# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report Academic Year 2023-2024

## 1. Part One: Foreword

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This Annual Reportpresents an overview of how we fulfil our equality duty, providing insights into our approach and performance in advancing, embedding, and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. We highlight some of the achievements and progress that we have made together during 2023 – 24.

At Kirklees College, our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of our mission of “Creating Opportunities, Changing Lives”. We strive to create an environment where every student and staff member can reach their full potential, embracing the richness of a diverse community. We are dedicated to fostering a culture of kindness, unity, and excellence, whilst working to remove barriers that limit equal opportunities for all.

We acknowledge the inequalities present in the wider community and endeavour to use our insights to make continuing progress in developing and maintaining an inclusive and diverse environment that is representative of our community population.

Our students, staff and communities face many challenges including rising living costs, inequality, poverty, mental health issues, technological changes and climate change. These challenges affect us all differently and how we respond to them matters. We embrace the needs of all in our community, irrespective of academic achievement and social background.

Our strategy is driven by the goal of shaping a better future through excellent teaching and learning with a strong social purpose. As an anchor institution in the community, we change lives by providing a ladder of opportunity and progression through creative, responsive and successful learning.

Thank you to everyone involved in our EDI community, those engaged in our staff and student networks, participating in our training and events and leading or supporting EDI initiatives in our college. Your efforts are instrumental in shaping our culture. Together, we are making positive and lasting change to make Kirklees College an outstanding place to learn and work.

**Palvinder Singh, Principal and Chief Executive**

## 2. Part Two: Context

Kirklees is a vibrant area known for its diverse communities and rich cultural heritage. Living and working in Kirklees offers a unique blend of urban and rural environments with Huddersfield and Dewsbury providing access to both industry and green spaces. The local economy is varied including sectors such as manufacturing, education and healthcare contributing to job prospects. Census data (2021) identifies Kirklees as among the top 45% of most densely populated English local authority areas.

Although the Kirklees district has areas of relative affluence, there are challenges in addressing inequalities, particularly in terms of socio-economic disparities, educational attainment and access to opportunities for minority groups. It also has areas of significant deprivation including poverty, employment and housing. Using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, we have a much higher than average number of students who come to us from the three bands of highest deprivation.

Many of our students have significantly lower than average starting points in English and maths. Kirklees College is the key provider of post-16 SEND provision in Kirklees and there have been year-on-year increases in the number of students with EHCPs attending the college.

With increased focus on equality and diversity in all sectors and in all areas of everyday life, we actively demonstrate and communicate to our stakeholders, both internal and external, that we are committed to providing a supportive, inclusive and respectful environment.

### 2.1 Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of our mission of “Creating Opportunities, Changing Lives”. We strive to create an environment where every student and staff member can reach their full potential, embracing the richness of a diverse community. We are dedicated to fostering a culture of kindness, unity, and excellence, while working to remove barriers that limit equal opportunities for all. Our values of Kindness, Unity, Excellence are deeply aligned with our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. These values apply equally to staff and governors, as well as students, volunteers and organisations that we do business with. They guide our actions and decision-making, ensuring that we foster a culture where every individual is respected, supported and empowered. This reflects our belief that Kindness, Unity and Excellence, enable us to build a more equitable community.

We are committed to being open and transparent about the information on which we base our decisions, what we are seeking to achieve and our results. This includes clearly setting out the equality outcomes that we are working towards.

We are committed to meeting our regulatory requirements. The General Public Equality Duty, section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires relevant public authorities to have due regard to the need to;

* comply with the law in promoting equality and where appropriate go beyond the legal requirements
* ensure that all students succeed and can progress in ways that match their abilities and aspirations
* be an organisation that embraces and recognises the talents of all and does not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment.

We comply with our statutory reporting obligations arising under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 which require the college to publish:

* specific and measurable equality objectives, at least every four years.
* information to demonstrate its compliance with the public sector equality duty each year.

We comply with the Equality Act 2010 Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations and publish our Gender Pay Gap annually. We not only meet this requirement but exceed it by voluntarily reporting on both our Ethnicity Pay Gap and Disability Pay Gap.

### 2.2 Our Equality Objectives

This annual report provides an update on the progress we are making towards achieving our equality objectives. The factors by which we assess our success are:

* Our progress in improving participation, retention and achievement in areas where there is currently inequality.
* Our ability to maintain the progress of all students.
* Evidence of all staff adopting a positive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and their success in doing so.
* Our progress towards embedding equality, diversity and inclusion with the curriculum.
* The completion of the action plan relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
* Gaining feedback from students, staff and stakeholders.
* Our progress in recruiting a diverse workforce and the demonstration of best practice in relation to employment.

### 2.3 Our Approach

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy sets out our approach to embedding these principles across all aspects of our work, while also meeting our obligations under relevant legislation. Other related policies including our Dignity at Work Policy, Freedom of Religious Belief Policy, and Transgender Policy, along with comprehensive EDI information and resources, are readily available on the college intranet, supporting our ongoing efforts to foster a more inclusive learning and working environment.

Everyone plays a crucial role in ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is not just a set of policies but a lived practice at our college. Equality, diversity and inclusion is actively promoted among staff, students and governors, with dedicated training provided to ensure that responsibilities, values and behaviours are understood. Additionally, our communication strategy prioritises EDI to raise awareness and reinforce everyone’s responsibility in creating an inclusive culture.

We are developing our work in trauma informed practice and restorative practice as vital components in advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the college. Trauma informed practice recognises the impact of trauma on individual’s behaviour and relationships, creating safer and more empathetic spaces where people from all backgrounds can thrive. Restorative practice focuses on healing and repairing relationships through dialogue and accountability, fostering a culture of inclusion by addressing conflict and harm in a supportive manner.

We integrate these practices in our approach to EDI by ensuring that policies, training and community interactions reflect an understanding of trauma and promote restorative outcomes. This commitment helps create a more inclusive environment where every individual feels valued and supported to contribute fully, knowing their experiences and well-being are respected.

The Single Equality Scheme (SES) is currently undergoing a comprehensive review to align with our strategic approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and set out our specific and measurable equality objectives. This renewed scheme will reflect our strong commitments to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment, ensuring that all individuals feel valued and supported. It will outline clearly defined actions that are focussed on addressing inequalities, promoting diversity and creating a culture of belonging. It will serve as an action plan for achieving meaningful progress, holding us accountable to the highest standards across the college.

We are expanding our employment monitoring to include demographic data on new starters and leavers, as well as key employment decisions such as internal promotions, grievances, disciplinaries and capability issues. This data enables us to assess any differential impact of the college’s employment and recruitment practices on individuals from different backgrounds and ensure fairness and inclusivity across all aspects of employment.

We publish this annual report on our website as required by the Equality Act 2010.

## 3. Part Three: Advancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in teaching, learning and assessment

This section outlines our progress in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into the curriculum, ensuring these values are integral to the learning experience. It also highlights the strides we have made in improving participation, retention, and achievement in areas where inequalities currently exist. Additionally, we continue our efforts to gather meaningful feedback from students, which informs our strategies for maintaining the progress of all learners.

Our commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment is reflected in our comprehensive approach to teaching, learning, and assessment (TLA), as well as in the diverse resources and support services we offer.

We self-assessed as “Good” for High needs students in 2023/24.

### 3.1 Student voice

97% of students felt the college is a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds.

94% of students across the college felt they were treated with respect by everyone.

These figures, derived from our latest Student Experience Survey, demonstrate a positive trend in our EDI efforts, with both metrics showing improvement over the previous academic year.

### 3.2 Innovative Approaches to Inclusive Education

Teaching Excellence Initiative: We are actively engaged in a self-improvement programme aligned with the Education and Training Foundation’s Professional Standards. This initiative encourages educators to reflect on and enhance their EDI practices in lesson planning and delivery.

Adaptive Assessment Strategies: Departments across the college are exploring innovative assessment methods to accommodate diverse learning needs. For instance, our Health and Social Care team has implemented alternative assessment formats to better support students with SEND/SEMH requirements.

Digital Inclusion: Recognising the growing digital divide, we've intensified our efforts to integrate technology in the classroom. Our new Digital Innovation Hub provides access to cutting-edge tools like VR and podcasting equipment, ensuring all students have the opportunity to develop crucial digital skills.

AI Awareness and Integration: We're proactively addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by AI. Through targeted CPD sessions and classroom integration, we're preparing both staff and students to navigate this evolving landscape.

### 3.3 Inclusive Curriculum

Significant progress has been made in enhancing inclusivity for high needs learners through the development of individualised inclusion plans. These plans identify the required provisions and integrate them into Quality First Teaching, assistive technologies, and specialist support to ensure learners achieve their goals.

In 2023/24, the specialist provision for high needs students within the Foundation Learning departments at the Waterfront and Springfield Centres made significant progress by transitioning to more personalised curriculums across three pathways; Pathway to Independence, Pathway to Employment and Pathway to Independent Study.

Staff are now using Recognising and Recording Achievement (RARPA) to tailor individualised programmes that better align with students’ EHCP outcomes and prepare them for successful transitions. By incorporating EHCP provisions, qualifications and initial assessments, students are better placed in maths and English programmes suited to their needs and aspirations.

During 2023/24, we engaged an external specialist from the National Association of Specialist Education Colleges to provide guidance and quality assurance on curriculum change. This support helped ensure that we offer a strong student experience in accordance with our commitment to delivering high quality education.

The Supported Internship programme is designed to offer job rotations tailored to student’s individual career aspirations, with ongoing support from job coaches. The programme’s strong partnership with the Local Authority and REAL employment has led to employment rates above the national average, with the programme being nationally recognised as a model of good practice by DFN Project Search.

Retention (92.2%, +0.8%), achievement (90.3%, +4.5%) and pass rates (97.9%, +3.9%) for high needs students are above whole college rates.

Students demonstrate good behaviours and attend well.

High quality learning environments enable students to develop skills and knowledge whilst providing appropriate spaces for regulation and reflection.

Students have opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities that enable them to become more active citizens and members of their community.

Outstanding positive destinations at 95.3% for young people.

### 3.4 Learning Resource Centre: A Hub for Inclusivity and Support

The Learning Resource Centre (LRC) plays a vital role in our EDI efforts, operating across six sites to provide comprehensive support for academic study, teaching and learning, and personal well-being:

Diverse Collections: The LRC offers a wide range of resources, including dedicated wellbeing collections, LGBTQ+ materials, and books on various subjects supporting health, career progression, and citizenship. The collection also includes dyslexia-friendly titles, Quick Reads, and books in multiple languages to cater to our diverse student body.

Decolonising Resources: Work has begun to diversify our collections, including themed selections such as "Black Britain" and an "Active Citizenship" series written by and for ESOL students.

Mental Health Support: The LRC has produced a free mindfulness journal for students, launched during Mental Health Awareness week, with full roll-out planned for September 2024.

Literacy Initiatives: Regular author and illustrator events are held, featuring diverse speakers and topics. The LRC also collaborates with the local council library service to promote literacy and provide access to additional resources.

Inclusive Spaces: The LRCs offer stress-busting areas during exam periods, weekly visits from Pets as Therapy (PAT) Dogs, and provide safe spaces for all users.

Community Engagement: The LRC supports local initiatives, such as providing cheap theatre tickets in conjunction with Dewsbury Arts Group and maintaining a Local History collection accessible to all.

### 3.5 Looking Ahead: The Year of Excellence

In the upcoming academic year, Kirklees College will focus on further embedding EDI principles into our educational framework. Key initiatives include:

* Inclusion-Focused Teaching Excellence: We are introducing a dedicated pillar of excellence centred on inclusive teaching practices, empowering educators to better understand and address diverse learner needs.
* Anti-Racist College Initiative: Building on our commitment to inclusivity, we're implementing strategies to become an actively anti-racist institution. This includes curriculum diversification and the development of anti-racist classroom practices.
* Trauma-Informed Approach: We will continue adopting trauma informed and restorative practices to create a more supportive and understanding learning environment for all students.
* Commemorative Project: The LRC will participate in college-wide celebrations marking 200 Years of Technical School Education in Kirklees. A key project is the production of an anthology titled "Journeys," written entirely by our college community, celebrating our cultures and diverse population. This book will be available in early 2025.

By continually refining our approach to EDI, we aim to create an educational experience that not only accommodates diversity but celebrates and thrives on it. Our goal is to prepare students for success in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, equipping them with the skills and perspectives needed to excel in their future careers and personal lives.

### 3.6 EDI Case Studies and Targeted Work

We continue to work with Leaders Unlocked on the Student Commission on Racial Justice (SCRJ). SCRJ address racial inequality across education, employment, health and policing. In response to the Student Commission on Racial Justice survey, an increased number of students from minority ethnic groups (75% compared to 60% in 2022/23) agreed the college ensured that all students are aware of the impact of racism and microaggressions through a variety of events and activities. Students are supported to take on such volunteer roles so they can engage in meaningful social action.

Our five Student Commissioners collaborated with colleges nationwide to gather youth voice feedback and lived experiences through the ‘Have Your Say’ Racial Justice survey. In April 2024 we brought together college managers and students to develop recommendations for action in response to the survey findings. Our work includes creating tutorial resources, with the 2024 video featuring our students.

[I Will Not Be Silenced (Student Commission on Racial Justice 2024) (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDdStSFQV_U)

In March 2024, we held a student-led ceremony to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave. As the first college to host an independent ceremony, we signalled our commitment to educating the community on equality, diversity and inclusion. This event is part of a larger collaboration with Sharon De Leonardis, founder of SpectaculArts, to raise awareness and honour those enslaved over a period of nearly 500 years.

During Hate Crime Awareness week students were encouraged to take part in ‘active bystander’ training to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to act if they witness a hate crime.

The Performing Arts department collaborated with Film Buddy to develop a live brief, challenging students to script, produce and perform a video campaign to tackle sexual harassment. The students produced 4 videos which address sexual harassment and misogynistic behaviour towards women and girls. These videos have been used across the college tutorial programme.

[Kirklees College 'Call It Out' Campaign - Safer Streets - College (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5ggKIYvgJA)

[Kirklees College 'Call It Out' Campaign - Safer Streets - Parties (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vM2YZ3PSZdY&t=22s)

[Kirklees College 'Call It Out' Campaign - Safer Streets - The Streets (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic24CzCwZ-Y)

[Kirklees College 'Call It Out' Campaign - Safer Streets - Social Media (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftODg9nrJoE)

Through our partnership working with the Virtual School, we have provided targeted support for care-experienced students, a group we recognise as a protected characteristic. The Virtual School collaborates with key partners to ensure the best outcomes for looked-after children by monitoring attendance, attainment, and achievement. In October 2023, we won the Alex Timpson Award for Post 16, after being nominated by the Virtual School for our work with care-experienced students, highlighting our attachment and trauma-aware practices.

We are also finalists for the AoC Beacon Award for our trauma informed, restorative approach to supporting student mental health and wellbeing.

In June 2024 we hosted our annual ‘Cultural Diversity’ days at Springfield and Waterfront centres, with over 700 students participating in performances and cultural activities, including a cultural catwalk, showcasing garments from across the world.

We effectively distribute funds to remove financial barriers and widen participation in further and higher education. Retention rates for students receiving free college meals match those of their peers.

By actively engaging with local opportunities, we secured a £4,000 annual scholarship from the Mirfield Education Charity for an HE animal care student, the first in her family to attend university. The student qualified by demonstrating hardship and overcoming barriers to education.

Our robust student voice cycle is led by over 200 class reps and 10 student union officers across all sites, with balanced male and female representation and diverse ethnic backgrounds. Notably, 39% of reps receive free college meals, and we include voices from vulnerable cohorts, such as students with EHCPs. We actively seek input from all students to understand their individual experiences.

To amplify youth voice beyond the college, the Student Union hosted consultations with the Children’s Commissioner’s Office for the Big Ambition Survey and collaborated with local youth groups to contribute to a youth manifesto ahead of the general election.

Ahead of the local and General Election, [we held Hustings](https://livekirkleescollegeac-my.sharepoint.com/personal/smcgrath_kirkleescollege_ac_uk/Documents/Desktop/SU%20hosted%20a%20hustings), in partnership with other local colleges and Conscious Youth. These events, engaged more than 600 students from our college and other local sixth forms. Candidates from Labour, the Green Party, Reform UK and Liberal Democrats participated answering student questions from the student community on topics like the NHS, immigration, global conflicts, social inequality, the rising cost of living and more.

## 4. Part Four: Analysis of Learner Equality Data 2023/24

This section reviews student enrolment, achievement and retention, focusing on disability, gender and ethnicity. It highlights trends, disparities, and progress in addressing EDI gaps. The aim is to show how these factors affect educational experiences and outcomes, identifying areas for improvement and ongoing challenges.

### 4.1 Retention

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|  | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| **Category** | **Enrolments** | **Retention** | **Enrolments** | **Retention** | **Enrolments** | **Retention** |
| Other ethnic group Females | 1032 | 91.96% | 1090 | 91.93% | 1254 | 92.6% |
| Other ethnic group Males | 1670 | 87.01% | 1577 | 85.35% | 1615 | 90.4% |
| White Females | 1548 | 86.63% | 1648 | 85.08% | 1582 | 89.8% |
| White Males | 1907 | 85.00% | 1790 | 89.39% | 1850 | 90.8% |

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|  | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| **Category** | **Enrolments** | **Retention** | **Enrolments** | **Retention** | **Enrolments** | **Retention** |
| Mixed ethnicity | 462 | 83.98% | 464 | 85.99% | 518 | 91.5% |
| All other ethnic groups | 5695 | 87.37% | 5541 | 87.82% | 5783 | 90.7% |

Retention improved across all categories in 2023/24, with each category achieving its highest reported retention rates. The most notable increase is 5.05% for Other ethnic group Males, while the Other ethnic group Females continue to have the highest retention rates.

The retention rate for mixed ethnicity 16–18 year olds has improved by 5.51%, the largest improvement in all categories, and exceeds other ethnic groups.

In 2023/24, mixed ethnicity 16-18 year old student completers showed a decline in pass rates compared to other ethnic groups, creating a -4.1% gap. This represents a significant change from previous years where mixed ethnicity students outperformed other groups, 3.5% in 2021/22 and 0.9% in 2022/23, indicating an emerging achievement gap that requires investigation and intervention.

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|  | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| **Category** | **Completers** | **Pass Rate** | **Completers** | **Pass Rate** | **Completers** | **Pass Rate** |
| Mixed ethnicity | 455 | 89.3% | 464 | 92.0% | 543 | 86.9% |
| All other ethnic groups | 5654 | 85.8% | 5541 | 91.1% | 5912 | 91.0% |

### 4.2 Achievement

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|  | **College Overall Achievement** | **EHCP Learners Achievement** | **Learners without EHCP Achievement** |
| **2023/24** | 86.8% | 88.8% | 86.8% |
| **2022/23** | 85.8% | 89.6% | 85.6% |

The current achievement rate for EHCP students for 2023/24 is 88.8% compared to 89.6% in 2022/23, a drop of 1.8%. The achievement rate remains above the whole college rate for 2023/24.

Provision for students with an EHCP at Kirklees College is strong. There are 41 curriculum areas in the college that include EHCP learners, and in 32 of these areas, their achievement rates are higher than those of their peers. Our aim is to ensure that students are enrolled onto the correct programmes and that appropriate support packages are in place to enable students to make good progress.

* Achievement rates for 16-18 year olds with an EHCP have dropped slightly from 89.8% in 2022/23 to 88.5% in 2023/24. This is 6.5% higher than their peers. The most significant drop has been in maths achievement rates from 94% in 2022/23 to 83.5% in 2023/24. It is worth noting however, that this drop which is most significant at level 2 maths equates to a relatively small number of learners (18). The drop in English achievement has been smaller, from 93.6% in 2022/23 to 87.2% in 2023/24. This equates to 12 students across all levels. We will assess the effectiveness of support provided to EHCP students in maths and English, with particular attention to how well it prepares them for exams.
* Achievement rates for 19-24-year olds with an EHCP has remained broadly the same at 89.4%. There were three students aged 19-24 with an EHCP that did not achieve in 2023/24.
* The achievement rates of male students with an EHCP are higher than their females and male peers. This is consistent with learner achievement in 2022/23.

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|  | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
|  | **EHCP Learners****Achievement** | **Learners without EHCP Achievement** | **EHCP Learners Achievement** | **Learners without EHCP Achievement** |
| **Female** | 88.2% | 86.5% | 87.1% | 86.5% |
| **Male** | 90.3% | 84.7% | 89.7% | 85.3% |

The most significant achievement gap observed this year is among white female learners with EHCPs, who are now performing below their peers without EHCPs. This marks a shift from 2022/23 when EHCP learners across most categories outperformed their non-EHCP peers.

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|  | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
|  | **EHCP Learners Achievement** | **Learners without EHCP Achievement** | **EHCP Learners Achievement** | **Learners without EHCP Achievement** |
| **Other Ethnic Group Females** | 87.4% | 88.8% | 96.3% | 87.9% |
| **Other Ethnic Group Males** | 87.9% | 84.2% | 90.2% | 84.9% |
| **White Females** | 88.7% | 83.0% | 82.7% | 87.8% |
| **White Males** | 91.9% | 85.3% | 89.4% | 86.5% |

Consistent with 2022/23, those who declared a disability or learning difficulty have lower retention than those who did not declare one.

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|  | **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
|  | **Enrolments** | **Retention** | **Enrolments** | **Retention** |
| **Declared D/LD** | 1708 | 90.79% | 1436 | 92.4% |
| **Did not declare D/LD** | 8800 | 94.19% | 7370 | 94.9% |

## 5. Part Five: Staff EDI Information, Progress and Next Steps

This section outlines the key steps taken throughout 2023-2024 to further embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across our workforce. It also provides an overview of our workforce demographics, offering a snapshot of the current diversity within our organisation. As we continue to focus on enhancing workforce diversity, our goal remains to ensure that it reflects our local community.

### 5.1 Staff Survey Results 2024

Our annual staff survey, provides feedback and valuable insights into our culture, engagement levels, and overall employee experience. The most significant improvements were seen in the category values and culture, senior leadership, and overall satisfaction – strong indicators that our culture is developing year on year and becoming a core strength. This is further supported by “culture” being the most frequently mentioned strength in our staff feedback.

We are pleased to report that perceptions of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have improved by 3%. This positive trend is evidence of a positive approach to EDI and reflects our ongoing efforts to foster an inclusive and supportive working environment. While there is work to be done, this improvement is an encouraging trend that highlights the impact of our initiatives and our collective commitment to creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and respected.

Additionally, in analysing more than 400 comments submitted in response to the question, “What do you believe is the biggest strength of our college community?”, we identified five top themes. It is heartening that Inclusivity and Diversity feature as one of these strengths:

* Positive culture
* Team work and relationships
* Inclusivity and diversity
* Our values which are embedded and role modelled
* Our passion to do the best to support our students

### 5.2 Policy Updates

We have reviewed and refreshed several of our policies as part of our ongoing effort to modernise our approach and ensure they align with our values and culture. Our aim is foster high expectations through kindness, unity and a commitment to excellence, building an inclusive culture for all.

In updating these policies, we focused on making them more user-friendly by refining the language and structure. The new policies are the Supporting Attendance Policy and the Supporting Improved Performance Policy.

### 5.3 Workforce Demographics

Our aim is to ensure that our workforce reflects the diverse demographics of our local community. It is important for us to understand our workforce demographics to ensure we are fostering an inclusive and representative environment, and by staff reporting their protected characteristics, we can better identify and address any disparities, enabling us to create targeted strategies that promote equality.

We are actively working to ensure that workforce data is complete as possible and that staff feel comfortable to declare their protected characteristics. Whilst it is encouraging to see increased response rates, addressing this gap remains important to ensure we capture as complete a picture as possible of our workforce. Continued efforts to build trust and communicate the value of declaring information are key in reducing the number of prefer not to say responses, ultimately supporting more effective workforce planning and diversity initiatives.

Work is ongoing to improve how data is captured in our systems, making the process easier and user-friendly. This includes working with managers to encourage staff to participate and improve response rates.

This report comments on our workforce demographics for the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

Where available we have benchmarked our data against community demographics from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 surveyand sector data from the most recent Further Education Workforce Data Collection Report 2022/23.

### 5.4 Sex & Gender

The data shows a continuing predominantly female workforce, 66.96% (permanent workforce), aligning with sector trends. This does not reflect the local community demographic reported by ONS, which is more balanced, 51% female, 49% male. The imbalance is more pronounced within our temporary and casual workforce; 76.56% female, 23.44% male. A preference for temporary and casual roles often provides greater flexibility in managing other commitments such as family and caregiving. They can also offer a pathway into the sector and often appeal to those returning to the workforce, providing a stepping stone back into permanent employment and the opportunity to rebuild skills and professional networks.

According to the Further Education Workforce Data Collection 2022/23, 65.2% of the workforce was female, continuing the ongoing trend of a predominantly female workforce within the FE sector and in line with our workforce data.

#### 5.4.1 Gender

It is pleasing to note the increase in response rates from both permanent and temporary / casual workforces as well as starters and leavers, with an increase from the lowest response rate of 59.42% for our temporary-casual workforce in 2022/23 to the current response rate of 76.56%. Our permanent workforce data has increased from 76.4% to 89.9%. This improvement is significant because it reflects the success of our efforts to encourage individuals to declare their characteristics, fostering a culture of transparency and inclusivity. High response rates are critical in enabling us to better understand workforce demographics and implement more targeted recruitment, retention and support initiatives.

The majority of permanent workforce respondents, 97.22% declare their Gender identity is the same as sex registered at birth. This is in line with 93.40% ONS data. The only other category with a notable response rate was “Prefer not to say”, 2.23%, which is broadly consistent with ONS data, 6.10%.

#### 5.4.2 Sexual orientation

We have seen improved response rates for sexual orientation compared to the previous year across both the permanent and temporary / casual workforces. However, there has been an increase in the number of new starters who chose, “Prefer not to say” in both workforce categories, alongside a decrease in the overall number of starter responses, highlighting the need for continued focus on encouraging disclosure. The data shows that the workforce is predominantly heterosexual, 86% reflecting the community demographic, 90%.

### 5.5 Ethnic Origin

A key area of focus is improving the response rates for ethnicity data, which is currently at 92.6%. Therefore, it is challenging to identify meaningful changes in the actual workforce profile. We are actively working on strategies to address this issue in order to gain a clearer understanding of our workforce demographics.

Where we have response rates over 90% from the permanent workforce, we can more confidently report that our demographic profile is broadly consistent with the ONS data, with a predominantly White ethnic origin, 79.73%, (73.6% ONS) followed by Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh, 12.16% (19.4% ONS). Our Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African population at 5.27% continues to be more than double the community population of 2.3% (ONS).

It is noted that the FEWDC 22/23 also reports challenges with response rates with an increase in the proportion of staff choosing to disclose their ethnicity, 88.7% up from 87% in 2021/22. It reported that changes in proportions of staff identifying as belonging to each ethnicity could be in part due to more staff disclosure rather than demographic changes.

### 5.6 Religious Belief

In addition to compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and accommodating religious practices, recognising and respecting diverse religious beliefs helps prevent misunderstandings or conflicts that may arise, promoting harmonious working relationships. Response rates for both permanent, 70.59%, and temporary-casual workforces, 54.07%, have improved significantly on the previous year and we are working hard to continue this trend.

In the context of relatively low response rates, the analysis of the responses received shows that the percentage distribution of religious beliefs is generally aligned with the ONS local population data with Christian and No Religion as the largest groups; 44.33% of our permanent workforce identifying as Christian compared with 39.4% ONS local population. Amongst our permanent workforce, 26.24% identify as having No Religion, compared to 34.8% in the local population according to ONS data.

There is a higher proportion of our respondents selecting “prefer not to say” or not answering, 9.75% compared to 5.50% local ONS data.

We have a smaller reported Muslim group, 12.94% compared to ONS data 18.5%. The lower reported Muslim representation could indicate underreporting within the specific workforce compared to the local population.

### 5.7 Disability

It is encouraging to see high response rates in both permanent, 100%, and temporary-casual workforces, 96.17% and it’s important to highlight the increase in disability disclosures across the majority of data sets.

11% of our permanent workforce have disclosed a disability, compared with 8.9% in 2023. New starters (permanent workforce) reporting disability has increased from 7.48% in 22/23 to 16.67% in 23/24 and new starters (temporary-casual workforce) from 3.66% in 22/23 to 9.46% in 23/24.

There has also been a rise in the proportion of disabled leavers from our permanent workforce, which has increased from 3.38% to 10.34%.

ONS data confirms that 17.5% of the local community have a disability, so whilst its pleasing disability representation is increasing there is some work to do to be more reflective of the community.

The FEWDC 2022/23 reported 7.3% of the FE workforce identified as having a disability, up from 6.5% in 2021/22, significantly lower than the percentage of our workforce reporting a disability.

### 5.8 Age

We have 100% response rates across the workforce and our data continues to show the majority in the 35 to 64 years age groups which are core working years. Our largest age groups are 35.67% aged 35 – 49 years, and 36.67% aged 50 – 64 years. We also see the most starters and leavers in those age groups. ONS data identifies these as the two largest population groups; 19.3% aged 35 to 49 years and 19.4% aged 50 to 64 years.

There is an increase in workforce participation amongst the 65 – 74 years group, in both the permanent and temporary casual workforces. This could reflect shifting retirement patterns from a desire for continued engagement in work or financial necessity.

The low representation of 16 – 19-year olds in our workforce likely stems from several factors including ongoing education and limited work experience. Younger workers often prefer flexible roles to fit around other commitments. Aligning recruitment strategies and entry level roles, like apprenticeships, with their needs and career development goals could help with this gap.

In the 2022/23 academic year, the median age of staff in the FE sector, according to the FE Workforce Data Collection, was 46. The median age of permanent staff in the college, 2023/24 was 46.

### 5.9 Marital Status

Work is underway to improve response rates in this area and this can be seen in improvements compared to the previous year; 67.71% permanent workforce response rate in 2023/4 compared to 34.23% in 2022/23. The majority of the responses are in the two categories either married, 44.36%, or never married and never registered a civil partnership, 47.5%. These broadly reflect the ONS data married, 45.90%, and never married and never registered a civil partnership, 36.2%.

Additionally, individuals who are divorced or have dissolved a civil partnership are underrepresented, 4.62%, compared to community demographics, 9.20%.

## 6. Next Steps

To drive and embed EDI amongst our workforce, the next steps include:

* Update and refresh the Single Equality Scheme, developing a comprehensive EDI strategy. This will involve data review, policy and practice review, stakeholder consultation, community and external insight and setting goals and objectives.
* Encouraging robust data collection, enhancing data analysis capabilities and continuing our efforts to close data gaps in workforce reporting for more informed decision making. A more complete workforce profile will guide positive action efforts, enabling us to better understand and address areas for improvement.