



Strategic Equality Plan

2020-2024

“Our Mission is Your Future Success”

Prepared by: Chair of Equality & Diversity group

Approved by: Senior Leadership Team
Governing Body



let's end mental health discrimination



rhown ddiwedd ar wahaniaethu ar sail iechyd meddwl



'Promoting Equality and Embracing Diversity in all we do'

Availability of this Plan in Other Formats

This document is available at **Coleg y Cymoedd** and upon request it can also be made available in a range of alternative formats.

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Principal's Foreword

The benefits of a diverse population of learners and staff enriches the life of the College and enhances the educational opportunities we offer.

The Coleg y Cymoedd Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 emphasises our commitment to promoting a fair, equal and diverse community for our learners, staff and visitors. However, promoting equality is more than a statement of how the College will meet the statutory requirements. It's about embracing equality and diversity as an essential part of how we operate and our aim is to ensure that we acknowledge this in everything we do.

I look forward to working collaboratively with learners, staff and other stakeholders to provide a positive and inclusive learning and working environment, to challenge discrimination in all forms, and to promote good relations among diverse groups in the College.

KJ Phillips



Section One

Introduction

This is Coleg y Cymoedd's third Strategic Equality Plan, which revises and updates our second Strategic Equality Plan (published in 2016) and demonstrates our continued commitment to meeting the Equality Act 2010. We have made good progress in developing a programme of work around equality to enable us to meet our equality duties and deliver against the objectives that we set ourselves.

Our commitment extends to proactively promoting equality of opportunity for current and prospective learners and staff, and to removing barriers to access, achievement and progression, supporting our principle of fairness in all that we do. In developing this plan and in setting our new Equality Objectives we reviewed our previous Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives and we have responded to the EHRC "Is Wales Fairer? 2018" report.

This plan will demonstrate how we comply with all equality legislation and how we advance the equality of opportunity for our staff and learners to make a real difference to the lives of those working and studying here. It will provide guidance on:

- how we will meet our equality duty;
- how we will handle any cases of harassment and unlawful discrimination
- how policies, procedures and plans will be monitored for adverse impact (Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Measures)
- how the overall practice and outcomes of our college will be monitored
- how action will be planned and delivered to address any concerns that are identified.

The main aims of the Strategic Equality Plan are to establish a College where:

- people of different backgrounds come together in harmony and mutual respect
- positive action is taken, where appropriate, to overcome long term disadvantage
- achievement and progress are based on endeavour and not prejudice.

At the time of publication, the COVID- 19 outbreak was impacting upon all areas of the College communities and has presented us with many challenges, particularly in terms of equality. 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. In addition to the issues COVID-19 has presented to us, we also acknowledge the significant events around the Black Lives Matter Movement.

The College Strategic Equality Plan is a long term, high level document which provides overarching objectives with sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing priorities. We will continue to listen and understand the key inequalities and human rights issues arising from the coronavirus pandemic. This will inform our decision making and action plans and provide focus on our work to ensure existing inequalities do not become further entrenched, supporting the aim of 'rebuilding a more equal and fairer Wales' as we recover from this crisis.

Reference: EHRC: Rebuilding a more equal and fairer Wales: Focus on the unequal impact of the coronavirus pandemic May 2020

The Plan outlines six main aims and eight key objectives for the period 2020-2024:

Aim 1:	We will identify employment gaps of protected characteristic groups, and in particular focus on reducing the employment gap for disabled people and ethnic minority groups
Objective 1:	Increase the number of avenues we use to attract applications from disabled people and ethnic minority groups and thus increasing the number of applications we receive for employment from disabled and ethnic minority applicants by a minimum of 5% by 2024.
Aim 2:	We will identify pay gaps amongst all protected characteristic groups and put appropriate actions in place to address any identified areas.
Objective 2:	Maintain current gender pay gap within a 6 – 9 % threshold.
Objective 3:	Identify pay gaps amongst remaining protected characteristic groups by 2021 and address any differentials by 2024.
Objective 4:	Actively promote development opportunities for under-represented staff groups (including LGBT employees, disabled employees and ethnic minority employees) during the four year period 2020 – 2024.
Aim 3:	We will ensure that successful outcomes for all protected characteristic learner groups are monitored and attainment gaps are minimised.
Objective 5:	Continue to ensure that the attainment gaps for all protected characteristic groups remain within a tolerance of 5%, with focus on outcomes for those groups who have historically lower levels of attainment (ethnic minority groups, learners with additional learning needs, and of socio-economic disadvantage).
Aim 4:	We will support employers to improve the participation of under-represented groups in apprenticeships.
Objective 6:	Engage with a range of employers to encourage them to consider under-represented groups in apprenticeships by 2024.
Aim 5:	We will continue to address identity-based bullying, harassment and discrimination, paying particular attention to racial and sexual harassment and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
Objective 7:	Hold two awareness campaigns throughout the College to enable all staff to identify abuse, harassment and discrimination and act effectively to prevent and challenge this behaviour, as well as support those staff and learners being affected.
Aim 6:	We will obtain a complete picture of the composition of our workforce in order to better understand the experiences of people sharing all protected characteristics.
Objective 8:	Increase current equality and diversity data collection of workforce to 80% declaration by 2022 and 100% by 2024.

Please refer to section six for further information relating to our Equality Objectives.

Section Two

The Law and Background

The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 consolidates previous equality legislation into one Act, which protects staff, learners and recipients of services from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of certain characteristics, known as **Protected Characteristics**:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership (in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Gender (Sex)
- Sexual orientation

Within the Equality Act 2010, public bodies have an additional responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. When making decisions and delivering services we are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. **eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
2. **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced 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 with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Meeting the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others, as long as this does not contravene other provisions within the Act.

From this we understand that 'equality' does not simply mean treating everyone the same. It means understanding and tackling the different barriers to equal opportunities that different people face so that everyone has a fair chance to fulfil their potential.

The overall aim of the equality duty is to ensure that equality is mainstreamed into our work, and that this in turn should result in more appropriately delivered services and outcomes taking into account individuals' backgrounds.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The public sector equality duty came into force in 2011 and in Wales the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011 were introduced putting in place a series of specific duties to underpin the general duty. The duties are designed to ensure that public services and employment in Wales are fair, accessible and responsive to people's needs. Duties include the creating, publishing, reviewing and reporting of Strategic Equality plans and objectives, after consultation, and reporting annually against the Plan, with a published annual report, including monitoring data. Also included are specific duties such as:

- a gender pay gap measure
- equality in public procurement, and
- the carrying out of equality impact assessments which consider the needs of people in all policies, practices and decisions.

Coleg y Cymoedd is committed to these principles of mainstreaming equality and to providing high quality, lifelong education and training in support of individuals, communities, employees and their employers. We also understand that mainstreaming equality issues will ensure that we deliver our aims in a more meaningful way, which will reach all groups in our community more effectively.

Welsh Language

Although not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established a legal framework to impose duties on public organisations to comply with standards of conduct on the Welsh Language. This means that Welsh must be treated no less favourably than English. Together, the Equality and Welsh Language policy agendas complement and inform one another.

The College's Welsh Language Scheme sets out our commitment to the Welsh Language and details how Coleg y Cymoedd develops and promotes the use of Welsh in all of its activities. The Scheme aims to develop a Welsh ethos at the College, develop bilingual communication skills and the Welsh-medium provision offered. It is promoted not only as an academic subject but as a living community and social language, in line with the Welsh Government's vision of a truly bilingual Wales.

Section Three

Coleg y Cymoedd



Coleg y Cymoedd (meaning college of the valleys) was formed in 2013, following the merger of The College Ystrad Mynach and Coleg Morgannwg.

Over 10,000 learners study at Coleg y Cymoedd each year with sites in Aberdare, Nantgarw, Rhondda and Ystrad Mynach.

The college offers a wide range of full and part-time courses from Entry to Degree Level in over 15 curriculum areas. This curriculum provision is supported by over 795 full-time and part-time teaching and support staff.

Working in partnership with more than 800 employers, the college's Business Services team offer a wide range of Apprenticeship and Bespoke Commercial Training packages.

The college has invested significantly in its facilities in recent year, with standout projects including the Nantgarw campus (a £40 million award winning campus), Aberdare campus (a £22 million campus opened in 2017), state of the art Railway Training and Motor Vehicle Facilities.

The communities served by the college are characterised by high levels of economic and social deprivation with economic inactivity rates that are among the highest in Wales. In addition, just over a quarter of its working-age population is without formal qualifications.

The college is committed to providing high quality, diverse, varied and relevant education and training opportunities for the local communities it serves.

Coleg y Cymoedd is a proud member of the **Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme**. This is Britain's good practice forum that promotes equality in the workplace for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employees and brings together the UK's top employers to promote diversity. Our membership of this programme will support our efforts to make the College an inclusive and supportive environment to work, study and visit.



"People perform better when they can be themselves" – Stonewall

The College takes part in the Stonewall Workplace equality index each year. We are using this to embed good practice in creating an inclusive workplace for LGBT staff and learners and also in relation to all protected groups.

Coleg y Cymoedd is a **Disability Confident Employer** which demonstrates the College's positive approach to employing disabled people.



Coleg y Cymoedd has around a thousand Welsh speaking students and many more Welsh learners. The areas of Rhondda Cynon Taff and Caerphilly have approximately 50,000 Welsh speaking residents, and the Scheme aims to provide an equally high quality service in both English and Welsh.

The College currently holds the Platinum Award for the Corporate Health Standard. This is run by the Welsh Government, and is the quality mark for workplace health promotion in Wales.



Coleg y Cymoedd was the first FE College in Wales to sign the Time to Change Wales Organisational pledge, showing its commitment to tackling stigma and discrimination around Mental Health in the workplace



As a member of Employers for Carers (EfC), an employer membership service provided by Carers Wales and Carers UK, we are better able to identify and support our working carers and provide a platform for our employees to seek information and advice to help juggle work and care effectively.



The Armed Forces covenant supports the armed forces community. As part of this we have committed to the proactively demonstrating that service personnel / the armed forces community are not disadvantaged as part of our recruitment and selection processes.



Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

Our Mission is Your Future Success

Vision

To be recognised as an excellent college by learners, staff, business and communities

The College's Core Values

We focus on learners
We strive for high performance
We value and invest in all people
We seek continuous improvement
We are aspirational, we listen and collaborate
We develop strong and effective partnerships

Section Four

The following information gives a brief profile of the College's staff and learners (data as at January 2020 for staff and September 2019 for learners).

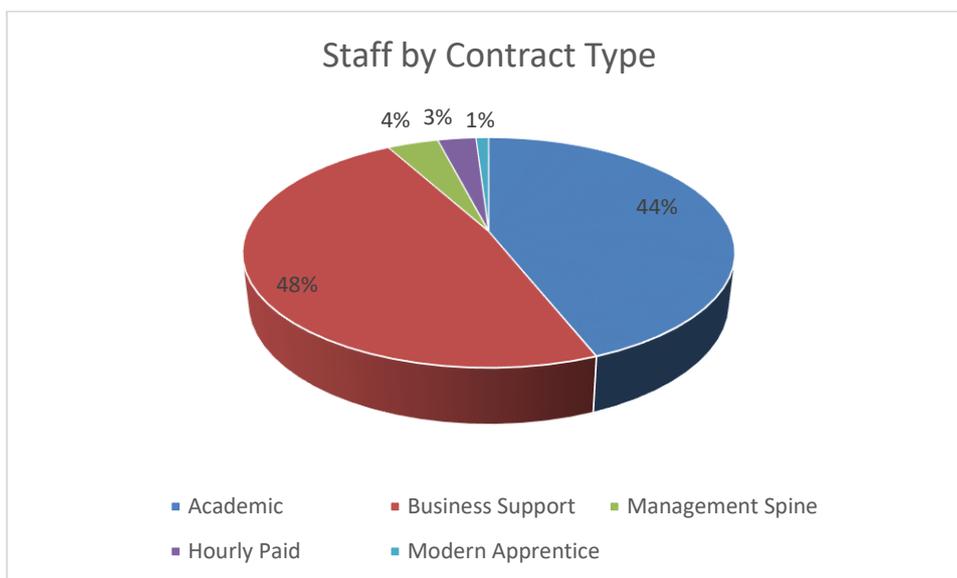
Staff

With a workforce of over 795 employees, female members of staff make up a large proportion at 60%.

	All	Female	Male
Full-time	57	27	30
Part-time	29	20	9
Term-time	14	13	1
All	100	60	40

57% of employees are full-time, 29% are part-time and 14% are term-time.

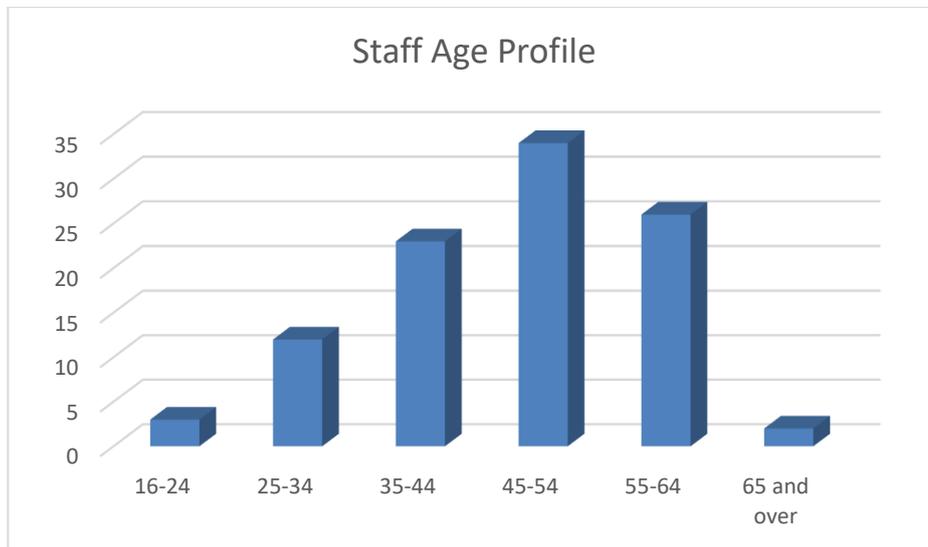
Females have the higher proportion of part-time and term-time contracts.



48% of employees are employed as Business Support, with 44% as Academic staff.

	All	Female	Male
Academic	44	25.5	18.5
Business Support	48	31.5	16.5
Management Spine	4	1.5	2.5
Hourly Paid	3	1.25	1.75
Modern Apprentice	1	0	1
All	100	59.75	40.25

There is a higher proportion of females on Business Support contracts, and a higher proportion of men on Management Spine contracts.



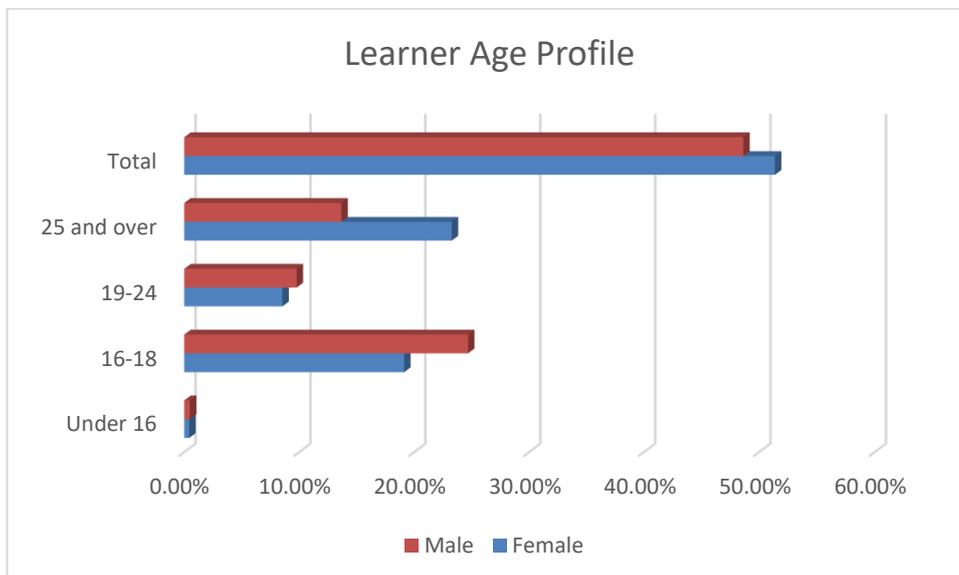
The age profile of staff at the College shows that there are proportionately more staff aged 45-54 (34%) than any other age group.

The majority (99%) of employees identify themselves as White, with less than 1% of a black or minority ethnic background (BME).

11% of college employees have declared themselves as having a disability or learning difficulty.

Learners

The learner population is divided into 51% female and 49% male learners.



The age distribution of learners at the College shows a higher proportion of male learners represented under the age of 25, whilst at 25 plus there are more learners who are female.

The College Learner BME profile is 5.0%

17.5% of College learners have declared themselves as having a disability or learning difficulty.

Section Five

Engagement and Consultation – How we set our Equality Objectives 2020-2024

We cannot know what people require or how to assist them unlock their potential without involving them and their representative groups in our planning and decision making processes. We recognise that the involvement and engagement of appropriate stakeholders is critical to the success of our Strategic Equality Plan.

In preparing this Strategic Equality Plan, consultation has taken place with:

- The Senior Leadership Team
- The Equality & Diversity Committee
- Staff and learners
- Trade unions
- Engagement with external organisations

The Equality and Diversity Group seeks to work with all members of the college community to advance equality and celebrate diversity. The Group draws its membership from learners, Academic and Business Support staff from all four campuses, ensuring it is fully representative of the college community. It meets at least once per term with the purpose of moving forward our Equality and Diversity agenda and to monitor the delivery of the objectives and review and implement any actions.

The college Learner Involvement Strategy enables the views and perceptions of learners to be gathered to inform change and enhancement to provision. Through this strategy, learners have the opportunity to be involved in college matters through representation on various forums, including Student Conference, Learner Voice Forums and college committees.

The Senior Leadership Team and managers of the College undertake regular 'Learner Walks' around College campuses to seek the views of a range of learners on College facilities and services. An on-line survey is also produced each year to gain an understanding of learner perceptions regarding College facilities, services and practices.

Events, such as the annual Equality & Diversity and Health & Well-being event, gathers staff and learners in an effort to increase engagement and improve communication. Questionnaires are distributed for feedback on equality and diversity at the College.

The feedback from emails, drop in sessions and walks around each campus canvassing the views of staff and learners, provides an opportunity for everyone to have their say in an informal setting.

Listening to the users of our services ensures that our focus is on the experiences of parents, staff and especially learners.

In developing our Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives a number of methods and sources were used to formulate the evidence base:

- Equality Impact Assessments
- The College Strategic Plan
- A review of the College's Strategic Equality plan 2016-2020 and its objectives
- Evidence centred on challenges identified in the EHRC report 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018'
- EHRC Public Sector Equality Duty and FE sector briefing
- Welsh Government Draft Equality Objectives
- Fair Work Wales

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Business the in Community – Equal Lives: Parenthood and Caring in the workplace
- Stonewall Cymru 2018 work report and 2017 school report
- EHRC Racial discrimination in HE Settings
- Employment statistics
- National and local data
- Committee meetings
- Surveys

We have gathered and reviewed information to assess where there are inequalities and opportunities and establish the key priority areas for action.

The college is looking at innovative methods of engaging with staff and learners to improve consultation and decision making and to ensure that the needs of people are taken into account, involving staff and learners with those protected characteristics which are under-represented.

We will continue to carry out external engagement exercises to identify areas for improvement in advancing equality issues and we will seek out new groups and links where we recognise we have least information and experience.



Section Six

Equality Objectives

The key purpose of setting equality objectives is for us to advance equality in all areas of our work and to drive better outcomes for people with protected characteristics. This Plan outlines objectives with specific improvements and extends consideration to each of the eight protected characteristics covered by all three of the main aims of the general duty and the requirement to eliminate discrimination, harassment and other actions prohibited in the Equality Act 2010 in respect of civil partnerships and marriage.

In arriving at our objectives, we have kept in mind the overriding purpose of the general duty. This is the requirement to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Each of the protected characteristics have been considered and objectives will clearly indicate where specific groups are being targeted through strategies, actions or positive action opportunities.

In developing the objectives, we have drawn on, and will carry forward, commitments from the previous College's previous Strategic Equality Plans. The College has previously identified the following functions of Coleg y Cymoedd as the most significant issues in respect of equality and the general duty:

Curriculum and Learning
Learner Services
Physical environment

Academic achievement
Employment
Staff training and awareness

The College's progress to date in relation to these functions is outlined in the Annual Equality Reports.

The following identifies and details **Coleg y Cymoedd's key equality aims and objectives** in relation to these functions for 2020-2024.

The objectives should be read in conjunction with a step phased Action Plan, accompanying the Strategic Equality Plan in Appendix A. Coleg y Cymoedd aims to take a stepped approach to meeting these objectives and may revise or remake the objectives at any stage, which we will subsequently publish.

Aim 1: We will identify employment gaps of protected characteristic groups, and in particular focus on reducing the employment gap for disabled people and ethnic minority groups.



Why? To ensure our workforce represents the communities we serve and to secure the very best workforce by ensuring that all sectors of the community consider Coleg y Cymoedd as an employer of choice.

Objective 1: Increase the number of avenues we use to attract applications from disabled people and ethnic minority groups and thus increasing the number of applications we receive for employment from disabled and ethnic minority applicants by a minimum of 5% by 2024.

We will measure our progress by:

- Monitoring the number of job applications received from disabled and ethnic minority applicants
- Monitoring the diversity of candidates at shortlisting and interview stages of recruitment
- Monitoring the representation rates of disabled and ethnic minority staff
- Reviewing information taken from exit interviews and questionnaires of staff to identify any barriers

Aim 2: We will identify pay gaps amongst all protected characteristic groups and put appropriate actions in place to address any identified areas.



Why? To ensure equal outcomes for all employees at Coleg y Cymoedd by understanding and responding to the needs of our current and prospective employees. All staff will feel valued, supported and respected.

Objective 2: Maintain current gender pay gap within a 6 – 9 % threshold.

Objective 3: Identify pay gaps amongst remaining protected characteristic groups by 2021 and address any differentials by 2024.

Objective 4: Actively promote development opportunities for under-represented staff groups (including LGBT employees, disabled employees and ethnic minority employees) during the four year period 2020 – 2024.

We will measure our progress by:

- Producing annual reports on pay gaps and monitoring action plans.
- Monitoring applications for flexible working by protected characteristic groups
- Monitoring numbers of staff from protected characteristic groups accessing parental leave policies and leave of absence policy
- Monitoring the uptake of development opportunities by staff by protected characteristic groups
- Reviewing feedback from staff surveys to gauge staff satisfaction levels and any perceived barriers to progression.

Aim 3: We will ensure that successful outcomes for all protected characteristic learner groups are monitored and attainment gaps are minimised.



Why? To provide support to learners so that everyone can flourish and succeed to the best of their abilities "Our Mission is Your Future Success".

Objective 5: Continue to ensure that the attainment gaps for all protected characteristic groups remain within a tolerance of 5%, with focus on outcomes for those groups who have historically lower levels of attainment (ethnic minority groups, learners with additional learning needs and of socio-economic disadvantage).

We will measure our progress by:

- Monitoring attainment data of all protected characteristic learner groups
- Monitoring the uptake of I2A referrals and access of learner support
- Reviewing information from learner surveys to assess understanding of learner support available
- Benchmarking against other education providers in Wales.

Aim 4: We will support employers to improve the participation of under-represented groups in apprenticeships.



Why? To reduce gender segregation and improve the participation and progression of women, ethnic minorities and disabled people across a range of apprenticeships.

Objective 6: Engage with a range of employers to encourage them to consider under-represented groups in apprenticeships by 2024.

We will measure our progress by:

- Monitoring the number of apprentices at the college by protected characteristic groups
- Reviewing the feedback from employers

Aim 5: We will continue to address identity-based bullying, harassment and discrimination, paying particular attention to racial and sexual harassment and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity.



Why? Everyone has a right to feel safe and supported, and by protecting staff and learners we ensure everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential in work and education.

Objective 7: Hold two awareness campaigns throughout the college to enable all staff to identify abuse, harassment and discrimination and act effectively to prevent and challenge this behaviour, as well as support those staff and learners being affected.

We will measure our progress by:

- Monitoring the level of informal and formal complaints received from staff and learners
- Reviewing information from exit interviews and questionnaires of staff and learners
- Reviewing feedback from staff and learner surveys and learner walks to gauge whether all staff and learners feel safe and to assess confidence in reporting and complaints procedures
- Monitoring access to Employee Assistance Programme
- Monitoring sickness absence and return to work data for staff
- Monitoring the access of learner welfare services

Aim 6: We will obtain a complete picture of the composition of our workforce in order to better understand the experiences of employees sharing protected characteristics.



Why? To provide fair, equitable services and develop policies that are based on a robust understanding of the needs of, and the impact on, people who have protected characteristics. To enable staff to maximise their success.

Objective 8: Increase current equality and diversity data collection of workforce to 80% declaration for all protected characteristics by 2022 and 100% by 2024.

We will measure our progress by:

- Monitoring declaration rates of all protected characteristic staff groups
- Reviewing data from staff surveys in order to identify level of confidence of staff in being themselves at work
- Monitoring the response rates in the 'Prefer Not to Say' category.

Section Seven

Arrangements for assessing likely, actual and on-going impact on protected groups (Equality Impact Assessments)

We are committed to measuring the impact of new and existing policies, practices and procedures on all equality groups by conducting appropriate impact assessments to ensure that they are fair to all groups of people and do not impact adversely on them in any way. To this end, the College has a continuous programme of reviewing policies, procedures and practices in place.

The process provides us with the scope to carefully consider the likely impact of our actions and behaviours at work. Discrimination is rarely intentional but by carefully focussing on each of the protected characteristics of diversity we can highlight the different ways in which groups of people are affected by our practices and take any actions to eliminate any negative consequences. It is not enough to say that because a policy is applied uniformly to all groups that it is fair and equal. Applying a policy or procedure consistently may result in differential outcomes for different groups. The process can also help to highlight positive impacts of our policies and practices.

The assessments are based on a clear view of the main aims and procedures of the policy together with as much information as possible about the different groups the policy is likely to affect. Individuals are affected by College policy differently according to their protected characteristic for example in terms of access to a service, or the ability to engage with proposed opportunities

When conducting assessments we:

- Establish clear criteria for measuring the relevance of a policy, practice or procedure to equality of opportunity for all groups.
- Collect and analyse relevant data to assist with impact assessments.
- Engage appropriately through involvement and consultation people who are likely to be affected by policies and programmes from the start of the development and planning processes.
- Review and revise proposals in light of data collection, consultation and involvement of people to ensure any negative impact is mitigated.
- Provide our staff with training and support to ensure they carry out equality impact assessments with confidence and knowledge.
- Aspire to provide a positive outcome for all equality groups in our work.

In order to assess the impact of our policies and programmes on all protected characteristics we utilise the following information:

- demographic data and other statistics, including census findings
- existing research findings
- comparisons with other colleges and other educational establishments
- survey data
- equality monitoring data
- Ad hoc data gathering exercises
- Specifically commissioned research

Section Eight

Raising Awareness and Staff Development

Promoting knowledge and understanding of the general and specific duties amongst employees

We are committed to providing a comprehensive training and awareness programme for all staff in respect of the general and specific duties. The programme is designed to meet the requirements of different staff roles, and includes mainstreaming equality and the duties into the College induction programme and staff mandatory training.

The College delivers the following training:

1. Training for Equality & Diversity Committee in respect of the duties and their responsibilities
2. A mandatory online general training and awareness programme in respect of the duties for all staff
3. Induction training for all new staff on equality and diversity

The College will continue to deliver equality and diversity training during 2020 - 2024 through a range of methods:

- Training for all senior managers in respect of the duties and their responsibilities
- Training for all Line Managers on awareness of specific equality related issues, for example Gender identity and disability awareness
- Training for appropriate academic staff in respect of curriculum and the production of appropriate material for use with learners. This will assist in mainstreaming equality for all protected groups into learner culture and behaviour
- Tailored training on assessing the impact of policies and functions on all protected characteristics for appropriate staff
- Tailored training for key support staff including front line services
- Tailored disability training for identified priority staff particularly in respect of Vocational Access staff
- Mainstreaming of equality and the duties into all professional development training programmes

Each year a calendar is produced to raise awareness of diversity days and events, these include National Hate Crime Awareness week, Human Rights Day, World Religion Day, Disability Awareness Day.

The College generally communicates with staff and learners through electronic means. A staff and learner portal on the intranet carries news and information on its front page and is the portal to access further information on policies, practices and guides on a range of services. This is used to remind staff and learners of the College's responsibilities under the Equality act 2010. There are also a number of blogs, social media pages and Yammer groups available to share information, good practice, ideas and as a tool for social interaction and to encourage discussion between colleagues across all sites.

The college equality and diversity twitter profile regularly communicates equality and diversity issues and events at the college and information from other leading equality organisations.

Plasma screens in different locations throughout the College provide current information and upcoming events and a Coleg y Cymoedd App is available for staff and learners to download for their SMART devices, which provides them with a range of information and support available at the College.

Learners have access to a range of Equality and Diversity resources and are a feature of the tutorial system.

Within the remit of the Welsh Language Scheme is an objective to improve our understanding of Welsh culture and to improve the Welsh language skills of both learners and staff.

Performance Management: Fairness is essential to performance management. Reviewers are expected to guard against any form of discrimination when continually assessing a jobholder's performance and ensure jobholders have equal opportunity to develop their performance fully. Reviewers are expected to ensure that the jobholder is not unfairly treated because of their protected characteristics.

Staff networks: The college works with staff to encourage the establishment of staff network groups. The staff networks aim to:

- Tackle issues for under-represented and disadvantaged groups and individuals
- Offer a place to come together, share experiences and raise issues in a safe environment
- Contribute to the development of college policies and working practices
- Assist in arranging events to raise awareness and celebrate diversity.

Section Nine

Recruitment and Selection

Coleg y Cymoedd continues to ensure our recruitment and selection processes are assessed in order to provide a fully inclusive and accessible process. We ensure that all recruitment panel members have received training on equality and diversity and on preventing discrimination. Due consideration is given to the composition of interview panels and a member of Human Resources staff is present at all interviews.

The College is a Disability Confident employer, which demonstrates our commitment to supporting disabled staff. We endeavour to identify and address any barriers that may prevent or deter disabled people from applying for jobs and ensure our online and offline processes are fully accessible by offering reasonable adjustments at application and interview stage. Applicants with disabilities who apply under the scheme, and who satisfy the essential criteria of the post, are offered an interview.

All job applicants are asked to complete an Equality and Diversity monitoring form, and we continue to monitor and analyse recruitment information, and investigate reasons for any differential outcomes.

In addition to advertising vacancies on the College website, we seek to ensure our advertisements reach a wide audience covering all protected characteristic groups by circulating vacancies to external organisations.

Job descriptions, person specifications and job advertisements are monitored to ensure that they are not discriminatory and appointments are made through open competition with selection on the basis of assessment against competencies of the job, regardless of any protected characteristics.

Procurement

The College currently ensures that other organisations who deliver functions on our behalf give due regard to College policies, rules and procedures in place, including equality and sustainability related policies. The College regularly reviews procurement arrangements, procedures and agreements to ensure they comply with college standards and meet the needs of all stakeholders. The College is a member of the National Procurement Service, which manage developmental and improvement projects for collaborative procurement in the FE sector in Wales. As part of this, the College adheres to an Approved Supplier List for each category of spend which identifies framework agreements.

Modern Slavery Act

The Modern Slavery Act requires the College to publicly report the steps it takes to ensure its operations and supply chains are free of human trafficking and slavery. The College is committed to employing staff, engaging with and supporting our learners, acquiring goods, services and works for its requirements, and otherwise conducting its business without causing harm to others. In doing so, the College is committed to supporting the UK Government's Action Plan to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The College adopts a zero tolerance approach in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking and is committed to work to address areas of higher risk or concern. This is demonstrated in the College's Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement.

Section Ten

Arrangements for measuring and monitoring progress

Measuring progress on Equality

Identifying and measuring the impact of equality activity on the learning and working environment of the college can be complex. It may take several years before a benefit is realised and there is often more than one stage and level of impact. Pinpointing a direct relationship between specific outcome and a specific impact is therefore challenging, particularly for equality areas where there is little quantitative data.

Measuring progress on equality work is central to demonstrating that an institution is undertaking work to meet the public sector equality duty of the Equality Act 2010. Measuring progress with qualitative evidence will provide a richer picture of the impact our work has on people's experiences.

Qualitative as well as quantitative evidence may be used to gauge progress and measure outcomes, and this information may be obtained through staff surveys, analysis of complaints, feedback forms and benchmarking.

Monitoring Equality

Equality monitoring is the process used to collect, store and analyse data on the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. Monitoring is essential to ensure that the Strategic Equality Plan is being delivered and that it is appropriate to the needs of learners, staff and the wider community.

Data monitoring strengthens our commitment to the Equality Act and also ensures that the College is able to:

- assess the impact of its policies on staff,
- target and support areas of under-representation,
- help inform policy and decision making.

Successful delivery of our objectives requires strong leadership. Leadership will be driven primarily by our Governing Body and Principal and through the Senior Leadership Team. The Vice Principal (Chief Operating Officer) has the strategic responsibility for the equality and diversity agenda and oversees the implementation, monitoring and review of equality and diversity at an operational level for employment issues and the Assistant Principal Learner Experience has strategic responsibility for the equality and diversity agenda for learner matters.

Responsibility for operational delivery rests with all teams within the college. Each Faculty Director will ensure their staff has the appropriate skills and knowledge in relation to equality and diversity issues which are required for them to effectively perform their duties.

We will review our information, engagement evidence, impact assessments and objectives on an annual basis. Through detailed action plans, the College Equality and Diversity Group will monitor the delivery of the objectives and scrutinise the information available to ensure we identify and implement new strategies and objectives appropriately.

Arrangements for collecting, identifying and publishing relevant equality information

We collect statistical information on the composition of staff and learners analysed by protected characteristics. We currently monitor equality data for the following areas:

Staff:

- Numbers employed
- Continuous Professional Development
- Disciplinary and Grievances
- Recruitment
- Promotions
- Leavers

Students:

- Admissions
- Student Retention
- Student Complaints
- Student numbers
- Student Attainment

This information will be published annually on our website in the College Equality and Diversity report and may be used to:

- Compare data with relevant demographic indicators (benchmarking) for the sector in Wales and the UK;
- Help identify barriers, underlying causes and plan appropriate action
- Assess what further improvements can be made
- Develop and plan future strategies and targets.

The data gathered fully depends on our staff and learners, and work continues to ensure that people understand the reasons behind data collection and to ensuring they feel comfortable in disclosing their personal information.

Information and statistical data is obtained through a variety of sources.

- **Internal employment data (Profile) and External applicant data (access to opportunities)**

Human Resources have in place appropriate systems for collating staff data in respect of all protected characteristics. This includes voluntary self-assessment by potential and existing staff completing Equality Recruitment Monitoring forms, and data from the self-service HR/Payroll system. The on-line system allows all employees to have control of their monitoring data and staff are able to update their own profiles.

- **Learner data (Profile), Learner applicant data (access to opportunities) and Academic achievement data**

Learner Services have in place appropriate systems for collating learner data in respect of all protected characteristics. This includes data from student enrolment forms and from Learner Information management system (EBS).

External sources will be extracted from the Equality Challenge unit, Colleges, Office for National Statistics and any other equality body as appropriate in order to benchmark the College's position.

Section Eleven

Reviewing, Reporting and Publishing Arrangements

Following the analysis of data, an Annual Equality report of the Strategic Equality Plan and its objectives is produced in order to inform actions and assess our progress against objectives. This takes place during the first term of each Academic year. The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for preparing and presenting the report for comments and approval through the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body of the College.

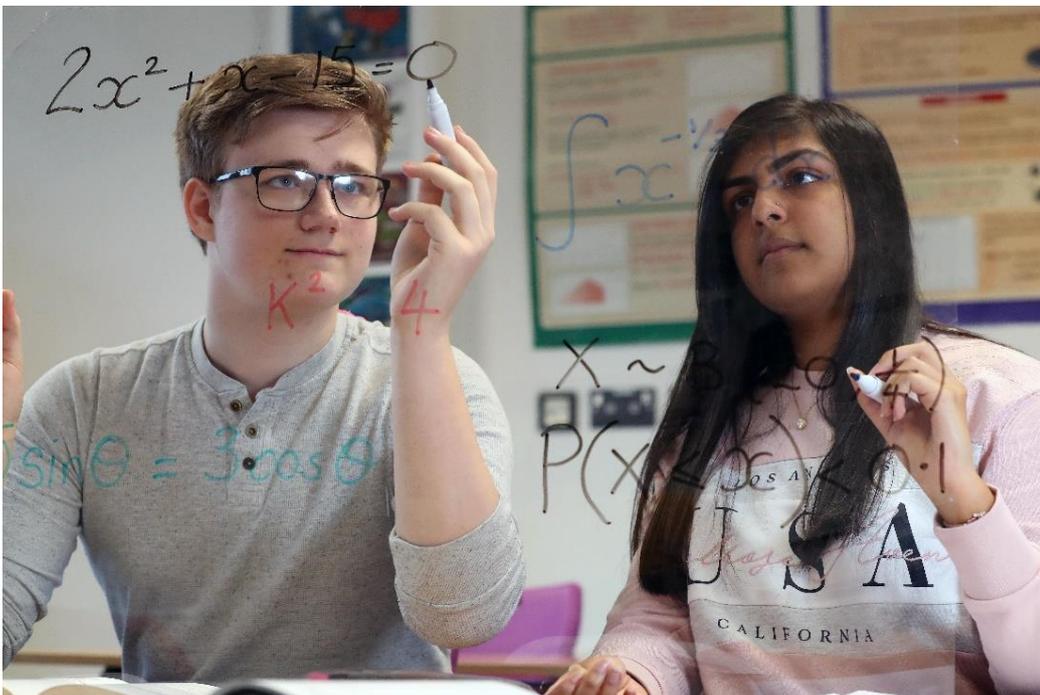
The report includes:

- Progress made against the Plan and Objectives, with relevant key points;
- Monitoring and analysis of learner and staff diversity profiles;
- Relevant activities and partnership working which has taken place;
- Any proposed revisions and recommendations;
- Any future legal or strategy developments which are being developed in the sector, Wales and/or UK.

The plan, together with Annual Equality reports, is published on the Equality and Diversity section of the College website in PDF and accessible word and also made available in a range of formats on request.

We ensure that reports are published in such a way that no individual can be identified.

Dissemination of information to Support and Academic areas is carried out in order to ensure that those responsible for particular functions are aware of the learner and staff diversity profiles.



Section Twelve

Reporting Harassment or Discrimination

The College has an Equality and Diversity Policy for staff and learners, which covers discrimination against all staff and learners. If a person believes that the policy has been contravened staff should contact their Line Manager or Human Resources and students should contact their Head of School. The matter will be investigated and action may be taken under the College's Disciplinary Procedures. Full support will be given.

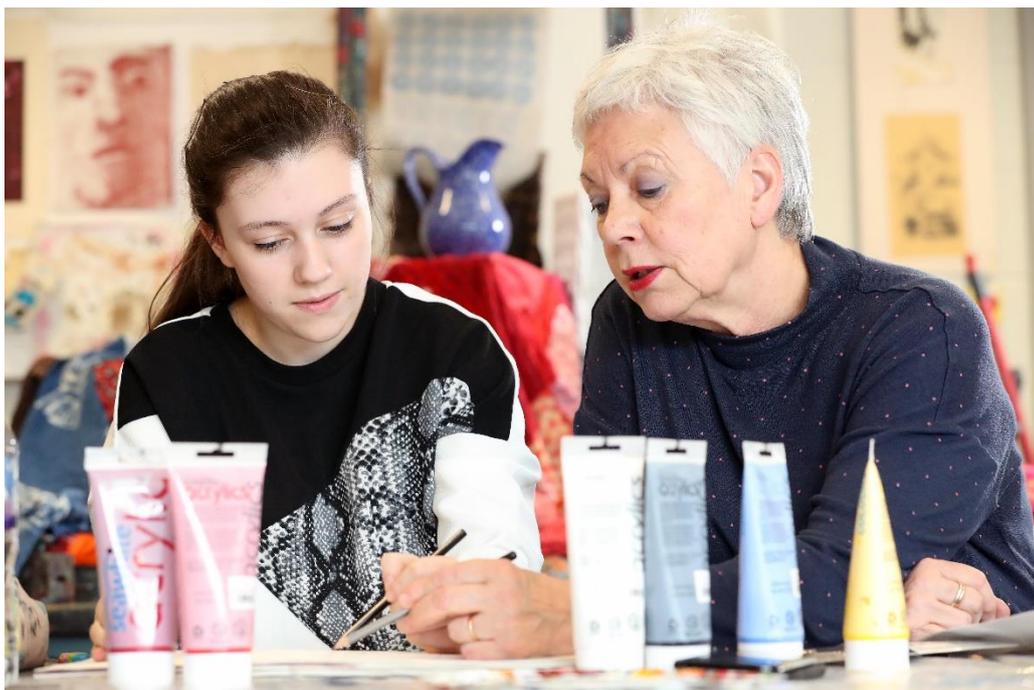
The College has a Bullying and Harassment Policy which covers all forms of harassment, for both staff and learners. The policy outlines the procedures for any member of staff or learner to report harassment or seek advice.

Further support can be obtained from the College's Employee Assistance Programme, in which employees can access a 24/7 counselling service. Assistance is also available from the College recognised Trade unions and the Equality and Diversity Group. Additionally, the College has identified staff on each campus who are able to assist in any bullying and harassment issues.

The policies and further guidance are available for staff and learners on the Equality and Diversity section of the College intranet or from the Human Resources Department, with full details of routes for reporting incidents of bullying and harassment and hate crime.

Details of the College's system for reporting are also included in the learners joining details and in staff induction.

Disciplinary action may be taken against staff and learners who are found to act in a way that constitutes discrimination, harassment or bullying. This can result in expulsion or dismissal.



Section Thirteen

Linked Strategies and Policies

The Strategic Equality Plan is not a stand-alone document. It has close links to a number of key strategies and plans, for example:

The College's Strategic Plan

Equality and Diversity Policy

Health and Wellbeing Policy

Disciplinary and Grievance Policy and Procedure

Capability Policy

Family Friendly policies (flexible working policy, leave of absence policy)

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Sexual Orientation policy

Gender identity policy & Guidance

Religion & Belief Policy

Employee Code of Conduct

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Management of Attendance Policy

Teaching and Learning Strategy

Learner Engagement Strategy

Admissions Policy

The Welsh Language Scheme

Student Complaints Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Student Disciplinary Policy

Chaplaincy Policy

Fitness to study Policy

Learner Admission Policy

(Copies of related policies and procedures are available on the College portal).

Section Fourteen

Contact Us

Please contact equalityanddiversity@cymoedd.ac.uk or Human Resources, Zoe Wellington Zoe.Wellington@cymoedd.ac.uk if you wish to make any suggestions, have comments or seek clarification on the College Strategic Equality Plan.

Advice and support for staff is available through the Human Resources Department, departmental Line Managers and recognised Trade Union representatives.

The HR Department also offers Occupational Health advice and external counselling services.

Learners may obtain advice and support from a range of staff within Learner Services, Campus Services and Course Tutors.

Staff and learners may also contact external bodies for advice, such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, ACAS. A link to a full list of useful contacts is available on the College intranet.



Appendix A: Equality Objectives 2020-2024

Aim 1: We will identify employment gaps of protected characteristic groups, and in particular focus on reducing the employment gap for disabled people and ethnic minority groups.			
Objective 1: Increase the number of avenues we use to attract applications from disabled people and ethnic minority groups and thus increasing the number of applications we receive for employment from disabled and ethnic minority applicants by 5% by 2024.	Outcome	Persons responsible/ Target completion	Protected characteristic
Impact assess existing recruitment policy and procedures to help eliminate any potential discrimination that may currently exist and address barriers to entering the workplace	Fair, transparent recruitment and selection process is in place	HR Team / EDI Team 31 st August 2021	All protected characteristics
Identify training to tackle any potential prejudice for those involved in recruitment and selection (including unconscious bias)	Fair, transparent recruitment and selection process is adhered to	HR Team / EDI Team 31 st August 2021	All protected characteristics
Review recruitment advertising methods and publications to ensure a diverse range of communities are able to access and view job adverts	Presentation and placement of adverts is strategic with intention of widening access	HR Team / EDI Team 31 st August 2021	All protected characteristics
Monitor applications for employment to identify any barriers for protected characteristic groups	Gaps in applications are identified	HR Team On-going	All protected characteristics
Engage with relevant community groups to explore the needs of people who share the protected characteristic	Needs are identified and acted upon	EDI Team 31 st Dec 2021	Disability, ethnicity

Review flexible working policy, and advertise jobs with flexible working options where appropriate (Include 'Happy to Talk Flexible Working' on adverts)	All jobs are advertised with flexible working options	HR Team 31 st August 2021	All protected characteristics
Hold recruitment fairs to encourage applications from protected characteristic groups	More applications are received from protected characteristic groups	HR Team 31 st August 2022	Disability, ethnicity
Ensure staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge to enable them to understand and respond to the needs of everyone within our communities	Staff are more knowledgeable and an increase in diverse staff and learner population is achieved	HR Team L&D Team 31 st August 2022	All protected characteristics
Obtain disability confident leader status by 2024	Disability confident leader status obtained	HR Team 31 st March 2024	Disability
Aim 2: We will identify pay gaps amongst all protected characteristic groups and put appropriate actions in place to address any identified areas.			
Objective 2: Maintain current gender pay gap within a 6 – 9% threshold.	Outcome	Target completion	Protected characteristic
Review flexible working practices and raise awareness of types of flexible working	Accessible flexible working policy for all staff with clear information	HR Team 31 st August 2021	Gender

	and guidelines available		
Improve awareness of the college's family friendly policies to encourage sharing of care	Raised awareness of family friendly policies	HR Team 31 st August 2021	Gender
Create improved on-line resources and create a 'becoming a parent' toolkit	Clearer access to family friendly policies and information	HR Team 31 st August 2021	Gender
Work with Carers Cymru and Carers UK to support carers at the college and introduce a 'Carers Passport'	Carers are more supported at the college	HR Team 31 st August 2021	Age, Gender
Objective 3: Identify pay gaps amongst remaining protected characteristic groups by 2021 and address any differentials by 2024.	Outcome	Target completion	Protected characteristic
Report on pay gaps as per the gender pay gap and set action plans for any identified areas	Pay gaps are identified	HR Team 31 st Dec 2021	All protected characteristics
Objective 4: Actively promote development opportunities for under-represented staff groups (including LGBT employees, disabled employees and ethnic minority employees) during the four year period 2020 – 2024.	Outcome	Target completion	Protected characteristic
Review progression routes to identify any potential barriers	Barriers are identified and actions are put in place.	HR Team L&D Team 31 st Dec 2021	Disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity
Promote positive messages about flexibility and career development (include the use of case studies, showcase positive role models)	Raised awareness of career development paths, and flexible and	HR Team L&D Team 31 st Dec 2021	All protected characteristics

	part-time working are not seen as an obstacle to career development		
Review the uptake of development opportunities to ensure they are representative	Staff from all protected characteristic groups are accessing development opportunities	HR Team L&D Team 31 st Dec 2021 and on-going	All protected characteristics
Aim 3: We will ensure that successful outcomes for all protected characteristic learner groups are monitored and attainment gaps are minimised.			
Objective 5: Continue to ensure that the attainment gaps for all protected characteristic groups remain within a tolerance of 5%, with focus on outcomes for those groups who have historically lower levels of attainment (ethnic minority groups, learners with additional learning needs and of socio-economic disadvantage).		Outcome	Target completion
		Protected characteristic	
Review the Socio-Economic Duty being implemented in 2020	Guidance developed on the Socio-Economic Duty	SLT HR Team EDI Team 31 st August 2021	Disability, ethnicity
Explore the barriers that impact attainment gaps	Barriers identified and actions put in place	EDI Team CMT Learner Support 31 st August 2022	Disability, ethnicity

Review data on learners from deprived areas to understand nature of gaps (e.g. certain curriculum areas, or age ranges)	Greater understanding of where the gaps may arise	EDI Team CMT Learner Support 31 st August 2022	Disability, ethnicity	
Deliver staff training on understanding and developing equality for learners of socio-economic disadvantage	Improved equality for learners of socio-economic disadvantage	EDI Team L&D Team Learner Support 31 st August 2022	Disability, ethnicity	
Work with learner support staff to identify learners who may require additional support. Promote the services of learner support and the I2A project.	Additional support visibly promoted to learners	EDI Team Learner Support 31 st August 2022	Disability, ethnicity	
Aim 4: We will support employers to improve the participation of under-represented groups in apprenticeships.				
Objective 6: Engage with a range of employers to encourage them to consider under-represented groups in apprenticeships by 2024.		Outcome/Evidence	Target completion	Protected characteristic
Hold community events outside of open days to engage with local communities and promote apprenticeship opportunities	Increased awareness of apprenticeship opportunities on offer	EDI Team WBL 31 st August 2023	Disability, gender, ethnicity	
Survey employers on their recruitment processes	Greater understanding of where employers may be	EDI Team HR Team WBL	Disability, gender, ethnicity	

	missing opportunities in their recruitment processes	31 st August 2023	
Share good practice on providing extra support for under-represented groups and identifying barriers	More information made available for employers	EDI Team WBL 31 st August 2023	Disability, gender, ethnicity
Provide advice on positive action (e.g. guaranteed interview scheme)	Positive action is being implemented	EDI Team HR Team WBL 31 st August 2023	Disability, gender, ethnicity
Aim 5: We will continue to address identity-based bullying, harassment and discrimination, paying particular attention to racial and sexual harassment and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity.			
Objective 7: Hold two awareness campaigns throughout the college to enable all staff to identify abuse, harassment and discrimination and act effectively to prevent and challenge this behaviour, as well as support those staff and learners being affected.	Outcome	Target completion	Protected characteristic
Review current Anti-bullying and harassment policies (staff and learners) to ensure it reflects all areas of identity-based bullying and harassment and gives specific examples e.g., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Consider third party harassment and power imbalances.	Accessible anti-bullying and harassment policy for all staff and learners with clear information and guidelines available	HR Team EDI Team Director of Learner Services 31 st March 2021	All protected characteristics

Running a “It’s OK to be you” campaign to raise awareness of the protected characteristic groups. Involve marketing for the use of TV screens on campuses. Enhance tutorial programme for learners to raise awareness and understanding of those with protected characteristics	Raised awareness of the experiences of those with protected characteristics	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Dec 2021	All protected characteristics
Running a “It’s OK to say it’s not OK” to raise awareness of unacceptable behaviour and identify routes to gain support. Involve marketing for the use of TV screens on campuses e.g. #This is not ok #This is sexual abuse	Raised awareness of Anti-Bullying and harassment policy and reporting routes	HR Team EDI Team Marketing 31 st Aug 2021	All protected characteristics
Reinforce the college’s zero tolerance approach to discrimination and harassment	Established culture of respect and kindness	HR Team EDI Team Marketing 31 st March 2021	All protected characteristics
Ensure our complaints policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Proactively encourage and communicate routes for reporting discrimination, bullying & harassment, providing multiples points of contact so learners and staff can choose who they feel most comfortable speaking to.	Consistent mechanism in place for recording and monitoring all complaints	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Aug 2021	All protected characteristics
Consider the introduction of on-line reporting system for staff and learners. Consider a mechanism for recording all informal complaints from staff and learners, ensuring all informal complaints are recorded and monitored in line with formal complaints.	On-line reporting system in place. Informal complaints are recorded centrally for	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Aug 2021	All protected characteristics

	monitoring purposes		
Identify training for those staff who may investigate claims of sexual harassment	Increased confidence in staff in dealing with claims of sexual harassment	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Aug 2021	Gender
Deliver staff training and support in recognising, recording and challenging identity-based bullying and harassment, including hate crime incidents and how to report them. To cover challenging negative behaviours and reinforcing positive attitudes.	Increased knowledge amongst staff in identifying, recording and challenging bullying and harassment	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Aug 2021	All protected characteristics
Consider a staff survey to ask all employees questions on an anonymised basis to obtain as accurate a picture of harassment that is happening in the workplace as possible, and to obtain feedback on employees' confidence in the college's reporting and complaints procedures.	Results of survey may identify areas of harassment to address as immediate action.	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Dec 2021	All protected characteristics
Aim 6: We will obtain a complete picture of the composition of our workforce in order to better understand the experiences of employees sharing protected characteristics.			
Objective 8: Increase current equality and diversity data collection of workforce to 80% declaration for all protected characteristics by 2022 and 100% by 2024.	Outcome	Target completion	Protected characteristic
Hold campaign to ensure staff understand why data is collected and to increase staff confidence in disclosing their protected characteristics	Increased equality data for staff	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Aug 2021	All protected characteristics

Use the introduction of the new HR systems as a starting point for capturing staff data	Increased equality data for staff	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Aug 2021	All protected characteristics
Consider alternative methods of data collection	Increased equality data for staff	HR Team EDI Team 31 st Aug 2021	All protected characteristics