



# Blackburn College Equality and Diversity Report

2020 / 2021

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# Leadership and Management



## 1. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The College actively embraces its role to promote educational opportunities for all, including those who have not traditionally accessed education and training. The College's values, policies and practices are designed to ensure that students from a wide range of backgrounds, abilities and cultures are encouraged to take advantage of the educational and training opportunities on offer and are supported to be successful. The College plays an integral role in the promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion, both in the internal College community and within the wider context of Blackburn with Darwen.
- Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a statutory obligation to annually report on the progress which we have made under the general duties of:
  - *Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;*
  - *Advance equality of opportunity between different persons; and*
  - *Foster good relations between different groups.*
- This Annual Report reflects our unified approach to the statutory obligations to detail progress on targets in relation to staff and student protected characteristics and identify gaps in reporting, where applicable. Our Equality Objectives (2020-2024) encompass 13 targets for the College to focus on in order to advance the Equality and Diversity agenda. The Equality Objectives are attached in Appendix Two.
- The Principal and Chief Executive, Executive Team and College Leadership Team commit significant resources and guarantee objectives are in place to ensure that Equality and Diversity values are fully embedded within the whole College. Rigorous targets are set in the annual Single Equality Implementation Plan to ensure the whole College is more responsive to issues relating to all protected characteristics.
- The College was inspected by Ofsted in December 2018 and the concluding report positively commented on the promotion of Equality and Diversity as a strength at the College:

*'Curriculum leaders, teachers, assessors and staff promote a culture of mutual respect and tolerance. Students behave well; they respect other people's views and work cooperatively together. Teachers develop students' and apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity and British values well.'*
- This commitment was further enhanced with the work of the cross-College Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+ (LGBT+) Champion. This role is in place to support the LGBT+ agenda for staff and students in terms of awareness raising and creation of resources to further advance the agenda through the curriculum. The impact of this role is the ongoing support provided to students who identify as LGBT+ or allies through the various support networks to address and to promote good practice.
- In terms of teaching, learning and assessment, our courses, materials and quality assurance procedures all reflect a commitment to the principles of Equality and Diversity. In 2020/21, of the class-based observations and learning walks, there was no significant actions relating to Equality and Diversity and examples of good practice were seen. Teaching and assessing staff are supported to maximise any opportunities to support Equality and Diversity issues during the course of lessons.
- Across the College we share a core set of values in everything we do. They state what we value highly as staff and make a firm statement about how we operate. Of our College Values, 'Equality' and 'Respect' are prominent alongside 'Commitment' and 'Excellence and Empower'. "Fundamental British Values" also form part of the College Values. The key aspects of "Fundamental British Values" are introduced at induction and form a golden thread throughout

the curriculum, personal development and tutorial activities.

- Safeguarding and pastoral care are highly effective at supporting students in building self-confidence and awareness in staying safe both inside and outside of the College and online. Provision to support the development of independent skills in High Needs students is effective. Fundamental British Values are promoted across the College through the vehicle of shared 'College Values'. The College values framework has been mapped to Fundamental British Values to ensure that it meets the needs of Blackburn College students and links with the local community. The College has invested in key staff; the Personal Development, Employability and Welfare Manager role works across the College's Further Education (FE) Curriculum Centres to further strengthen personal development, behaviour and welfare support and facilitate opportunities for developing employability skills and progression. The Personal Development, Employability and Welfare Manager works closely with the Assistant Principal for Higher Education to ensure students in both Further and Higher Education (HE) at the College have the same opportunities, the same information and to promote the values of the whole College.
- All managers and teaching staff have received training on Fundamental British Values, the Prevent agenda and Working to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP). Further WRAP training sessions and those on Child Sexual Exploitation and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) have been recognised as mandatory training for all staff. All of the Safeguarding Team and Senior Leaders have been trained on this key area of activity. In addition, the Police have delivered training for staff and provided risk and threat updates for the Senior Leaders. The College has a referral system, 'Channel', which was developed in liaison with the local Prevent steering group.
- Mandatory staff training, including WRAP, is available for all staff both online and face to face. The classroom-based workshops enable colleagues to identify the risks and threats of radicalisation and extremism. The College reviews and evaluates this training regularly to ensure the content is current and relevant to the FE/HE sector. The Personal Development, Employment and Welfare Manager has completed specialist themed Prevent training and is the only external agent currently invited to attend sessions delivered by the external authorities. Feedback from the College training is that staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding students from extremism and radicalisation, both locally and nationally.
- Extensive Equality and Diversity training packages are delivered to staff at different levels from awareness raising to refresher sessions on the Equality Act 2010. This training is mandatory and is through a rolling cycle every two years. It addresses individual roles and responsibilities. The College is currently at 99% compliance (January 2022) for this training and this positively impacts on staff understanding and their confidence in discussing issues around Equality and Diversity in business practice and reinforces that Equality and Diversity is everybody's business.
- The HR Strategy is supportive in mainstreaming Equality and Diversity issues. This means we work hard to recruit a more culturally diverse staff group to act as role models to attract a more diverse student body and look at our policies and actions that acknowledge and promote equality, diversity, access and inclusion as an integral part of College life. This is reflected in our workforce figures in relation to recruiting a diverse workforce.
- The College has a Single Equality Committee which is chaired by the Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning – Academic Centre and works collaboratively to promote ownership of Equality issues across the College with representation from all areas of the College. This Committee oversees the completion of the Single Equality Action Plan (Appendix One). The College also sponsor 'One Voice' which is a Community Interest Company (CIC) that aspires to create an inclusive, cohesive and vibrant community in Blackburn and Darwen. The College is also linked to Dementia Care and are a dementia friendly College.

- An increase in student involvement activities provides positive stories with initiatives such as Anti-Bullying week learning materials supporting tutorial activities. Students also benefit from the opportunity to participate in a range of externally delivered presentations and workshops. The impact of this is students' awareness being raised on key differences and close links with local agencies ensures support is available in cases of child protection, forced marriage and disrupted lives. This has increased to also cover sexual abuse, harassment and violence alongside consent and the wider healthy relationships agenda and also the additional risks of far-right white supremacy.
- The Safeguarding Team received 419 alerts during 2020/21; from those alerts, the triage system the College employs resulted in 145 cases. Out of the 145 cases, 74 were for mental health concerns and this again was the highest Level 2 category in relation to student referrals. Again, this is consistent with regional and national trends and representative of the issues affecting children, young people and families. This included the additional lockdown period when safeguarding referrals still followed the usual processes.
- Alongside this the Safeguarding Team gave information, advice and guidance to members of staff, outside agencies and parents 281 times. Furthermore, 667 ESafe alerts were received, 171 criminal conviction checks were carried out and eight risk notifications received from Children's Social Care.
- 145 Risk Level 2 cases referred required safeguarding intervention at the higher level.
- The College makes a significant contribution to social cohesion through a range of engagement with local events highlighting themes such as hate crime. Information about major religious festivals is disseminated regularly to staff to discuss with students and colleagues. Staff and Student Voice are utilised to ensure differences are acknowledged and stakeholders have an opportunity to share their views on points of interest. For example, mental health awareness and Anti-Bullying week were both embedded in the student enrichment calendar with opportunities for staff Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

# Key Facts about our Community



## 2. KEY FACTS ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

- Blackburn College is a large general Further Education College and the rapidly developing main campus is situated in the heart of Blackburn town centre. Within a mile radius of the College there are two schools with Sixth Forms and private schools with A-Level provision. Each year the College provides learning opportunities to 9000 students at all levels and across a wide range of sectors.
- 149,700 people live within the borough of Blackburn with Darwen. 62.3% of its residents are people aged between 16-64 which is in line with the National Average for Great Britain (62.5%).
- In Blackburn with Darwen 69% of the population is white. The proportion of the population who are BME (Black and Minority Ethnic), at 31%, was by far the highest in the Lancashire-14 area. The rate was three times greater than for Lancashire-14 and regional averages. Almost 45,500 people in Blackburn with Darwen were in the BME category.
- The percentage of disadvantaged students (pre-16) within the borough is 33.6% and remains at around 7% above the national rate of 27.3%. Blackburn College has 61% of students from disadvantaged postcodes and 28% of students are from BME backgrounds (this figure rises to 36% for FE). Around 28% of the borough's residents are from an Asian heritage background, with 69% from a White ethnic group. Between 2014 and 2039 the population of the borough is projected to decline by 2,698 (1.8%) to 144,045.
- The 2019 Indices of Deprivation revealed Blackburn with Darwen was ranked as the 15<sup>th</sup> most deprived area out of 317 districts and unitary authorities in England, when measured by the rank of average LSOA rank and is also in the most deprived 10% in England.  
<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/deprivation/indices-of-deprivation-2019/2019-deprivation-analysis/>
- Blackburn with Darwen has 16.5% (7,300) of households with no adult in work. The Annual Population Survey 2020 reveals that 9.9% of Blackburn with Darwen residents have no qualifications, compared with 7.5% for the North West and 6.4% nationally. A lower proportion of Blackburn with Darwen adults are qualified to Level 2 or above, 69.5% compared to 76.9% for the North West and 78.2% for Great Britain and of these, Blackburn with Darwen adults are less likely to be qualified to Level 4 (29.5%).  
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157069/report.aspx#tabeinaact>
- Blackburn with Darwen has an unemployment rate currently of 5.4%, which is 1.2% above the North West rate and 0.8% above the UK unemployment rate. With high levels of social deprivation, basic skills levels, including English, are low. 28% of jobs within the borough are paid below the living wage. 91.2% of Blackburn with Darwen residents either spoke English as their main language, or if it was not their main language, spoke it well, compared to 95.5% in England and Wales.  
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157069/report.aspx>
- 23.3% of the working age population of Blackburn with Darwen are full or part time students. 27.6% of the working age population are economically inactive which is considerably higher than the 22.4% for the North West and 20.9% for Great Britain. The proportion of Blackburn with Darwen 16-17 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) for 2020 is 8.4%, 1.9% above that for England and 0.5% higher than the North West average.



- 32% of the working-age population of Blackburn with Darwen has a degree or other higher education qualification, significantly lower than the regional average of 38% but an increase of 2% in the last year.
- Only 0.4% of employers in the borough have over 250 employees and 85.8% of enterprises are classified as micro – employing 0-9 individuals; Blackburn College is part of the HIVE network which supports small-to-medium size employers (SME) to engage with the College. 11.6% of enterprises are small and employ 10 – 49 individuals and the remaining 2.1% are medium enterprises employing 50 – 249 individuals.
- College recruitment data shows that 16 year old FE students are recruited primarily from Blackburn with Darwen with approximately 60% of the total school leaver cohort coming from 22 local schools.
- 2019 GCSE results showed that 44% of school leavers in Blackburn with Darwen achieved Grade five or above in English and maths, this was above the England state schools average (43%). A new secondary school GCSE accountability system was implemented in 2016, in which 'Attainment 8' measures achievement in maths and English plus other subjects with less weighting. In this case the average score in Blackburn with Darwen was 46.4, in line with the England all schools score of 46.7. Of 12 schools with listed results, 3 are performing 'well above average', 5 'average', 3 'below average'. (<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=phase&region=889&geographic=la&phase=secondary&for=secondary>) This has not been updated for 2020/21 due to no performance data being published due to COVID-19.
- Blackburn with Darwen is a Prevent priority area and the College engages effectively with this Prevent agenda. The College has strong and supportive links with partners, including local authorities, the Police (Prevent and Channel) and the regional FE/HE Prevent Coordinator to develop stringent information-sharing protocols and share intelligence. A member of the College Leadership Team is the nominated Single Point of Contact (SPoC) for Prevent/Channel and is a member of the local and regional Prevent Partnership Meetings and represents FE/HE at the Lancashire Channel Panel. A Prevent risk assessment is in place (informed by the Counter Terrorism Local Profile) and reviewed termly with associated action plans developed to a high quality and covers all aspects of the 'Prevent' duty, including risk and threat.
- The economy of Blackburn with Darwen exhibits diversification as older traditional industries are replaced by employers in the high technology sector. Manufacturing, notably in aerospace and engineering, continues to be important. 35% of the working age population is not in work which comprises of 30% males and 42% of females, and for those who are in work, full-time earnings are 19% below the national average. With high levels of social deprivation, basic skills levels, including English as an additional language, are low.
- The College is committed to Widening Participation in learning at all levels in order to meet the skills gaps and respond to the needs of both individuals and employers. Changes to the curriculum are reviewed on an annual basis through both business planning and Governance in response to labour market information, local, regional and national priorities.
- It is within this challenging environment that the College operates and works in partnership with the borough and others to make improvements to life chances.

# College Student Profile

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Blackburn  
College

### 3. COLLEGE STUDENT PROFILE

- The College student profile has changed in 2020/21 from the previous year in terms of gender and ethnicity. There is a 6 percentage point difference with more female students (53%) than male students (47%). There is a 0.5 percentage point increase in Asian students and a 0.5 point decrease in white students.
- The percentage of Asian students at 25% is above the local Community demographics. The percentage of students from widening participation backgrounds has decreased by 1 percentage point to 61%.

		2017/18 (%)	2018/19 (%)	2019/20 (%)	2020/21 (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Female	54.1	54.7	50.9	53
	Male	45.9	45.3	49.01	47
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	71.3	69.4	66.5	66
	Asian	23.2	25.3	24.5	25
	Mixed	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.8
	Black	1.6	1.7	2.49	1.7
	Other	0.7	0.7	4.6	5.5
	Unknown	0.7	0.3	0	0
	<b>LLDD</b>	Yes	13.7	13.5	21.7
	No	84.5	85.2	78.2	80
	Unknown	1.8	1.3	0.06	1
<b>Widening Participation (LR)</b>	Eligible	67.4	69.6	62	61
	Not Eligible	32.6	30.4	38	39

- In 2020/21 the largest student faith denomination was 'no religious affiliation' (29.9%) and then Islam at (26.2%). Christianity as a student faith has reduced in the last three years from 28.8% to 25.3%.
- Data for 'unknown' has increased again by 2.9% to 9.7% of enrolls in 2020/21 and the 'I do not wish to disclose' has increased slightly to 7.6% from 7.1% in the previous year. More research is required with regards to religion and belief to understand why so many students have not recorded a faith and to support the increase in 'other' faiths students may affiliate to. This is to ensure the full breadth of religion and belief students affiliate to is recognised and celebrated.

Faith	2017/18 Enrols	2017/18% Total	2018/19 Enrols	2018/19% Total	2019/20 Enrols	2019/20% Total	2020/21 Enrols	2020/21% Total
<b>No Affiliation</b>	3140	29.6	2980	30.1	2942	30.7	2538	29.9
<b>Christianity</b>	3323	31.4	2847	28.8	2552	26.6	2146	25.3
<b>Islam</b>	2455	23.2	2522	25.5	2595	27.1	2229	26.2
<b>Do not wish to declare</b>	986	9.3	812	8.2	684	7.1	646	7.6
<b>None recorded</b>	536	5.1	592	6.0	682	7.1	652	6.8
<b>Any Other</b>	92	0.9	64	0.6	47	0.5	53	0.6
<b>Sikhism</b>	14	0.1	15	0.2	17	0.2	17	0.2
<b>Buddhist</b>	18	0.2	21	0.2	25	0.3	18	0.2

<b>Hinduism</b>	21	0.2	33	0.3	23	0.2	14	0.2
<b>Judaism</b>	13	0.1	13	0.1	11	0.1	9	0.1

### College Enrolments

The College enrolled 7969 FE student enrolments in 2020/21 of which 5235 were the 16-18 age group. This is an increase in enrolments from the previous year for this age range. This overall number of enrolments reflects the increasing demographic for 16-18 year olds in both Blackburn with Darwen and the wider Lancashire region.

### Attendance rates

Overall attendance for students at the College in 2020/21 was 88%, which is a 5% increase from the previous year. This was negatively impacted by lower than acceptable attendance at English (67%) and Maths (72%) classes, a well-recognised national issue relating to the governmental priority for English and Maths GCSE to be taught to all 16-18 year old students who do not achieve a Grade C / Grade 4 on exiting the mainstream education system, and also for the end of the year included a national lock down (January through to March).

	2020/21		2019/20	
<b>By Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
%	87	89	82.7	83.8

<b>By Ethnicity</b>	<b>Pakistani / Indian</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Pakistani / Indian</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Other</b>
%	88	87	89	84.6	82.5	83

\* Attendance has increased for all ethnicities in 2020/21.

# General Trends

- Relation to Student Participation

Excellence

Empowerment

Commitment

Know

Equality



## 4. GENERAL TRENDS IN RELATION TO STUDENT PARTICIPATION

### Further Education

- The proportion of females studying in FE at the College in 2020/21 is 53%; this is a 2.1 percentage point increase than the previous year. Male students decreased by 2 percentage points to 47%. This has slightly increased the gap between genders on enrolments.
- 66% of FE students are classified as White; this is a 5 percentage point increase from the previous year. 25% of FE students are Asian.
- 61% of students are eligible for disadvantage uplift which is a 1 percentage point decrease from the previous year.
- The percentage of students with a declared learning difficulty and/or disability is 19%, a 1 percentage point decrease from the previous year.
- There has been a 3% decrease in the proportion of students studying at Level 1 compared to last year. Students at Level 3 study increased by 4 percentage points in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20.

### Higher Education

- In the University Centre, the gender split has narrowed with 60% of the 2020/21 students being female and 40% being male.
- There is an increase of whole students to 76% equal to 1180 students, with 20% being Asian which is a 1% decrease.
- 20% of full-time students declared a disability which is again a slight increase of 15 year on year but demonstrates a 3% increase over the last four years.
- 67% of full-time students were mature which is a steady decline from 83% in 2017/18. Young part-time students have increased dramatically to 17% from 6% the previous year.

### Apprenticeships

- In 2020/21 apprentice numbers for Blackburn College are significantly reduced from 2019/20 with 103 leavers. There are 102 fewer apprentices due to SME apprentices continuing to fall into a subcontract with MIT Skills.
- The proportion of Blackburn female apprenticeship starts is 65% in 2020/21; this is a 27% increase from the previous year. Unsurprisingly, there continues to be a significant gender bias across many apprenticeship frameworks/standards. Business Administration, Health and Social Care, Human Resources and Children's Care Learning and Development all have significant female participation. In contrast, Plumbing has predominantly male participation. However, the College has been successful in offering and recruiting to a number of programmes to address this, for example small female numbers on Automotive, Plumbing and Electrical.
- Female achievement for 2020/21 completes at 77.6%, 21.2 percentage points above the National Rate.

- Male starts in 2020/21 is 35%, this is a 28% decrease on 2019/20, due mainly to male students working with SME's and therefore lying in the MIT contract. Male achievement in 2020/21 lies at 82.9%, this is a 11.6% increase on 2019/20.
- Black Minority Ethnic (BME) students account for 17% of apprenticeship starts which is a 1% increase from the previous year.
- The percentage of starts with a declared learning difficulty and/or disability is 15.5% (16 students) which is an increase from the previous year. This continues to be relatively low compared to the percentage of LLDD students within Further Education.

# General Trends

- Relation to Student  
Success





## 5. GENERAL TRENDS IN RELATION TO STUDENT SUCCESS

### 16-18

- The age group 16-18 achievement actually improved to 94.3% which is a 2.5 percentage point increase and now takes it 5.1 percentage points above 19+ achievement (89.2% - static for two years).
- Females made more improvement than males in 2020/21, however the gap is now narrowing as female achievement rose from 90.3% to 92.4% and males from 91.2% to 92.7%.
- Overall achievement gaps between ethnicities has notably reduced especially between White males and other ethnicities, however, Bangladeshi females (89.4%) as the second most notable group had a 5.5 percentage point decrease and African females a 1.5 percentage point decrease at 84.9% compared to the last academic year.
- Overall achievement improved for females by 2.1 percentage points from 90.3% to 92.4%. Males have improved by 1.5 percentage points from 91.2% to 92.7%.
- Overall achievement was higher for students with a difficulty/disability/health problem (91%) compared to those without a difficulty/disability/health problem (90.7%) in 2018/19. The gap between those that have a declared learning difficulty/disability/health problem significantly reduced the gap to 0.3%, difference from 8.4% last year.

### Apprenticeships

- The age group 16-18 had the lowest overall achievement by age group in 2020/21 for standards, whilst the age group 24+ had the lowest overall achievement for frameworks. While the age groups for frameworks 16-18 (85.7%) saw a 14.1% increase on 2019/20 and 19-23 (100%) saw a 16.7% increase on 19/20, 24+ framework apprentices saw a decrease of 20.3% to an overall achievement of 70%. Framework apprentice students (all ages) saw an increase of 8.3 percentage points from 78.9% to 87.2% in 2020/21. The age group for standards 19-23 (85.7%) saw a 5.7 percentage point increase on 2019/20 and 24+ (70.3%) saw a 24.8 percentage point increase on 2019/20. The age group 16-19 achievement remains low at 66.7%, however this is a 4.2 percentage point increase on 2019/20. Standard apprentice students (all ages) saw an increase of 2.3 percentage points from 76.5% to 78.8% in 2021.
- Overall achievement for White British males increased significantly in 2020/21 (83.9%); this was a 12.8 percentage point increase on 2019/20. Achievement was 3.9% higher than those males who were not White British (80%) in 2020/21.
- Overall achievement for females who were not White British (83.3%) showed a decrease of 10.8 percentage points from 2019/20. This is 6.9% higher than White British females (76.4%) in 2020/21, however the gaps between them has decreased by 3% in 2020/21.
- Overall achievement for those with a difficulty/disability/health problem (85.7%), shows a 5.7 percentage point increase on 2019/20.

### Higher Education

- Male achievement in 2020/21 has increased to 58.9%; whilst this is an increase from the previous year, it is still unacceptably low. Female achievement also rose to 65%.
- White British male achievement rose slightly to 58.5% with those of Asian ethnicity having also seen an increase in achievement to 55.4%.

## **Student Re-Engagement (Starting Out Right Now or Jigsaw programme)**

- The College is proactively involved in re-engagement activity for 16-18 year olds to help individuals in the community and looks at a variety of strategies that could either help a young person from becoming a NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) statistic or to offer someone who is NEET an opportunity to follow a personal pathway of learning. Referrals are forwarded from schools, in College, external agencies, social services, youth offending teams and The Prince's Trust. An action plan is developed and records any external agency involvement.
- The aim of these programmes is to re-engage students on a personalised programme or a modular programme and many have been re-introduced in the Centres they initially came from and were successful and in most cases achieved a full or partial qualification.
- The work is carried out by working closely with many external agencies and more work is planned with young carers and the agencies that work with families and young people. With the introduction of the Engagement Team, the students are supported in Centre.
- Some of the benefits on offer to students are:
  - Subsidised bus pass;
  - Cash bursary;
  - Up to £200 to spend on food and drink at College cafes;
  - College lunch (subsidised);
  - Stationary/printing bursary of up to £60 to spend in the College Library;
  - Free uniform and specialist kit;
  - All University Centre full time students can apply for the '£500 Bonus for Full-Time students' again this is not means tested. This is for help with course related costs;
  - There is a small hardship fund of £8,000 for those who experience unexpected hardship in the University Centre.

# Student Satisfaction Surveys



## **6. STUDENT SATISFACTION RATINGS**

### **Student Satisfaction Surveys**

Student Voice is gathered in a number of ways across FE and HE including surveys on; Enrolment and Induction, Open Events and Prevent. We are also subject to a number of external surveys, including the Ofsted Learner Survey and the ESFA Learner Satisfaction Survey. None of these surveys collect data on the responders' ethnicity, gender or age, something that we will seek to do in the future to be better able to respond to the feedback we receive. This is clearly an action point for the College as we collect more data in this way.

Currently 84% of eligible students have completed the NSS (National Student Survey) with significantly more females responding to the survey. The College needs to engage more with male students; while their lack of response does not necessarily correlate with low satisfaction, their lack of engagement may be an issue in itself. All reports and surveys moving forward must include Equality and Diversity data in order for a full analysis to be undertaken. Internal surveys will now include this and committees are encouraged to ensure this data is presented in subsequent reports.

# Staffing and Governance



## 7. STAFFING AND GOVERNANCE

### Staffing Profile

#### Staff Headcount as of 31 July 2021

The College employed 766 staff (543 FTE), which is a reduction on the same period last year where the College employed 802 staff (563 FTE). The definition of headcount used is contract count for the data produced as some staff have multiple roles. The number of actual different staff employed by the College at 31 July 2021 was 750.

The College employed 30 agency members of staff during the period 2020/21 due to a number of reasons such as sickness absence cover, pending recruitment to existing vacancy, etc.

#### Gender Profile as of 31 July 2021

The College has 40.1% of its workforce who are academic (compared to the sector norm of 38%), 52.7% business support (compared to the sector average of 55%) and 6.8% of its workforce being management (compared to the sector average of 8%).

The gender split across the College indicates that the proportion of female staff compared to male staff is 65.14%, which remains stable compared to the same period last year (64.71%) and a slight increase against the sector norm of 63%.

The gender balance (equal proportions of female and male staff) for teaching staff is now just below the sector average with the proportion of female staff in the academic category at 56.77% compared to the sector average of 58% and in the management category at 65.14% compared to the sector average of 56%. Female staff have a high representation amongst the business support category (72.03%) against a sector average of 69% and this is resulting in occupational segregation.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Business Support</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Male</b>	134 (43.23%)	113 (27.97%)	20 (38.46%)	267 (34.86%)
<b>Female</b>	176 (56.77%)	291 (72.03%)	32 (61.54%)	499 (65.14%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>766</b>

#### Disability Profile as of 31 July 2021

The proportion of staff with a declared disability is 9.26% which is a slight decrease from last year (9.48%) (-0.22 percentage point).

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>No Disability</b>
<b>Academic</b>	35 (11.29%)	275 (88.71%)
<b>Business Support</b>	34 (8.53%)	370 (91.58%)
<b>Management</b>	2 (3.85%)	50 (96.15%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>71 (9.26%)</b>	<b>695 (90.52%)</b>

## Ethnicity Profile as of 31 July 2021

19.45% of staff reported that they were from a minority ethnic (ME) background. This is now stable with the previous year when 18.09% of staff reported they were from a minority ethnic background. The proportion of staff from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased each year over the past six years with a small increase again from 18.83% to 19.45%.



## Age Profile as at 31 July 2021

The data indicates that there is still a requirement for the College to continue its pursuit of taking on more apprenticeships as the under 20 age group remains under-represented at 0.13% of the workforce, which remains consistent with the Annual Report 2019/20.

Contract	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
Academic		4.19%	15.48%	28.39%	37.74%	14.19%	
Business Support	0.25%	8.91%	24.75%	23.02%	24.26%	17.08%	1.73%
Management			21.15%	42.31%	32.69%	3.85%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.13%</b>	<b>6.40%</b>	<b>20.76%</b>	<b>26.50%</b>	<b>30.29%</b>	<b>15.01%</b>	<b>0.91%</b>

## Staff Turnover

The 12-month rolling labour turnover figure was 16.20%, which is an increase compared to the same period last year where the 12-month rolling turnover was 12%. The 12-month rolling turnover figure excluding the LFT Assistants is 14.16%.

Category	Death	Dismissed	Resignation	End of Temporary Contract	Mutual agreement	Voluntary Redundancy	Compulsory Redundancy	Grand Total
Academic	2 (4.44%)	1 (2.22%)	28 (62.22%)	7 (15.56%)		6 (13.33%)	1 (2.22%)	45
Business Support	2 (2.60%)		49 (63.64%)	21 (27.27%)		4 (5.19%)	1 (1.30%)	77
Management			3 (60%)		2 (40%)			5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4 (3.15%)</b>	<b>1 (0.89%)</b>	<b>80 (62.99%)</b>	<b>28 (22.05%)</b>	<b>2 (1.57%)</b>	<b>10 (7.87%)</b>	<b>2 (1.57%)</b>	<b>127</b>

## Disability Confident – Employer

The Disability Confident Scheme is voluntary and aims to help employers successfully employ and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. Being Disability Confident is a unique opportunity to lead the way in our community.

Some of the commitments that the College agrees to in order to maintain this status are:

- Actively looking to attract and recruit disabled people;
- Offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job;
- Providing paid employment (permanent or fixed term);
- Promoting a culture of being Disability Confident;
- Providing occupational health services if required.

The College has joined the Disability Confident scheme since 2016 and the Employer logo is prominent on all job adverts with a separate statement to say that we particularly welcome applicants with a disability. We also display the logo on the Human Resources SharePoint site and internal emails to ensure it is promoted to our employees and have recently renewed this scheme until 2025.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

Through our Organisational Development (OD) service, we offer a range of activities, guidance and awareness to help ensure we embed a strong culture of workplace wellbeing. In 2020/21 we offered in excess of 250 events in total. Some examples of how we do this are listed below:

- Awareness Days – throughout the year on our CPD days, activities have been made available to help promote wellbeing to staff. Some of the campaigns that we have supported over the last 12 months include; Mental Health Awareness sessions, take a break - have a Kit Kat, World Mental Health Day, Organ and Blood donation week and breast cancer awareness. We promote awareness material via email, College information, posters, and SharePoint as pop ups.
- Health Checks/Screening – staff can easily access and have the flexibility to access health checks twice a year. At our last CPD day, external practitioners from Blackburn with Darwen Primary Care Trust (PCT) carried out BMI, cholesterol, and blood pressure checks onsite for staff members.
- The College has also joined the Time to Talk Pledge, to commit to raising awareness of mental health and ensure employees have the time to meet and talk to ensure a healthy working life.
- Physical Health – in partnership with the Council, staff have subsidised rates for the onsite gym.
- Cycle to Work scheme – we also offer Cycle to Work, which enables employees to get a bike tax-free, saving 25-39% on the high street value. The scheme helps staff save money, be healthier and be more environmentally friendly.
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – the College also operates a 24/7 EAP to staff. The benefit of this is staff have access to professionals to talk about issues facing them at home. This aims to keep our workforce healthy while minimising the additional worry about cost. Staff are utilising this health benefit scheme proactively.
- Health and Wellbeing events – throughout the year, we launch health and wellbeing events in partnership with the gym and our Sports Coordinator. We offer a comprehensive package of wellbeing initiatives, services and activities to encourage and motivate staff to look after their health, both physically and emotionally. We hold the events on staff development days so the maximum amount of staff can attend. An example of the activities/services available for staff include; Yoga, Badminton, Basket Ball, Table Tennis, Barbering and Beauty Therapy, Mental Health and Stress awareness sessions, Slimming World, Meditation, Diabetes Awareness, Dementia Awareness, BMI checks.



- Results – we receive significant positive feedback from staff who access the health and wellbeing activities. Sickness absence figures are at 3.20% and 5.52 lost days per person (including leavers) for 2020/21, back down to 2018/19 levels and below.

### **Equality Training**

We have delivered a range of Equality and Diversity training in College both as classroom sessions and ongoing eLearning packages. We have also approved training requests for staff to attend external courses as featured below (\* denotes mandatory training):

- Equality and Diversity Training \*
- Unconscious Bias \*
- Hate Crime
- LGBTQI training
- Trans Training
- Mental Health and Suicide Awareness
- Bullying and Harassment



## 8. EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

The College has maintained a programme of Equality Analysis (EA's) in response to its legal obligations and also as a good practice measure. EAs in 2020/21 have focused on policies and processes with a total of 40 policies approved through our Policy and Procedures Committee, all of which have considered and made a declaration on Equality Impact. The College's Single Equalities Senior Manager is a core member of the Committee to intercept any Policies and/or Procedures that have not been given appropriate Equality and Diversity consideration. This allows the process to be mainstreamed through the Policy and Procedures Group and allows for more staff to be involved in discussions on equality issues. All Policy authors are encouraged to forward the completed EA's to the Policy Review Group for monitoring and publication.

The EA process is linked to the Business Planning process and it was agreed an EA exercise is carried out on any activity that will have an impact on the workforce of the College i.e. restructures/redundancies. HR/Organisational Development (OD) will continue to review the latest round of Business Planning, with any appropriate activities agreed in the cycle from the beginning, to ensure equality consideration is given throughout the whole process.

Along with best practice across the sector, the EA paperwork is outcome focused and creates a meaningful document through which the College activities can be viewed and assessed. The current plan will ensure that we are back on target within the next 12 months with a live and on-going EA calendar capturing new projects to be reviewed across the College. The outcomes of the completed EA's form part of area action plans, if applicable, to ensure actions are completed to provide equal access to our services.

EA's have been carried out on:

- Policy on Religion and Belief
- Continuous Professional Development Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Learner Charter
- Computer Usage Policy
- Smoke Free Policy
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Guidance Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Guidance
- Display Screen Equipment Guidance
- Environmental Policy
- Staff Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Staff Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- HE Admissions Policy
- College Website
- Resources helpdesk assessment
- Security on campus assessment
- Special Leave Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Procedure for Dealing with Safety Issues in College

The impact of EA's on these policies has been to amend and highlight the commitment the Policy has in adhering to the Equality and Diversity ethic at the College. No concern has been recorded from any EA conducted.

# Embedding Equality and Diversity into the Curriculum and Personal Development and Welfare



## 9. EMBEDDING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE CURRICULUM AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE

- The College has a strong structure for supporting and monitoring teaching, learning and assessment through various processes including observations, learning walks and centre reviews. There is a robust process in both FE and the University Centre that has a programme of TLA developmental activities and peer observations to support staff in the development of their practice.
- Across the College there is evidence of promotion of Equality and Diversity through posters, tutorial Moodle, student induction week and enrichment programmes which covers aspects of Equality and Diversity which were embedded in the cross-College tutorial scheme of work e.g. Black History Month, World Aids Day, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans History Month. Work experience opportunities have enabled students to work with a diverse range of cultures for example Health and Social Care Cadets completing work placement hours at Royal Blackburn Hospital.
- Since the beginning of the academic year, the Safeguarding Team has supported students with the reporting of sexual harassment, abuse and violence. The College has provided targeted support and intervention to identified groups to address this issue and educate in healthy relationships.
- The Safeguarding Team has also supported students with:
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Obsessive behaviours
  - Eating problems
  - Personality disorders
  - Self-harm and suicidal feelings/experiences
- Welfare and Pastoral Support is effective including access to Chaplaincy guidance and the use of prayer rooms and other faith-related facilities.
- Staff training is essential on safeguarding and available for all staff both online and face to face. The classroom-based workshops enable colleagues to identify the risks and threats of radicalisation and extremism. The College reviews and evaluates the training regularly to ensure the content is current and relevant to the FE/HE sector. The College Safeguarding Practitioner has completed specialist themed Prevent training and is the only external agency currently invited to attend. Clear structures are in place, including a nominated safeguarding Governor.
- The 'Prevent' duty is explicit in ICT policies and procedures and ICT monitoring identifies inappropriate usage and safeguarding issues/risk taking behaviour. ICT monitoring alerts are received and assessed in 'real time' by the College Single Point of Contact (SPoC) and contribute to work with partners and external agencies for additional support, information and intelligence.
- External safeguarding partnerships are strong, including engagement with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), the Lancashire Prevent Group and the Lancashire Channel Panel.
- The College has a good and effective approach to promoting personal development, behaviour and welfare. The learning environment is harmonious, students pay attention and work independently in lessons. Personal development tutorials are structured and focused on transferrable skills aimed at employability and independence. There are good opportunities for work preparation and experience in the College's real work environments and students in

many curriculum areas value and benefit from good and meaningful work experience that improves their vocational skills and their understanding of the demands of employment.

Further work is planned with Personal Development Tutors, together with Heads of Schools and the Personal Development Manager to further promote 'Fundamental British Values' via the curriculum, personal development tutorials, student behaviour interventions and Student Voice activity in order to contextualise 'Fundamental British Values' to be personalised and students to understand what they mean to them.

- Safeguarding and pastoral care are highly effective at supporting students in building self-confidence and awareness in staying safe and provision to support the development of independent skills in High Needs students. Fundamental British Values are promoted across the College through the vehicle of shared 'College Values'. The College Values framework has been mapped to Fundamental British Values to ensure that it meets the needs of Blackburn College students and links with the local community.
- Excellent safeguarding and pastoral support interventions build confidence and self-awareness, and ensure that those most at risk are able to remain at College and achieve their qualifications with support and guidance.
- The tutorial framework provides wide-ranging and motivational opportunities for students to engage in themed activities including employability, national days, religious festivals, volunteering, progression and College/British Values. Students have access to effective tutorials that focus on personal and emotional development and enable students to develop a broad range of skills, including self-confidence, resilience, self-awareness, reflection practice, critical thinking, enterprise, effective communication, and how to relate to others and integrate into the local community. Events to support the Personal Development Tutorial Programme in 2020/21 have been:

External speakers/companies are invited in to support the PDP topics, to inform, motivate and engage.

- British Values/Routes Prevent October;
  - Social Care Perspectives held in November;
  - MindsMatter Talk – two events held in November;
  - Odd Arts (Healthy Relationships) – various events held over the year;
  - GO2 (Drug and Alcohol service) – open event;
  - Safe Drive, Stay Alive;
  - BRAVE (Building Resilience Against Violence and Extremism) workshop;
  - Prevent Conference;
  - Online modules (Side By Side) are used to strengthen tutor input on Radicalisation/Extremism, Staying Safe Online, Critical Thinking and British Values, including apprentices who record their achievement in OneFile.
- Students benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities, external guest speakers, educational visits and workshops which promote healthy lifestyles (including sexual health), personal (including online) safety, and emotional development, and help them make informed choices about healthy eating, fitness and their emotional and mental well-being.
  - Apprentices also receive tutorial sessions covering key College induction topics and they have been provided with Moodle access to materials on Prevent, British Values, safeguarding and employability skills.
  - The LGBT+ tutorial week incorporated Brook from the 'Everybody Centre' supporting Personal Tutors within their tutorial session. Brook delivered a total of 11 tutorial sessions over a 2-week period with feedback being positive from both staff and students. This has now led to Brook offering tutorial sessions on more regular basis to provide this service as a tutorial

option. Brook are also available to support tutorial sessions in the delivery of HIV/AIDS for World AIDS day with their resources on Moodle for staff to access.

- The Anti-bullying week focusing on Cyber-bullying looking at the impact and the effects. A session has been videoed and has been placed on Moodle for staff/students to access. The workshops were attended by a total of 1350 16-18 students. Feedback was excellent with 97% of students stating the workshop made them think more about the effects of bullying.
- The highest category of need (risk) continues to be mental health issues. Again, this is consistent with regional and national trends and representative of the issues affecting children, young people and families.
- Although mental health remains the main concern, this is particularly linked with the anxiety around the pandemic and the impact on families to young people. A number of cases included mental health needs manifested in either attempted suicide/suicidal ideation, self-harm and personal safety or were directly linked to domestically abusive relationships.
- The age range for safeguarding cases was 247 (59%) children and young people and 172 (41%) vulnerable adults.
- The analysis of age identifies that 246 (59%) of all referrals were for students aged 16-17 years old. Female students continue to reflect the highest number at 64% (females) of alerts. Retention rates continue to remain consistent and positive at 96.5%.
- The College supports Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Experienced. There is a broad range of reasons and therefore risk factors associated with the young people that are looked after, including full and interim care orders. In addition to monitoring welfare and engagement, the Safeguarding Team have attended statutory care reviews and Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings. The PEP (for pre-school to age 18) is an evolving record of what needs to happen for Looked After Children and Care Experienced to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential.

### **Self-Assessment of Performance (SAR)**

- It is best practice for areas of the College to report on Equality and Diversity matters when writing their Self-Assessment against the Education Inspection Framework. This can be improved to ensure all areas report on robust data and activity to provide a holistic view from Centres. A brief summary of key points from the Self-Assessment are:
  - There is a strong commitment to Equality and Diversity which is well understood by staff.
  - Good progress in developing the culture of the College.
  - Academic staff are supported to ensure Equality and Diversity are appropriately covered although there remains variability in practice and not all aspects are fully embedded.
  - Outstanding facilities and resources meet student needs.
  - Excellent links with a range of partners to support the equalities agenda.
  - Some disclosure rates were low for both staff and students on protected characteristics.
  - The Single Equality Action Plan will bring the Single Equality Scheme 'to life' and make it a more manageable working document looking at the key actions to be addressed on a yearly basis.

### **Student Support**

The Student Support Team's work provides support for students with a learning difficulty, disability or medical condition. A student's individual support requirements are assessed and an appropriate personalised support package, ranging from the application of reasonable adjustments to a detailed support package, is implemented.

## **Further Education**

Blackburn College is unique in that there is no discrete provision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) other than the Get Set programme (the College's supported internship programme). This means students study in an inclusive learning environment in which SEND students work alongside students with a range of abilities which aids integration and supports SEND students to progress into work or further study alongside other students. This is enhanced by individualised study programmes which are tailored to meet the individual needs and aspirations of our students.

The Get Set programme is specifically for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan and provides a valuable bridge between study, employment and progression into work.

The destination data showed 96% of students who were supported by the Additional Learning Support Team progressed to positive destinations including higher level study, employment or further study.

At the College's Ofsted Inspection in December 2018, the High Needs provision was graded 'Good'. High Needs students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and are in receipt of additional support funding paid to the College from their home local authority where their support costs exceed £6,000. In the survey to parents/carers and professionals to review our provision, and the Education Health and Care Plan review process, all respondents were asked if they were satisfied; 40% agreed and 60% strongly agreed. The comments returned were very positive.

## **Higher Education**

### **HE Disability Services- including Emotional Health and Wellbeing**

The Higher Education Disability Services Team liaised with 419 students who had disclosed a learning difficulty/disability or medical condition and 220 were supported (where they met the Disabled Students' Allowances eligibility criteria) to become claimants for this support funding.

During the COVID-19 lockdown periods the Advisers were able to offer remote support to students, which has developed current practice with some students preferring telephone/on line contact

The feedback from students accessing the HE Disability Service was extremely positive and below are a couple of relevant extracts:

- 95% of respondents would recommend the service to students.
- 100% of respondents felt comfortable with the Adviser, and that there was sufficient time to discuss their requirements.

Comment from student:

*"I think the service is wonderful, I could not have done the course without their help and support".*

Blackburn College provides a Non-Medical Helper Service through the Disabled Students Allowance to support Higher Education students via My Support Service - Blackburn College. 85 students accessed support through this service.



# Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIM)



## 10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT MEASURES (EDIM)

The College's Equality and Diversity Impact Measures for 2020/21 are:

EDIM	2020/21
1. Raise 16-18 White British achievement to 85% in the Technical Centre (national average).	16-18 White achievement at 91.1% in 2019/20.
2. Raise Pakistani learner achievement in A Levels by 5% to 81%.	The overall achievement for Pakistani learners in A-Levels was 88.6%. The national average was 88%.
3. Raise achievement rates for learners who declare a LDD by 2%.	Overall achievement for students with a Difficulty/Disability/Health Problem increased to 91.2% compared with those without a Difficulty/Disability/Health Problem (93.2%).
4. Reduce the attainment rate gap between Asian and White, "All Undergraduate" students, from 9% to level outcomes (EDIM supporting one of the targets set in the Access agreement).	Blackburn College's performance against the key measures set out by the Office for Students (OfS) on the Access and Participation Dashboard.
5. Changes to reporting and processes to embed Equality and Diversity in classroom practice.	<p>Creation of a standard 'in year' and 'year-end' learner success report broken down by protected characteristics and center/division.</p> <p>Diversity data in relation to progressing the equality objectives are addressed at the Quality Summit meetings.</p> <p>To gather physical evidence of embedding diversity in the classroom.</p>

Workforce Equality Objectives	2020/21
1. Continue to foster greater recognition of being an inclusive College that celebrates diversity.	In the last staff survey (June 2019), 77% of respondees agreed to the question 'Equality of opportunity is embedded into the culture of the College'.
2. To Increase the employment of 'under 20' age group within the workforce.	The under 20-age group remains under-represented at 0.13%.
3. To Increase the percentage of Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) staff at Managerial level to 10%.	The proportion of BME managers is at 9.62%.
4. Increase staff disability disclosure.	The proportion of staff with a declared disability has increased to 9.3%.

# Progress Update on Single Equality Scheme



## 11. PROGRESS UPDATE ON SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

This part of the Report provides an overview of the work that the College has undertaken in relation to the Single Equality Scheme, in order to meet the requirements of legislation relating to all protected characteristics (if information is available) namely;

Race, Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, Age and Socio-deprivation.

The Single Equality Scheme three year Action Plan and the annual Single Equality Action Plan addresses key targets on an annual basis. The Single Equality Scheme was reviewed and updated in 2021.

### Progress update on protected characteristics Race

- We actively collect student data about all aspects of a student's journey from admissions to final achievement.
- Data for destination and use this data to ensure that everyone has been given the opportunity to achieve and there are no significant achievement gaps with minority groups.
- The use of non-stereotypical images in all our materials produced and the use of images that promote a positive understanding of different cultures and racial groups.
- The annual awareness raising and celebration of cultural and religious festivals within the College.
- The use of positive action, as appropriate, to encourage a wide range of applicants for both employment positions and courses.

### Disability

- The College has maintained comprehensive and robust data on the disabilities of students and staff collected through the enrolment and the recruitment processes and is able to respond appropriately to their needs.
- We have an excellent Student Support Team who have seen a year on year growth in the numbers of students that they are able to support. Students making declarations are supported for success from application to achievement.
- The impact of learning support is very positive on the student experience and, consequently, students with a disability and/or learning difficulty perform as well or better than those without.
- We have well established screening and diagnostic testing practices which aim to identify any additional learning support students may need to enable them to succeed on their course.
- The use of texting and ProMonitor commentary across student services regarding attendance and Library services has benefitted all students including students with disabilities.
- We have reviewed and evaluated our recruitment procedures, methods and associated documentation and started to implement an improvement action plan in consultation with staff groups and in line with good HR practice.
- Some students are offered Individual Study Programmes in order to access mainstream curriculum.
- The Disability Officer for the University Centre and the Support Coordinators write an annual report evaluating access to curriculum; quantifying numbers of students accessing support; tracking retention and success; and identifying key issues which have presented barriers to learning. These reports are integrated into the Curriculum Centre Self-Assessments and Service Area Self-Assessments.

- The College continues to be a 'Disability Confident' accredited organisation and actively adheres to the criteria under this accreditation. The College is working towards achieving the 'mindful employer' kite mark and proactively ensures the College has a health and wellbeing programme in place.
- Since 2010 the College has made considerable progress in making its campus more accessible to people with a range of disabilities. New build and major refurbishment programmes, including six major building refurbishments have made access to the College more readily available for all.

These developments have also allowed the College to dispose of or demolish a significant number of buildings with poor or no disabled access.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths). This building has been built to current building regulations and contains the following accessibility items:

- Level access to the building through the main reception
- Lift to all floors
- Auto door openers on all internal corridor areas linked to Paxton security system x 8
- Disabled toilets on each level x 3
- Ambulant toilet in all male and female toilets x 6
- Contrasting paint surfaces on all walls
- Braille signage on each door
- Rise and fall desks in all classrooms
- Rise and fall laboratory work surface in each laboratory x 6

RATH (Regional Automotive Technology Hub). This building contains the following accessibility items:

- Level access to the building through the main reception
- Lift to all floors
- Disabled toilets on each level x 2
- Ambulant toilet in all male and female toilets x 4
- Contrasting paint surfaces on all walls
- Braille signage on each door
- Rise and fall desks in all classrooms

After the demolition of our old Motor Vehicle and Gateway buildings we have created a further 20 disabled car parking spaces on campus.

The College has a range of specialist teams to support students with complex difficulties including emotional and behavioural difficulties; Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The College has self-select in place for staff to ensure they update their own personal diversity data confidentially.

Bespoke Equality Objectives are in place in relation to student and staff disability disclosure and achievement.

## Gender

- We promote an inclusive culture of mutual respect in relation to gender. We do not tolerate gender-based harassment. We remove barriers and actively encourage inclusive participation in traditionally gender specific job roles, job levels and curriculum areas and levels, within the parameters of the law.
- Overall, participation rates between male and female students are broadly the same. However, efforts to promote gender balance in some areas of the curriculum must continue as

highlighted in the College Equality Objectives 2016-2020. We are committed to dealing swiftly with any gender related concerns students may have and our students regularly report feeling safe at College.

- We collect robust data concerning the gender of our staff, both permanent and temporary, and will continue to analyse it on a yearly basis to ascertain the impact of our actions to date.
- Challenging and preventing sexism and discrimination through mandatory training on bullying and harassment which 95% of staff attended.
- The College undertakes to continue to provide diverse, non-stereotypical images of women and men in any material which it produces for students and staff.
- The College ensures that all staff, regardless of gender, have equal access to training, promotion and other aspects of career development. Where issues are identified through our impact assessment, we will consider positive action measures to address any gender imbalances or other issues.
- The College ensures that all staff are treated fairly in relation to caring responsibilities and will work with staff of any gender that may need to work flexibly in order to meet these caring responsibilities to find a solution that meets the needs of the individual and the College.
- Creation of toilet facilities within the Pavilion that do not direct gender as to create 'genderless' toilets for inclusivity and a facility to support non-binary and transgender students.
- We are committed to ensuring through our transparent recruitment processes that the differing levels of senior management are well represented by both genders.
- Positive action initiatives are in place to ensure access to management development programmes is in line with succession planning.
- We have specific overarching College four-year Equality Objectives in place on creating a workforce reflective of the community which includes gender balance in STEM subjects.

### **Sexual Orientation**

- This is an area that has been proactively addressed by the LGBT+ champion in place. The College has been represented at key community events such as Preston Pride to raise awareness to future staff and students. The College mandatory training addresses sexual orientation however, we are conscious more work needs to be done in this area.
- The College has provided resources for the establishment of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+ (LGBT+) group which will provide a confidential and safe support mechanism for LGBT+ staff and students. This group will be seen as a support network as well as an advisory and consultative group for the College.
- The College has had a particular focus on disability and sexual orientation, this has taken the form of specific student networks, celebratory and inspirational events and speakers and a focus on the rights and responsibilities of others to make the College an inclusive place for everyone. Activities have included celebrating LGBT+ history month, a particular focus on homophobic bullying during anti-bullying week. This is an area that will continue to be a focus for the College moving forward.
- The College was the only FE provider in Pennine Lancashire to actively engage in the Preston Pride for six years consecutively, this was halted unfortunately in 2019/20 due to COVID-19. This highlights our continued commitment to promote the agenda to all prospective stakeholders.

- The College has received feedback following our submission to the Stonewall workplace index on a number of actions that the College will take to improve the work it does to promote LGBT+ issues and provide an environment that is inclusive and positive about sexual orientation and become a Stonewall member.
- Staff sexual orientation information regularly requested for different monitoring purposes and staff surveys to ensure the variety of staff employed are involved with College activities/processes.
- Launched specific LGBT+ training for Personal Tutors.
- The College has worked in partnership with Brook to launch their LGBT+ group which is promoted to students. The College LGBT+ champion works proactively with staff and students to raise awareness of key LGBT+ events.

## **Age**

- Age information is captured by HR for statistical Equality and Diversity analysis as part of the recruitment process. This information is not part of the selection process and is removed from applications before short-listing.
- Government priorities and funding agendas clearly differentiate between the needs of young people and those over the age of 19 and this does lead to different levels of provision and support for different age groups. Barriers to access for adult students have been minimised as much as possible through effective usage of hardship funding, and we have a commitment to supporting all students, regardless of their age, in their learning and career progression.
- The College positively encourages the interaction and involvement of mixed ages, to break down barriers and enrich experiences.
- We create opportunities for all staff to have a voice and work with staff to develop excellent professional development and progression opportunities to evolve their careers, irrespective of their age.
- The College acts firmly to eliminate any unfair behaviour arising from differences in age.
- The College's HR policies reflect this commitment and do not discriminate on the grounds of age in our recruitment and selection or progression processes. We actively encourage the full commitment and contribution of all staff regardless of age
- Following the removal of the Default Retirement Age (DRA) in 2011, there are currently 13 staff who are aged seventy or above.
- Our adult students reach the high levels of success experienced by our younger students.

## **Religion and Belief**

- A peace garden and faith rooms are available in College open to all faiths and are proactively used by staff and students. Student Voice also encourages philanthropy and fundraising, raising the awareness of a variety of causes including discrimination and disadvantage and the benefits of volunteering. In the University Centre students have proactively raised funds for various charities. The College has nominated its charity as Lancashire Mind as chosen by staff and students in 2016 which has continued.
- Student Voice also works on bullying and has anti-bullying information on the Moodle page. Student Voice helps to promote fair trade, human rights issues, has investigated extremism

and Preventing Violent Extremist as well as challenging negative beliefs and stereotypes. Also, cross College students worked with the chaplaincy to hold Eid celebrations.

- The College celebrates religious, cultural and other festivals throughout the year and will ensure that students and staff are provided with an understanding and appreciation of different religions and their contribution to our society.
- The Chaplaincy service not only provides advice and guidance but works with us in promoting and celebrating the diversity of religions and beliefs within our community.
- The College held workshops on dealing with 'the Islamic faith' during staff development days to ensure maximum attendance by staff.
- By operating an inclusive culture and providing opportunities for individuals of all faiths to contribute to the whole College, it is envisaged that positive perceptions will be encouraged and the diversity and breadth of the College community celebrated.
- The College will encourage and support students and staff to challenge prejudice, stereotyping and intolerance, and will manage the environment in a way that maintains every individual's dignity and rights.
- The College promotes learning and understanding between religions. We will act firmly to eliminate any discriminatory behaviour arising from differences in belief. We will work to secure respect for beliefs, faiths and religions and welcome all of them equally.
- The Chaplaincy offers a quiet 'peace room' for meditation or prayer, information and displays about religious festivals and world issues, events for staff and students to meet, advice on where to get help outside the College, training sessions, signposting to religious groups, resources for tutorials and projects and a curriculum menu aimed at challenging perceptions and expanding horizons.
- The College offers opportunities for students to engage in debate and discussion on key faiths and similarities.
- The College offers a respectful and value-based curriculum that promotes social and moral development. Also, we offer information to staff on major faith activities such as Ramadan and Hanukah.
- Improved data on the profile of religious belief by students and staff helps us develop our services, with a distinction between cultural identity and actual religious practice.
- We have improved community cohesion in some of our religious communities.
- We have a Policy on religion and belief for staff and students to highlight the College role and responsibilities.

### **Gender Reassignment**

- Support students in different curriculum Centres to access careers of their choice, regardless of traditional gender under representation.
- Bespoke Trans training delivered to staff and students with the addition of a Transgender Policy.
- College Commercial Team work with local Trans group to provide access to our services.



- Established support groups within the College or referred individuals to support groups outside of the College environment.
- Provided confidential advice and guidance to students, as and when required.

### **Social Deprivation**

- The College has a successful programme dedicated to young people suffering socio-economic disadvantage that have disengaged from education and training. The Fresh Approach programme has attracted over 200 students in the last three years.
- The College, and any agency it contracts with, does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of their background, as students who maybe poor or who do not have a job. Criteria are based on possession of appropriate skills to undertake the course, or employment.
- The College will encourage and support students and staff to challenge prejudice, stereotyping and intolerance, and will manage the environment in a way that maintains every individual's dignity and rights
- The College positively encourages the interaction and involvement of people from different social backgrounds, to break down barriers and enrich experiences.
- Students in receipt of hardship related financial support tended to out-perform students not in receipt of such benefits.
- Through the College's Student Recruitment and Progression Teams, we actively engage with individuals and communities from areas of socio-economic deprivation, the use of positive role models in the form of both staff and students helps encourage under-represented groups into mainstream provision at the College.
- The expansion of the College's HE provision has been specifically targeted at local people who would otherwise not engage with higher level study.
- The College has a large apprenticeship programme with elements targeted at NEET young people and young people from deprived areas. The programmes give young people real job opportunities and help to break the cycle of unemployment prevalent in the local community served by the College. Since 2010 we have supported close to 3000 young people into work through this programme.
- The College provides a number of support mechanisms including financial support mechanisms for students suffering socio-economic disadvantage. These support mechanisms are intended to support the retention of student by enabling financial support for travel and course materials. In addition, the College operates a free breakfast offer for students that come to College without having consumed any food and prevents the knock-on effect this can have in terms of retention, concentration.

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

- We are committed to treating civil partners in the same way as married people in employment and training. Any benefits given to married employees will also be offered to civil partners, including flexible working, statutory paternity pay, paternity and adoption leave, health insurance and survivor pensions.
- All of the College's Policies and Procedures recognise same sex partnerships and marriages and afford same sex couples the same rights as heterosexual couples

## **Pregnancy and Maternity**

- The College has excellent and well-embedded processes to support employees and students who are pregnant or have recently given birth. For example, we allow time for anti-natal appointments and care, and carry out risk assessments to ensure the environment is safe in relation for new and expectant mothers. Flexible learning and working arrangements are available for new and expectant mothers in consultation with personal tutors (in the case of students) and with line managers in the case of staff.
- A robust approach to pregnancy and maternity discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention and unfair behaviours and promotes a culture of respect.
- A well-developed curriculum and tutorial programme that positively promotes understanding and equality of pregnancy and maternity.
- An effective working relationship with local agencies and institutions that will allow us to train and support staff and students.
- A fully developed approach to equality in employment and career progression that takes into consideration the needs of new and expectant mothers.

## **College Estates and Facilities**

The College has undertaken extensive building works in order to comply with equalities legislation, including Induction Hearing Loops, and some visual alarms. Specific suggestions provided by the advisory group have been taken into account and acted upon. There is on-going dialogue with staff and students and the Estates Team during each new build and any changes to buildings e.g. with the construction of disabled toilet and shower facilities which are aimed not just to be compliant but functionally accessible.

## **Procurement**

Invitations to express an interest in the College contracts are advertised through Official Journal of the European Union, OJEU. The College also establishes through advertisement registers of contractors with expertise in particular areas who may be invited to tender for specific activities. Where appropriate, Invitations to Tender (ITT) for programme delivery will include targets relating to Equality and Diversity. ITT for programme evaluations and other research projects will flag data requirements and impact implications as requiring consideration in tenders.

The College will continue to overtly seek information on the Equality and Diversity practices of potential contractors when it goes out to tender and take this into account when making decisions.

## **Community Cohesion**

We proactively engage in community cohesion in many guises including the following:

- Regular debates on current affairs and world politics via Student Union events;
- The promotion of inter-cultural and inter-faith debate and dialogue;
- Working closely with the local Trans support groups to access our services;
- Working with community centres to promote the College as an employer with over 70 different occupations that can be offered;
- Working with the mosques and madrasas to promote the College service;
- Working with the constabulary and the council to raise awareness on hate crime in the borough.

The impact of this activity is the continuous positive presence in the community to promote the College as an employer and provider and also link in with community current issues to ensure the College responds to the needs of the changing community.

Our quality processes are robust and continually motivate all within our community to improve. Self-reflection and review processes embedded within our quality systems incorporate attention to Equality and Diversity matters, where appropriate. We continue to work towards the objectives detailed in our 2016 - 2020 Equalities Action Plan (due to be updated 2021/22).

# Widening Participation



## 12. WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Blackburn College continues to have a strong track record of access for under-represented groups to its Higher Education provision. Social mobility, fair access and widening participation continue to be fundamental to our vision. We continue to excel at reaching and attracting students from the more disadvantaged postcode areas. 60% of students in the University Centre at Blackburn College were recruited from disadvantaged postcodes which is on par with the previous years.

The College actively embraces its role to promote educational opportunities for all, including those who have not traditionally accessed education and training. Working with the Job Centre Plus team and providing short courses to engage adults back into education has proved highly successful supporting over 2000 students enrolled on a variety of programmes.

The College continues to involve stakeholders at all levels in developing its ability to promote equality of opportunities and has increased the involvement of its students through the Students' Union, and Student Representation cycle via student events and activities, likewise through the well-established Personal Tutorial and Student Engagement Model. The College has led regional and national workshops on community cohesion and has been consulted by ministers and government agencies.

Close links with local agencies ensures support is available in cases of child protection, forced marriages and disrupted lives.

The College has a strong tradition of developing innovative Widening Participation programmes. Widening participation, the active promotion of equality, the support for diversity and cohesion are central to our vision.

The University Centre Access and Participation Plan (APP) will be focusing on a big challenge in HE generally in reducing current variations in Access, Student Success and progression (into employment or further study) for a range of under-represented and vulnerable groups. The many factors involved are often magnified for the residents of Blackburn. However, we are confident of our ability to create, and are committed to effecting, substantial improvements in relevant measures across the groups identified in our APP document, over a five-year planning horizon.

Blackburn College's performance against the key measures set out by the Office for Students (OfS) on the Access and Participation Dashboard:

- Participation of the most and least represented groups – Blackburn College has a 10% gap between these cohorts for full-time undergraduates compared to 28% nationally.
- Continuation rate gaps between the most and least represented groups for full-time undergraduates are high at 20% compared to 5% nationally.
- Attainment gaps, (percentage of high grades achieved), exist between students who declare a disability and those that do not, but are not significant gaps on the basis of ethnicity.

Extracted from the full APP are the aims and objectives listed below:

### **Aims and objectives**

**We will increase the rate of participation in Higher Education by groups under- represented at the College.**

### **Objectives:**

- Decrease the 11% participation gap between POLAR 4 Q1 - Low Participation Neighbourhoods and Q5, so that the gap is less than 2% by 2025.

### **Key Commitments:**

- Increase the percentage of young people studying at the College, as this is likely to increase the rates of students from LPN.
- Increase the percentage of part-time students at the College, as will create more opportunities for people to participate in Higher Education.

**We will substantially increase success rates for all students, with a targeted pro-active support service being enhanced for students with disabilities and from low participation neighbourhoods.**

### **Objectives:**

- Reduce the 15% gap in attainment rates of students from Quintile 1 and 2 as compared to those from Quintile 3-5, by 13% to 2% by 2025.
- Reduce the 14% gap in attainment rates for students with a disability as compared to those without so that it is removed completely by 2025.
- Reduce the gap in continuation rates by 15%, from 20% to 5%, for students from POLAR 4 Q1 to reduce the gap against POLAR 4 Quintile 5 by 2025.
- Reduce the attainment rate gap between Asian and White, "All Undergraduate" students, from 9% to level outcomes for these two groups by 2025.

**We will further improve the percentage of students progressing into Graduate Level jobs and further study, raising their ambitions and assisting them through Careers Advice to gain high income jobs and post graduate study.**

### **Objectives:**

- Reduce the "All Undergraduate" students gap between Asian and White students from 13% to less than 5% by 2025.

### **Key Commitments:**

- Improve positive destination rates for students from areas of deprivation Quintile 1 and 2 and students from low participation neighbourhoods by 2025.
- Increase the rate of positive destination for students declaring a disability to be above sector averages.

The College's Outreach activities continue to provide excellent support for a range of schools and disadvantaged populations via a wide range of initiatives such as mentoring and tutoring, the Summer Schools, Open Days and student volunteering. The School Liaison office measures its impact where practicable. It is seeing an increasing number of applications from pupils who, previously, had attended an Outreach event.

The College has been part of the National Network for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) which aims to raise awareness and aspirations of young people from non-traditional backgrounds. It also seeks to raise awareness within the community and with the families and parents of young people to enable them to support their children through the transition to FE, HE and into employment opportunities.

The College will also be part of the forthcoming NCOP (National Collaborative Outreach Programme) which seeks to continue the good work of the NNCO to ensure longevity and sustainability of the projects and development where possible and support the Widening Participation agenda.

The Student Engagement Team strive to work with and provide support to specific cohorts of students who may not have had opportunities available to them previously in terms of their educational progression and employment prospects.

Key objectives of the current Widening Participation Strategy are:

- Continue to respond to local needs, in terms of both an employer-responsive curriculum and flexible, accessible and high-quality study opportunities;
- Building better outreach partnerships - Children's University, extended schools liaison; community liaison, including work with key local charities;
- Specific support for retention and success – a dedicated HE service to support the success and retention of our students targeted to each academic school;
- Researching and developing a peer mentoring system with a particular focus on male students;
- Making a significant contribution to internal progression curricula and fostering better internal partnership working;
- Ensure opportunities for international learning experiences are created and are accessible to all students;
- Further develop STEM specific Access routes into HE.

2016/17 saw the review and development of a new retention and intervention process to be fully implemented in 2017/18, 2018/19 and into 2019/20 and beyond. The aim being to maximise early intervention and support at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure the right outcome for each individual. This process involved all academic and support staff.

The Students' Union also continues to work closely with students with regards to Student Voice, building on the student community and cohesion.

### **Student Support**

Student support across the College continues to be a success, going from strength to strength with each team working collaboratively to support students in all areas of provision. Introductory talks are carried out during enrolment and welcome sessions during induction help to identify to students the 'wrap around' support package on offer from across the College. Some examples of the support areas are the Student Engagement Team, Students' Union, Student Finance and Careers, Counselling, HE Disability Services, Health and Wellbeing. The Student Engagement Team and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Officer also attend tutorials across the Centres in the first term to promote their offer and remind students of the 'wrap around' support on offer. This is also repeated for the January intake of students, including a 'refreshers fair' which covers new starters in January and a refresher for existing students.

The support services drop-in sessions continue to be a success. Students' well-being and mental health continues to be supported and work undertaken with external agencies.

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