

Executive Summary

Equality and Diversity Annual Report

2019 - 2020



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Availability of this Report in Other Formats

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Introduction

This is an executive summary of Coleg y Cymoedd's seventh Annual Equality & Diversity Report, covering the period September 2019 to August 2020. It provides a brief overview of the full Annual Report and focuses on outlining the main achievements in respect of the commitments made against our equality objectives. The full report can be found on our website www.cymoedd.ac.uk/en/about-us/equality-and-diversity.

At the time of writing, the COVID-19 outbreak is impacting upon all areas of the college communities and has presented us with many challenges, particularly in terms of equality. Rapid shifts to online delivery and assessment, changes to admissions policy and practice, the reoccupation of campus, and the response to financial challenges, can all create risks and negative impacts for equality groups.

Whilst all protected characteristic groups will experience some negative impact, evidence has shown that certain groups of the population, such as people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, are disproportionately negatively affected by COVID-19. Other factors include age, sex, disability and socio-economic reasons.

The report will cover measures taken across the college to ensure existing inequalities are not exacerbated.

Legislative context



Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects staff, learners and recipients of services from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of certain characteristics: Gender, Age, Disability, Gender identity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership (in employment only) and Pregnancy and Maternity.

The public sector equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies, in the exercise of its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The college is therefore under a legal duty to report annually on actions within these requirements and consider information on the protected characteristics detailed above.

Embedding Equality and Diversity

The college is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to embedding equality and diversity throughout the institution and this is being achieved in a number of ways.

We continue to progress ***Equality, Sustainability and Welsh Language Impact Assessments*** on all college policies and procedures. During 2019/2020, 19 impact assessments were completed for the review of existing policies and also the introduction of new policies. No actions arose from them.

The college has also undertaken an equality impact assessment to consider the disproportionate impact of corona virus on specific groups, such as ethnic minorities, pregnant and older workers, and how to mitigate these risks. This has been published to all employees at the college and continues to be reviewed.

The college recognises that the ***involvement and engagement of our stakeholders*** is critical to the success of our equality objectives, allowing us to learn, understand, act and make better decisions. We continue to develop links with a variety of diversity organisations and build our range of contacts to ensure we are fully inclusive of the communities we serve.

Through the use of the college *Diversity calendar* and organised *annual events* the college is continually ***raising awareness*** of equality and diversity issues. The college continues to deliver ***training and awareness programmes*** for staff, which are designed to meet the requirements of different staff roles.



With the very sudden move to remote teaching in March 2020, priority for staff development has been given to digital capabilities, as well as a large focus being given to the well-being of staff. An area has been developed on SharePoint for all staff to access with information on remote working and well-being, as well as regular all-employee communications via email, vlogs and live Q&A sessions with the Senior Leadership Team.

The college generally communicates with staff and learners through electronic means, including portals on the intranet which carry news and information, and access to further information on policies, practices and guides on a range of services. These have been instrumental while staff have been dispersed and working remotely. There are also a number of blogs, social media pages

and Teams groups available to share information, good practice, ideas and as a tool for social interaction and to encourage discussion between colleagues across all sites, raising awareness of all equality and diversity issues and events.

The college collects **equality monitoring information** relating to all protected characteristics, where this information has been provided. Data monitoring provides the college with information to:

-  assess the impact of its policies on staff;
-  target and support areas of under-representation and the potential for positive action; and
-  help inform policy and decision making.

There are a range of **staff and learner policies** and statements, such as the staff and learners Codes of Conduct and the Anti Bullying & Harassment policy, which support the college's equality and diversity agenda. These are regularly reviewed and communicated to staff and learners.



In terms of progressing **our Equality objectives**, the main achievements and progress towards the college's objectives as defined in the Strategic Equality Plan (2016-2020) up to 31st August 2020 are detailed here.

Objective 1: Continue to improve awareness of Equality and Diversity issues amongst staff and learners to ensure full integration of Equality and Diversity into the everyday operations of the college.

During 2019-2020 we have continued to raise awareness and promote equality and diversity through college wide positive information and publicity of events and publications of useful information relating to various protected characteristic groups. We have highlighted throughout the year National Awareness events such as Carers Week, International day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, and other events which are included throughout the report.



For Holocaust Memorial Day, there were a series of planned activities which allowed for opportunities to remember the millions of people murdered under Nazi persecution. A lecture was delivered on 'An introduction to the Holocaust' providing definition and information around the key events. A CPD opportunity was offered to staff on Holocaust Education, which provided staff with the tools and confidence to tackle such a difficult and emotive topic when discussing the Holocaust with learners. An exhibition on Holocaust related artwork was also created, in collaboration with learners from the Photography department. All of these activities were organised and delivered by a college Lecturer from the Public Services department.

On 4th November 2019, the college held an all employee LearnFest “celebrating differences”. Its aim was to bring diverse learning experiences and new adventures by combining headline acts, workshops, fringe events and peer learning. The sessions included: Teaching in the 21st Century; Inclusion with Technology (exploring different strategies, tools, techniques and technology to make the classroom more inclusive); Mindfulness; Trans Awareness sessions; Be the Best Version of you. Participation at these events is recorded in the learning and development report, along with feedback.

On 9th March 2020, the college hosted an event for International Women’s Day ‘An equal world is an enabled world’, with guest speakers from Chwarae Teg, British Airways and Age Connects Morgannwg. The aim was to provide a better understanding of gender and how gender impacts in all aspects of life, from choices, attitudes and behaviours to challenging the barriers history has put in place.

Through these means we have created opportunities to discuss and debate equality and diversity and share best practice from external organisations and across all departments of the college. These are also a way of reminding staff and learners of the college’s responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Objective 2: Monitor information and data more effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics.

Declaration rates for 2019/2020 show a further increase in staff providing their equality data, although work continues to address the gaps and encourage staff to provide their information in order for us to develop a better understanding of what our staff need in order to work, perform and enjoy life at the college. We aim to achieve this by assuring and enabling staff to be confident in being themselves in work and by reinforcing the importance of our monitoring commitments.

In addition, the implementation of a new HR system planned for 2020 - 2021 will allow for an opportunity to capture a larger proportion of data from new and existing employees.

Full data monitoring information for both staff and learners may be found in the full Annual Equality and Diversity report.

Staff:

Pay and Gender Equal Pay objectives: The college monitors its pay system to ensure it does not discriminate on the grounds of gender and in respect of all protected characteristics where this information is available, and to understand and address the causes of any differences between the pay of any person/s who have or share a protected characteristic, in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.



In March 2020 the college produced a gender pay gap report, the data from which is summarised here.

Coleg y Cymoedd mean pay gap = 4.9% (a decrease from 7.7% in 2019)

Coleg y Cymoedd median pay gap = 8.3% (a decrease from 10.5% in 2019)

The college's median gender pay gap at 8.3% compares to the gender pay gap of 13.7% for all workers in Wales.

In order to understand the reasons for the reported differences in pay, the following data at the college is considered:

	Lower quartile	Lower middle quartile	Upper middle quartile	Upper quartile
Male	35%	38%	45%	44%
Female	65%	62%	55%	57%

	Full-time	Part-time	Term-time
Male	29%	11%	1%
Female	24.5%	22%	12.5%

From this data, the college continues to monitor its actions intended to reduce the gender pay gap, including addressing gender under-representation in all areas across the college and engaging with staff to understand any perceived barriers to progressing to higher paid roles.

The continued promotion of the college's family friendly and flexible working practices across the college in every role and at every level ensures that our employees have the opportunity to work in a way that works best for their career aspirations, college needs and home life.

It is our intention going forward to introduce more formalised processes that will allow for the monitoring of pay for all protected characteristics and the production of reports at regular intervals, as per the processes for gender pay. Where we identify pay gaps between the protected characteristics we will put appropriate actions in our systems to address them.

Learners:

Monitoring the data of our learners gives us a broad overview of who is accessing our services and how satisfied they are. The college's Learner Management Information System (EBS) provides accurate and timely information in relation to learner profiles and activity, and overall attainment rates. Data reports on enrolment, retention and successful outcomes are available via a college dashboard, and data is monitored by the senior leadership and college management teams.

With regards to our service users, we are aware that different groups experience particular barriers and issues which mean that they do not have equal outcomes in respect of academic achievement. We therefore monitor data on all protected characteristics to consider curriculum and academic areas to identify gaps in access, course allocation and achievements. We are then able to develop and review learning programmes to ensure that curriculum design and delivery are shaped by the diversity of our student population, and to ensure our support programmes for learners with support requirements are fit for purpose.

We are yet to see the impact the COVID-19 pandemic may have on the achievements of those in groups where inequalities already exist. This will be closely monitored going forward.

Objective 3: *Take action to build a strong and cohesive community where staff, learners and visitors can feel safe.*

Promoting a culture that addresses negative behaviour: The college supported and promoted National Hate Crime Awareness week in October 2019, which aimed to remind everyone how to respond to hate crime incidents and to promote support and services available. RCT Cohesion Team were invited to the college to meet with learners to discuss hate crime and its impact.



In November 2019, we raised awareness around anti-bullying week, providing information and resources on preventing and responding to bullying and harassment. The theme this year was '**Change Starts With Us**', with the idea being '**Small change. Big difference.**' Lecturing staff were encouraged to involve their learners by sharing resources from the Anti Bullying Alliance and asking learners to think of ways of tackling bullying. Staff and learners were also reminded of the college's Anti-Bullying and Harassment policies, and the reporting routes were communicated. Learners at Aberdare campus attended anti-bullying workshops run by RCT youth engagement team.

Objective 4: *Improve the recruitment levels and promotional opportunities for staff groups who are under-represented such as those from BME heritage, those with a disability or from the LGBT community.*



Recruitment processes: We continue to monitor and analyse recruitment information in terms of discrimination and promotion equality of opportunity.

Line Manager guidance has been further developed to include information on preventing discrimination during recruitment, highlighting potential pitfalls with stereotyping, assumptions and unconscious bias, as well as guidance on providing reasonable adjustments for prospective and existing employees.

Ethnicity and the college's ethnicity profile: For 2019-2020 data has been recorded for 76% of employees (compared to a 61% declaration rate in 2018/2019), of which less than 1% identify themselves as a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background (BAME). This is lower than the local communities of Rhondda Cynon Taff and Caerphilly County Borough Council; StatsWales July 2019 report the BME population within the Boroughs at less than 3.5% and 2% respectively, with the usually resident population of Wales as 94.2% White.

We aim to identify opportunities to implement positive action in respect of recruitment of BAME staff and are seeking advertising employment opportunities within appropriate communities in order to target positive action for those who are under-represented in our staff groups.

During July 2020, Coleg y Cymoedd showed its commitment to racial equality by signing up to the Race at Work Charter, an initiative designed to foster a public commitment to improving outcomes for Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees in the workplace. It consists of five principles to ensure organisations address the barriers to BAME recruitment and progression.



We will therefore be leading on strands of work, from recruitment and career development to the diversity of the curriculum and the progress of students

Disability: Disabled people remain significantly less likely to be in employment than non-disabled people. We are committed to looking beyond a person's impairment at all the relevant environmental factors that affect their ability to be a full and equal participant in the life of the college.



The college provides support to help all employees stay well and manage their health condition. This support includes a variety of programmes, including an Employee Assistance programme (EAP), an Occupational Health service and a counselling service. These services have been paramount when supporting the college employees to work remotely during the COVID-10 pandemic, as well as on-going discussions with members of staff who have needed reasonable adjustments. We have used return to work risk assessments as an opportunity to consider and monitor reasonable adjustments made for our employees to work safely.

Work is now underway to highlight invisible impairments – conditions that many people live with which do not have physical signs but are painful, exhausting and isolating. As a college we are committed to understanding the impact of invisible impairments and the need for reasonable adjustments.

Sexual Orientation and Stonewall Diversity Champion / Workplace Equality Index: The college works closely with Stonewall's workplace team as part of

our membership of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme which supports our efforts to make the college an inclusive and supportive environment to work, study and visit by developing practices and promoting equality in the college for our LGBT employees and learners.



In 2019/2020 the college made its fourth submission to the Workplace Equality Index (Stonewall's leading benchmarking tool for LGBT inclusion in the workplace), in which we achieved an increase in ranking of 29 places to 79 out of 503 submissions, celebrating our place in the **Top 100 Employers list**.

Participating in the Workplace Equality index allows us to assess our achievements

and progress on LGBT equality and compare our performance with other organisations in the region and/or sector.

As part of our community engagement programme, the college supported the first Wales Wide Virtual Pride hosted by LGBTQymru in July 2020, as well as supporting Pride Cymru Digital Pride event during August 2020.

To celebrate LGBT History month, the college hosted a public event in partnership with RCT Council and Caerphilly Council. Various external organisations attended Nantgarw campus where they held an information stall and engaged with staff and learners. Presentations from Pride Cymru and from a Lecturer within the college's Public Services department were very well attended by both staff and learners with positive engagement during the event.

Also as part of the LGBT History Month celebrations, in collaboration with our catering suppliers, the college offered a free hot drink for all staff and learners wearing a rainbow lanyard or rainbow laces.

We have previously identified sexual orientation declaration is an issue and as a result we will continue to work with staff and learners to improve on this. Information is held on 54% of employees (compared to 52% held in 2018/2019), of which 98% identify themselves as heterosexual, 1% as bisexual and a little under 1% as gay or lesbian. Wales data shows 95% of people identifying as heterosexual, with 1.4% identifying as gay/lesbian, under 1% as bisexual and under 0.5% as other. There is little up to date data on local population statistics, however the 2011 census data records 93% of people in the RCT area as heterosexual, and 95% in the Caerphilly borough.

Objective 5: Create a more welcoming and supportive learning and working environment which better meets the needs of Trans students and staff.



We are aware that transgender people often experience the most difficult barriers and discrimination in both employment and access and success in education despite their relatively low numbers and we, as a college, can play a vital role in supporting trans employees and learners.

We have implemented policies and procedures to address the barriers experienced by transgender people and have developed guidance for trans staff and learners who wish to transition at the college, and for line managers to support the process. To support this, during 2019-2020 trans awareness sessions were introduced, initially for the senior leadership and college management teams. The sessions were designed to help college managers understand and meet the needs of trans people. The trans sessions were also delivered to groups of employees at Learn Fest, with the aim of assisting them in creating an inclusive environment to ensure that trans employees and learners feel welcome and valued at the college. This session has now been developed into an e-learning module which is available for all staff.

In order to build a truly inclusive service, we have reflected on the barriers that LGBT service users may face accessing it. This involved mapping the different touch points in our service user journeys, including the staff and systems that our learners and staff come into contact with. We have reviewed our application processes and the way in which we ask for people's titles on our application forms. Work continues in order to provide this function on our HR/Payroll database and learner database. Guidance documents for front line staff have been developed and we will continue to work with managers and staff in implementing training programmes on raising awareness around these issues.

Currently, we do not have any staff who have declared their identity as trans; however a number of job applications were received throughout the year from applicants who identified as trans. As well as protecting and supporting our staff, we demonstrate our commitment to potential job applicants, services users and future colleagues and learners.

Objective 6: Explore the educational implications for pregnant learners and the career implications for pregnant staff or staff on maternity leave at the college.

Coleg y Cymoedd is a member of the Working Forward initiative developed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). By joining Working Forward the College has pledged to work towards making our workplace the best it can be for pregnant women and new mothers.



In respect of pregnancy and maternity the college has a raft of family friendly policies and positive action support programmes in place for staff and

learners, including maternity/paternity policies, leave of absence policy and flexible working policy to name a few.

During the year 2019-2020, 19 employees had been on maternity leave, all of whom have returned to work and 5 employees took paternity leave during the same period. An analysis of pregnant employees and those on maternity leave has reaffirmed our belief that this group of employees receive fair and equal treatment in employment processes during this period.

Other Equality considerations

Age: The college collects age related information in relation to staff and learners. As in previous years, the age profile of staff at the college shows that there are proportionately more staff aged 45-54 (31%) than any other age group. 57% of the college's employees are within the age range of 45-64. This is reflective of the population of RCT and Caerphilly, and of Wales, the larger proportion being in the same age range. We recognise this in itself is not an equality issue; however this information presents the college with the opportunity to reflect on the need to consider effective workforce succession planning.

Carers: We recognise that being a carer can be exhausting and stressful; juggling caring for an older relative with raising a family and holding down a job would tire anyone out. To this end, the college has joined a new membership programme called Employers for Carers (EfC) – a service aimed at creating carer-friendly workplaces. As an EfC member, our managers and employees have full access to resources on the members' platform 'EfC Digital'. Resources include case studies, model policies, FAQs, toolkits, expert opinion pieces, policy news and essential guides, as well as e-Learning modules.



In a 2011 census, there were over 29,000 adult carers within RCT, including young carers, aged 18-25. These young people help look after a family member, a friend or neighbour, who without their help would not manage, due to illness, age or disability. Many of these young people give up on education and training, feeling they cannot cope with the additional pressures of studying, as they may not want to inform their tutor of their 'caring' role.

The college has seen great success in achieving the silver level certificate in the Young Carers College Award across all four campuses, designed by the Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support project. Working with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, the college has set up several processes including step-by-step guidance, practical tools and training opportunities to support learners who have caring responsibilities. A Young Carers Policy is now in place for learners.

Conclusion

We continue to progress our equality and diversity work for all protected characteristic strands. Following a consultation and engagement exercise during the year, the college has developed its Strategic Equality Plan for 2020-2024 with a revised suite of equality Aims and Objectives which will underpin the college's work for the four year period. The next annual equality report will provide information on these revised objectives.

The Annual Equality report is published on the equality and diversity section of the college website. We ensure that reports are published in such a way that no individual can be identified.