and the wider school community? For example: providing information in a range of languages; not assuming that all parents will have the literacy skills to read information sent home and so providing a podcast which can be listened to with an accompanying transcript; asking sensitively whether families need any support to be able to participate in meetings (e.g. a sign language or first language interpreter); providing a school report in enlarged print; not

making unexpected changes to routines or arrangements without giving sufficient notice for families where there is a member who needs support to manage changes to their usual routine.

- Are you able to correctly pronounce the names of all the children in your class, and of their parents where they have different surnames?
- Do you always assume that parents will have the same surname as their child? Do you assume that the parents are married to one another and that they are the child's birth parents? Why should you not do this?
- Do you build in opportunities for pupils with additional support needs to have differentiated inputs / outputs which are personalised to best meet their needs? Do you do the same thing year after year for differentiation without considering the individual needs of the pupils in your classroom each year?
- Do you or any of your colleagues have a visible disability? Is this something which is acknowledged and openly discussed? Or is it 'an elephant in the room'?
- Do you know what skills your colleagues have in supporting pupils with additional support needs or where English is not their first language? Does anyone use sign language or speak one of the children's home languages fluently?

## 2.17 Reflecting on Your Learning in the Module: Links with Professional Update

There is still discrimination and prejudice in Scotland despite all the advances in equality legislation we have seen over the years. As teachers, we may be witnesses to the echoes of prejudice, bias, discrimination, and stereotyping that we either hear our learners saying or witness them putting into action. These views may, as we discussed earlier, be those which they have been taught by family members or their social circle. As we come towards the end of this module, consider how you will take your learning forward. How will your increased or refreshed awareness and understanding of the issues of equality and diversity for teachers influence your teaching and engagement with learners and the wider communities in which we live and work? Take some time now to note down the actions that you would like to take so that your work as a role model for equality is up-to-date and reflects your updated understanding of this area. You may decide that you would like to engage in further Masters level study to take your learning in this area forward and wish to research a suitable university course to enrol on.

As part of your Professional Learning which informs Professional Update, do consider including a focus and possible objective on developing your professional values. You may find the reflective questions provided by GTC Scotland (<https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/reflective->

[questions.aspx](#) ) helpful as a starting point. Think about how your learning from these modules can be taken forward, and how you might gather evidence of the impact of your learning. This may be a review of the resources in your Early Years classroom, for example, or including examples of different protected characteristics in an updated revision and exam preparation booklet for pupils undertaking their Higher examinations.

## 2.18 Module 2 Conclusion

In this module, we have considered aspects of equality and diversity, and how these are relevant for us as teachers. We have explored in greater detail factors which contribute to barriers to equality and diversity, and developed our understanding of prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping and oppression. We have become more aware of protected characteristics and the implications of these for us as teachers and for our learners.

We have considered what our role is as teachers in upholding the principles of equality and diversity, and in challenging the barriers to them. We have considered the link between poverty and inequality, looking at initiatives and resources put into place to address these including the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding. We have refreshed our knowledge of our role in meeting the needs of all learners under the Additional Support Needs (2004) Act and have engaged with the Scottish National Framework for Inclusion.

Finally, we have considered our own learning and preparedness for being positive role models in our schools and communities and have reflected on our learning in the module and how this may support us in evidencing our Professional Learning as teachers. We have developed our awareness of the possible sources of support that we may avail ourselves of, both in supporting peers and ourselves, and in developing our learning activities and curricula to reflect the increasingly diverse society that we are preparing our learners to live and work in during the 21<sup>st</sup> century.