

1. Policy Statement / Intent

Our SCITT is committed to creating a training environment where **diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and wellbeing** are embedded in every decision. We believe that every trainee, regardless of their background, characteristics, or personal circumstances, should have equal opportunity to thrive and progress into the teaching profession.

To this end, we acknowledge the following basic rights for all members and prospective members of our community:

- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- To be encouraged to reach one's full potential

We are committed to:

- Meeting our **legal obligations** under the Equality Act 2010, SEND Code of Practice, Public Sector Equality Duty, and Ofsted's Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Framework.
- Promoting a culture of **belonging and respect**, where difference is valued, struggle is normalised, and wellbeing is actively supported.
- Embedding inclusion as a **core leadership priority**, ensuring that decisions are made transparently and in the best interests of trainees.
- Preparing future teachers to **model inclusive practice** in their own classrooms, building a profession that reflects the communities it serves.

This policy is both a **legal safeguard** and an **ethical commitment**: to create a fair, supportive, and psychologically safe environment where all trainees can achieve their full potential.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of our SCITT provision, including:

- **Recruitment and admissions**: fair and inclusive selection processes.
- **Training delivery**: inclusive teaching methods, differentiated support, and accessible learning materials.
- **Assessment and progression**: fair opportunities to demonstrate achievement, with reasonable adjustments where needed.
- **Wellbeing and support**: confidential 1:1 coaching, referral to specialist services, and proactive monitoring of stress and barriers to learning.

- **Placement partnerships:** ensuring schools and mentors uphold the same DEIB and wellbeing standards.
- **Professional conduct:** expectations of inclusive behaviour, language, and respect from trainees, staff, and mentors.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following legal and regulatory requirements:

- **Equality Act 2010** – including protection against discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the basis of protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation).
- **SEND Code of Practice (2015)** – duties to identify and support trainees with special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)** – obligations to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.
- **Ofsted ITE Inspection Framework** – requirements for inclusive practice, support for trainees with additional needs, and monitoring of equality outcomes.
- **GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018** – safeguarding confidentiality and appropriate handling of trainee data in relation to DEIB and wellbeing monitoring.

By adhering to this framework, we ensure that our SCITT not only meets its statutory obligations but also demonstrates excellence in inclusion and wellbeing.

4. Inclusion Commitments (Aligned with Ofsted ITE Criteria)

Our SCITT makes the following commitments to ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and wellbeing are fully embedded into our programme. Each statement directly addresses Ofsted's expectations for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers.

4.1 Identification and Support of Trainees with Additional Needs, Barriers, or Disadvantage

We commit to:

- Conducting **early screening** using self-check and wellbeing tools that allow trainees to reflect on potential barriers (stress triggers, workload pressures, SEND needs, financial disadvantage, or personal circumstances).
- Offering **confidential 1:1 support sessions** and coaching drop-ins where trainees can raise concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensuring mentors and staff are trained to **spot hidden difficulties** and encourage trainees to seek support without fear of stigma.

- Establishing clear referral pathways to internal and external specialist services, including SEND support, counselling, and financial hardship advice.

Outcome: No trainee is left unsupported; barriers are identified early and acted on promptly.

4.2 Leaders Prioritise Inclusion and Make Decisions in Trainees' Best Interests

We commit to:

- Embedding inclusion as a **standing leadership agenda item**, with regular reviews of trainee progress and wellbeing data.
- Ensuring all leadership decisions are tested against an **“inclusion-first” principle**: does this decision protect or advance equity for trainees?
- Allocating resources transparently, ensuring disadvantaged or at-risk trainees have access to the support they need.
- Providing mentors and school partners with training in inclusive leadership and the importance of equity in decision-making.

Outcome: Inclusion is central to governance and leadership, not an optional add-on.

4.3 Adaptive Training, Reasonable Adjustments, and Differentiated Support

We commit to:

- Designing our training with **flexibility built in** – offering optional and core elements, small-group coaching, and multiple pathways to success.
- Making **reasonable adjustments proactively**, not only on request, including accessible materials, adjusted deadlines, and alternative assessment routes where appropriate.
- Using **scaffolding techniques** to support those under pressure and gradually build independence and resilience.
- Reviewing adjustments regularly with the trainee to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.

Outcome: Trainees experience equitable access to learning, with adjustments normalised and stigma removed.

4.4 Awareness Among Staff of Support Services and Referrals

We commit to:

- Providing all staff, mentors, and placement schools with clear guidance on available services, both within the SCITT and externally.
- Training staff on how to **confidently signpost** trainees to the correct service or referral point.
- Supplying trainees with a **directory of wellbeing and inclusion support** at induction and updating this annually.
- Reinforcing awareness through regular reminders in training sessions and digital communications.

Outcome: No trainee is left unsure of where to go for help; staff and mentors are confident in providing guidance.

4.5 Inclusive Culture: All Trainees Feel a Sense of Belonging

We commit to:

- Normalising open discussion about challenge and struggle as part of professional growth, reducing shame or stigma.
- Embedding **peer-support practices**, such as structured check-ins and group reflection, into the training experience.
- Establishing clear expectations for inclusive behaviour and language, with zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or exclusion.
- Actively celebrating diversity through events, representation, and acknowledgement of different backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experiences.

Outcome: Trainees feel valued, safe, and connected to the SCITT community.

4.6 Monitoring and Evaluation of Inclusion Outcomes

We commit to:

- Collecting and analysing data on trainee wellbeing, progression, retention, and withdrawal patterns.
- Monitoring outcomes across different groups (e.g. SEND, protected characteristics, socio-economic background) to identify disparities.
- Acting swiftly where patterns of disadvantage are identified, adapting provision accordingly.

- Reporting findings to leadership each term, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Outcome: Inclusion is not just aspirational but measured, evidenced, and continuously improved.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

To make this policy effective, responsibility is shared across every level of the SCITT.

5.1 Leadership and Governance

- Ensure **strategic oversight** of inclusion and wellbeing, embedding them into the SCITT improvement plan.
- Allocate **resources and staffing** to support equity and belonging.
- Review data and reports each term, challenging outcomes where disparities exist.
- Act as visible role models for inclusive decision-making.

5.2 Programme Leads and Tutors

- Deliver training in ways that are **accessible and inclusive**, using differentiated approaches where needed.
- Identify and act upon **early signs of difficulty** in trainees.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of **referral pathways and services**.
- Reinforce expectations of inclusive behaviour and language in every interaction.

5.3 Mentors and Placement Schools

- Provide inclusive practice in school settings, ensuring that trainees are **treated equitably** and supported in line with SCITT standards.
- Complete required **training in DEIB and wellbeing awareness**.
- Work with SCITT staff to implement adjustments and feedback concerns promptly.

5.4 Trainees

- Contribute positively to a culture of **respect and belonging**.
- Take responsibility for accessing support when needed and respecting confidentiality processes.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour appropriately and report concerns through the designated channels.

5.5 DEIB & Wellbeing Lead

- Act as the primary **point of contact** for inclusion and wellbeing concerns.
- Ensure that this policy is implemented consistently across the SCITT.
- Coordinate **training, awareness campaigns, and resources**.
- Produce **termly monitoring reports** for leadership and contribute to annual reviews.

6. Procedures

This policy is operationalised through clear procedures designed to ensure early support, fairness, and accountability.

6.1 Reporting Concerns

- Trainees may raise wellbeing, or inclusion concerns confidentially through:
 - 1:1 coaching sessions
 - Direct contact with the DEIB & Wellbeing Lead
 - Formal reporting mechanisms (email or secure reporting form)
- All concerns are treated with sensitivity, confidentiality, and in line with safeguarding obligations.

6.2 Requesting Reasonable Adjustments

- Trainees may request adjustments at any stage of training, verbally or in writing.
- Adjustments are assessed in consultation with the trainee, programme staff, and placement schools where relevant.
- Adjustments are reviewed regularly to ensure continued effectiveness.

6.3 Referral Pathways

- Where needs exceed the SCITT's in-house provision, referrals will be made to appropriate services (e.g. SEND specialists, occupational health, counselling, financial support services).
- Staff and mentors are trained to use referral protocols consistently and without delay.

6.4 Safeguarding and Escalation

- Any concern that meets the threshold for safeguarding is immediately referred to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.

- Serious breaches of inclusion (e.g. harassment, discrimination, bullying) are escalated to leadership under disciplinary procedures.

6.5 Breaches of the policy

- We take all breaches of our Equality Policy extremely seriously. Any breach of the policy will be investigated, and ultimately disciplined, in accordance with the “Dignity at Work and Study Policy”.

7. Monitoring, Review, and Accountability

7.1 Monitoring

- Inclusion and wellbeing outcomes are tracked termly through:
 - Trainee satisfaction surveys
 - Withdrawal and retention data
 - Usage patterns of 1:1 support and adjustments
 - Feedback from staff, mentors, and placement schools

7.2 Review

- This policy is reviewed annually against:
 - Ofsted ITE framework requirements
 - Equality Act compliance
 - Trainee and stakeholder feedback
 - Sector best practice and new research
- Interim reviews may be undertaken if new risks, gaps, or changes in regulation arise.

7.3 Accountability

- Findings are reported to SCITT leadership and included in annual quality reports.
- Where disparities are identified, action plans are drawn up and monitored for impact.
- Failure to comply with this policy may result in:
 - Staff disciplinary action
 - Review of placement school partnerships
 - Formal trainee conduct procedures where applicable

8. Ethical and Moral Commitment

Our SCITT recognises that inclusion and wellbeing are not simply matters of legal compliance, but of **professional integrity and moral responsibility**. As an organisation entrusted with preparing the next generation of teachers, we acknowledge our duty to model the values we expect trainees to carry into their classrooms.

We therefore commit to the following principles:

- **Fairness and dignity:** Every trainee deserves to be treated as an individual with equal respect, regardless of background, identity, or circumstance.
- **Belonging and community:** True inclusion goes beyond access — it is about fostering a culture where every trainee feels safe, valued, and connected to their peers and mentors.
- **Wellbeing as foundation, not bonus:** We view wellbeing as essential to learning and professional growth. By supporting the whole person, we prepare trainees for sustainable careers in teaching.
- **Voice and agency:** Trainees are not passive recipients of support but active participants. We encourage honest feedback, shared decision-making, and co-creation of solutions.
- **Role-modelling for future classrooms:** By embedding inclusion in our own practice, we equip trainees to create equitable, safe, and inspiring environments for their future pupils.
- **Continuous reflection:** We commit to questioning our own practices, recognising bias where it exists, and improving even when no one is watching.

This policy therefore stands as both a **commitment and a promise**: that inclusion, equity, belonging, and wellbeing are at the heart of who we are and how we prepare teachers for the profession.

9. Publishing policy

This Policy will be available through the Durham SCITT website and our documentation. A copy is available from the SCITT office.

10. Review date for the Policy

The Policy will be reviewing tri-annually as part of the SCITT's Policy Review Process.