



**Single Equality  
Committee**

**Annual Report  
2021 - 2022**

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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 Principal, 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 January 2022 and the concluding report positively commented on the promotion of British Values as a strength at College:

*Students and apprentices develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain. They benefit from a tutorial programme that covers a range of topics, such as British values, online safety and healthy relationships. During induction, ESOL students develop a good understanding of what it means to live and study in the United Kingdom. Health and social care students understand fully how the law protects vulnerable adults in relation to their deprivation of liberty.*

- 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 2021-2022 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 maximize 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 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 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 Head of Student Experience and Head of Inclusion work closely with the Assistant Principal for Higher Education to ensure students in both Further and Higher Education in 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 updated Home Office Prevent training 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. Staff have also attended workshops delivered via Small Steps in relation to radicalisation.
- 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 Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience (DSL) and Head of Student Experience have completed specialist themed Prevent training and is the only external agent currently invited to attend sessions delivered by the Counter Terrorism Police and North West Prevent Teams. 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 2 years. It addresses individual roles and responsibilities. The College is currently at 99% compliance (Jan 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 Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) strategies are supportive of mainstreaming Equality and Diversity issues. This means we work hard to recruit a more culturally diverse staff group also 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 Student Support and Experience and works collaboratively to promote ownership of Equality issues across College with representation from all areas of the College. This Committee oversees the completion of the Single Equality Action Plan (Appendix 1). 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 is a dementia friendly College.



- Students benefit from a broad range of effective enrichment activities including sporting activities, that promote healthy living/lifestyles, and link to mental wellbeing. Several enrichment clubs have been running including: animation club, coding club, creative writing club, sustainability, book club hair and beauty club and Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award , with other activity planned by the Student Voice Participation and Enrichment Coordinator and a Health and Wellbeing timetable including activity for students with disabilities, single and mixed sex group activity and closed groups for hard to reach students, which is planned by the Student Health, Wellbeing and Extra Curricula Coordinator.
- The introduction of the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) has provided invaluable support to our students who need it along with advice and guidance for a variety of issues. This support is needed at all times and is not restricted to the College day, and that is what makes this service so important to our students, it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Health Assured have attended our open events and freshers fair to inform students of the service as well as promotion of the 'my healthy advantage app' and the benefits of downloading this and using the content to their advantage. We receive regular reports on student engagement with the SAP and any safeguarding concerns are passed directly to the safeguarding team who are alerted through reporting so nothing is missed. This is proving to be a positive, supportive partnership with excellent communication and always being on hand not only to students but also to key staff to be able to feedback those issues students are seeking support for, and for us here at College to provide further resources to help tackle some of the issues faced by young people today.
- A total of 555 safeguarding contacts were received in 2021/2022 which is an increase of 32% compared to 2020/2021, resulting in 148 (level 2) cases requiring active intervention and 35 students who were further identified and supported with external agencies including Child in Need, Child Protection, Statutory Assessment or Team around the Family (TAF). This is the same as the previous year.
- During this academic year the College has engaged with the new Lancashire Police Encompass alert system which came into force in March 2022. Police who attend a domestic abuse incident in the community will automatically alert College should one of our students be involved. During this period, 104 encompass Police referrals were made to the College, 14 of which required active intervention.
- 126 students with criminal convictions were assessed in total which is a drop from previous years. Due to more accurately reported SmoothWall alerts, the number of incidents has dropped by 44%. Each of these alerts are triaged and followed up by a visit to the student should support be needed or contact with tutor if the alert is regarding inappropriate usage of computer systems in College.
- 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.
- 154,900 people live within the borough of Blackburn with Darwen. 62.3% of its residents are aged between 16-64 which is in line with the National Average for Great Britain (62.8%).
- In Blackburn with Darwen 69% of the population is white. The proportion of the population who are Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), 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 14.2% (5,800) of households with no adult in work. The Annual Population Survey 2020 reveals that 9.1% (8,100) of Blackburn with Darwen residents have no qualifications, compared with 7.5% for the North West and 6.6% nationally. A lower proportion of Blackburn with Darwen adults are qualified to level 2 or above, 71.1% compared to 77.2% for the North West and 78.1% for Great Britain and of these, Blackburn with Darwen adults are less likely to be qualified to level 4 (33.8.5%).

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157069/report.aspx#tabeinact>

- Blackburn with Darwen has an unemployment rate currently of 5.7%, which is 1.5% above the North West rate and 2% above the UK unemployment rate. With high levels of social deprivation, basic skills levels, including English as an additional language, 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>

- 19.4% of the working age population of Blackburn with Darwen are full or part time students. 31.5% of the working age population are economically inactive which is considerably higher than the 23.4% for the North West and 21.5% 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.

- 33.8% 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 1% in the last year.

- Only 0.4% (15) of employers in the Borough have over 250 employees and 85.8% (3205) 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. 11.73% (440) of enterprises are small and employ 10 – 49 individuals and the remaining 2.1% (90) are medium enterprises employing 50 – 249 individuals.
- College recruitment data shows that 16-year-old Further Education (FE) students are recruited primarily from Blackburn with Darwen with approximately 61% of the total school leaver cohort coming from 18 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 yet for 21/22 due to no performance data being published since COVID.
- 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 Further Education (FE)/Higher Education (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 cover 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 Council and others to make improvements to life chances and meet the skills needs of our local community.

# College Student Profile





### 3 COLLEGE STUDENT PROFILE

- The College Student profile has changed in 2021-22 from the previous year in terms of gender and ethnicity. There is a 1% difference with more female students (52%) than male students (48%). There is an increase of 1%-point increase in Pakistani students and a 3% decrease in white students.
- The percentage of students from widening participation backgrounds has decreased by 1% point to 61%.

		19/20 (%)	20/21 (%)	21/22(%)
<b>Gender</b>	Female	50.9	53	52
	Male	49.01	47	48
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	66.5	66	63
	Indian	6	6	7
	Pakistani	19.5	19	20
	Other	8	9	10
	Unknown	0	0	0
<b>LLDD</b>	Yes	21.7	19	20
	No	78.2	80	79
	Unknown	0.06	1	1
<b>Widening Participation (LR)</b>	Eligible	62	61	62
	Not Eligible	38	39	38

- In 2021-2022 the largest student faith denomination has changed since the previous report from 'no religious affiliation to Islam. Christianity as a student faith has reduced since the last report by 1.3%.
- Data for 'unknown' has increased slightly by 0.2% to 9% of enrols in 2021-2022 and the 'I do not wish to disclose' has increased slightly by 0.3% from the previous year.

<b>Faith</b>				
	2021 - 2022		2020 - 2021	
	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Any Other	65	0.8	54	0.6
Buddhist	13	0.2	18	0.2
Christianity	1,999	24.1	2,172	25.4
Hinduism	18	0.2	15	0.2
I do not wish to disclose my religion	696	8.4	655	7.7
Islam	2,390	28.8	2,279	26.6
Judaism	6	0.1	11	0.1
No Religious Affiliation	2,332	28.1	2,570	30
Sikhism	17	0.2	17	0.2
Unknown	768	9.2	767	9

## College Enrolments

The College enrolled 7949 FE student enrolments in 2021-2022 of which 5234 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 2021-2022 was 84%, which is a 4% decline on the previous year. This was negatively impacted by lower than acceptable attendance at English (67%) and Maths (67%) 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.

	2021-2022			2020-2021			19-20		
Gender	Male		Female	Male		Female	Male		Female
%	84		84	87		89	82		83.8
Ethnicity	Pakistani / Indian	White	Other	Pakistani / Indian	White	Other	Pakistani / Indian	White	Other
%	85	82	83	88	87	89	84.6	82.5	83

# General Trends

- Relation to Student Participation





## 4 GENERAL TRENDS IN RELATION TO STUDENT PARTICIPATION

### Further Education (*dashboard incorrect*)

- The proportion of females studying in FE at the College in 2021-2022 is 52% this is the same the previous year. Male students are at 48%.
- 63% of FE students are classified as White; this is a 3% decrease from the previous year. 25% of FE students are Asian.
- 61% of students are eligible for disadvantage uplift which is a 1% decrease from previous year.
- The percentage of students with a declared learning difficulty and/or disability is 20%, a 1% increase from the previous year.
- There has been a 3% increase in the proportion of students studying at Level 1 compared to last year. Students at Level 3 study increased by 2% points in 2021-2022 compared to 2020-2021.

### Higher Education (*dashboard incorrect*)

- In the University Centre the gender split has increased by 10% with 70% of the students in 2021-2022 being female and 30% being male.
- 20% of full-time students declared a disability which is again a slight increase Year on Year but demonstrates a 3% increase over the last 4 years.
- 66% of full-time students were mature which is in line with 2020-2021. Young part-time students have increased dramatically to 34% which is 1% decrease on the previous year.

### Apprenticeships

- In 2021-2022 Apprentice numbers for Blackburn increased slightly from 2020-2021 with 146 leavers, an increase of 57. There are 98 fewer Apprentices due to all small employer Apprentices continuing to fall into a subcontract with MIT Skills.
- The proportion of Blackburn female apprenticeship starts is 60% in 2021/22 this is a 5% decrease from the previous year. Unsurprisingly, there continues to be a significant gender bias across many apprenticeship standards: Customer Service, 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 Motor Vehicle, Plumbing, Brickwork and Electrical.
- Blackburn female achievement 2021-2022 has decreased by 16.2% finishing at 61.4% this is in line with overall Apprentice achievement, it does lie 8.2 percentage points above National Rate
- Male starts in 2021-2022 is 40%, this is a 5% increase on 20/21. Blackburn male achievement in 2021-2022 has decreased by 20.3% finishing at 60.3%, this is in line with overall apprentice achievement, it does lie 0.2% percentage points above National Rate.
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Blackburn students account for 16% of Apprenticeship starts which is a 1% decrease from the previous year. Achievement rates of 62.5%, this is 6.8% percentage points above National Rate and in line with College Apprentice overall achievement.

- The percentage of starts with a declared learning difficulty and/or disability (LLDD) is 11.6%, (17 students) which is a decrease 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 has dropped from 94.3% to 89.5% when analysing this data, it is important to note that 2020-2021 was a year when we had teacher assessed grades in place, however this is a 4.8% decline, the College is 3.5% above national rates in 2018/2019.
- Males have performed better than females in 2021-2022, however the gap is now narrowing as female achievement rose from 90.3% to 92.4% and males from 91.2% to 92.7%. however, the gap is only 1.8%.
- There is significant gap between achievement of Asian students 92.3% (3339 leavers) compared to White students 86.8% (3490 leavers).
- Overall achievement improved for females by 2.1% from 90.3% to 92.4%. Males have improved by 1.5% from 91.2% to 92.7%.

### Apprenticeships

- The age group 19-23 had the lowest overall achievement by age group in 2021-2022 for frameworks/standards lying at 54.8% overall achievement (31 Blackburn Apprentices), 8.4 percentage points below National Rate, 16 – 18 students had the best overall achievement by age group in 21/22 for frameworks/standards lying at 64.9% overall achievement (57 Blackburn Apprentices), 7.7 percentage points above National Rate. 24+ students achieved 60.3% (58 Blackburn Apprentices), this is 11.9 percentage points above National Rate.
- Overall achievement for White British males (55 students) decreased significantly in 2021-2022 (60%), this is in line with National Rate of 60 percentage points. This is a 23% decrease on 2020-2021. Achievement was 6.7% lower than those males who were Not White British (66.7%, 3 students) in 2021-2022.
- Overall achievement for females who were not White British (61.9%), 7.7 percentage points above National Rate. This is a decrease of 21.4% on 2020-2021. This is 0.7% higher than White British females (61.2%) in 2021-2022, however this lies 8.3 percentage points above National Rate. The achievement gap between not white British females and white British females continues to decrease.
- Overall achievement for those with a difficulty / disability / health problem (21 students 47.6%), this is a 38.1%-point decrease on 2020-2021.

### Higher Education

- Male achievement in 2021-2022 has increased to 59.3% whilst this an increase from the previous year it is still unacceptably low. Female achievement also rose to 67.5% which is a 2.5% increase.
- White British male achievement rose to 61.7% with those of Asian ethnicity have also seen a significant increase in achievement to 64.8% which is an increase of 9.8%.

## **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 team and The Princes 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, Quality of Education and Prevent. We are also subject to the Ofsted Student 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 National Student Survey (NSS) Student Satisfaction survey with significantly more females responding to the survey. The College has had the highest participation and satisfaction rates across the North West which is an outstanding achievement.

# Staffing and Governance



## 7 STAFFING AND GOVERNANCE

### Staff Headcount

At the 31 July 2022, the College employed 745 staff (524 FTE), which is a reduction on the same period last year where the College employed 766 staff (543 FTE). The number of actual different staff employed by the College at 31 July 2022 was 692.

### Gender Profile

The table below shows the gender profile as at 31 July 2022.

Gender	Academic	Business Support	Management	Total
Male	144 (44.58%)	112 (28.79%)	11 (33.33%)	267 (35.84%)
Female	179 (55.42%)	277 (71.21%)	22 (66.67%)	478 (64.16%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>745</b>

The gender balance (equal proportions of female and male staff) for teaching staff remains slightly below the sector average of 63% with the proportion of female staff in the academic category at 55%. Female representation in the management category (64%) remains higher than the sector average of 56%.

### Disability Profile

The proportion of staff with a declared disability in the current reporting period is 8.59%, this is comparable with the previous year (9.27%). The College continues to welcome and support staff with declared disabilities, investing in occupational health support and the College Employee Assistance Programme.

Contract	Disability	No Disability
Academic	35 (10.84%)	288 (89.16%)
Business Support	27 (6.94%)	362 (93.06%)
Management	2 (6.06%)	31 (93.94%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>64 (8.59%)</b>	<b>681 (91.41%)</b>

### Ethnicity Profile

19.06% of staff reported that they were from a minority ethnic (ME) background. This is consistent with the previous year where 19.45% of staff reported they were from a minority ethnic background.

### Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation – as at end of July it coming out as 3% declared non-heterosexual. In addition to that though there is 171 who declined to say.





The Census data (published 2013) remains the most accurate reflection of ethnicity profile in the Blackburn with Darwen Borough. This records the local population as 30.8% from a Monority Ethnic (ME) background, which is higher than the College staff population. However, it should be noted that a significantly higher proportion (approx 20% across the 16-49 age range) are economically inactive.

### Age Profile

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 unrepresented, this is consistent with the Annual Report 2021/22. The Human Resources Team held a Careers open event in June 2022 as part of an initiative to promote the College to a diverse audience.

Contract	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
<b>Academic</b>		6.19%	15.79%	31.58%	38.08%	8.36%	
<b>Business Support</b>	0.51%	11.83%	19.79%	23.65%	25.45%	17.74%	1.03%
<b>Management</b>			15.15%	39.39%	39.39%	6.06%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.27%</b>	<b>8.86%</b>	<b>17.85%</b>	<b>27.79%</b>	<b>31.54%</b>	<b>13.15%</b>	<b>0.54%</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 2021-2022 we offered a number of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) events, support services and activities events. 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 a pop-up information box on desktop computers.
- 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 (BwD PCT) carried out Body Mass Index (BMI), Cholesterol, and blood pressure checks onsite for staff members.
- The College has also continued 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, Basketball, Table Tennis, Barbering and Beauty therapy, Mental Health and Stress awareness sessions, Meditation, Diabetes Awareness, Dementia Awareness and BMI checks.

## 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





# Equality Analysis (EA)



## 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 2021-2022 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 involved 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 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:**

- Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection/GDPR Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Internal Communications Policy
- Sexual, Violence, Harassment and Abuse Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- Staff Computer Usage Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Student Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Practice – Freedom of Speech
- Retention of Personal Data Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Financial Assistance for Further Education Students
- Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Student Computer Usage Policy
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Staff Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure
- Managing Staff Attendance Policy and Procedure
- Pension Exchange Scheme Policy
- Appraisal Policy
- Professional Learning Policy
- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- Lone Working Procedure
- Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment Procedure (Staff)

The impact of EA's on these policies has been to amend and highlight the commitment the policy has in adhering to equality and diversity ethic at 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 (TLA) through various processes including observations, learning walks and centre reviews. There is a robust process in both FE and HE that has a programme of TLA developmental activities and peer observations to support staff in the development of their practice.

Across 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. The College had a clear focus on delivering Sexual Harassment and Consent workshops. There was a clear focus on Mental Health and Wellbeing raising awareness amongst students as well as providing support and 1-1 sessions with Kooth and Lancashire Mind. 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 College has invested in the Student Assistance Programme which gives students 24hour access to a qualified Counsellor.

The Safeguarding team has also supported students with:

- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Peer on Peer abuse
- 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 inter 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. This was recognised by Ofsted in their visit in January 2022.

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 2021/2022 have been:

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

- British Values
- The Skills Network
- Odd Arts (Healthy Relationships) – various events held over the year
- GO2 (Drug and Alcohol service) – open event
- Safe Drive, Stay Alive
- Radicalisation
- Sexual Consent
- Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism
- County Lines
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- 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 an inclusive range of enrichment activities including the introduction of an LGBTQI+ support group which has been established, 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 LGBTQI+ 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 a 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.

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 College supports Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Experienced students. 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 teams 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**

Inclusive delivery is the fundamental difference between Blackburn College and other FE providers. At the College's Ofsted Inspection (January 2022) provision for High Needs Students was graded "Good".

We provide a broad range of Study Programmes, with personalisation being at the core of our offer. Our Supported Internship is tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of our students. This programme is specifically designed to support students with an Education and Health Care (EHC) Plan to aid their participation and become independent citizens who positively contribute to their local communities by gaining meaningful employment.



Destination data showed 98.5% of students supported by the Additional Learning Support Team progressed to positive destinations including further study, higher level study or employment/voluntary roles.

At the College's Ofsted Inspection in January 2022 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.

## Higher Education

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

The Higher Education Disability Services team liaised with 446 students who had disclosed a learning difficulty/disability or medical condition and 178 were supported (where they met the Disabled Students' Allowances eligibility criteria) to become claimants for this support funding.

The Advisors 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:

- 94% of respondents would recommend the service to students
- 94% of respondents felt comfortable with the adviser, and that there was sufficient time to discuss their requirements
- Comment from student: -  
*"I am very happy with the service", "the team is always available if needed, great support given"*

Blackburn College provides a Non-Medical Helper Service through the Disabled Students Allowance to support Higher Education students via My Support Service - Blackburn College. 72 students accessed support through this service.

# Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIM)



Blackburn  
College



The College’s Equality and Diversity Impact Measures for 2021-2022 are:

**Student Equality Objectives**

In summary, of the four Student Equality Objectives which formed part of the Single Equality Action Plan, the College’s Performance Indicator updates are as follows:

All the student equality objectives are being closely monitored and reported on via the Performance Quality Review meetings (PQR) and Quality Summits which are chaired by the Principal.

<b>Student Equality Objectives</b>	<b>Expected Impact in 2021-2022</b>
1. Raise African and Bangladeshi Female Achievement to National rate (87.3% and 91% respectively)	Targeted intervention on female 81 African Enrolments and 91 Bangladeshi Enrolments in 2021-2022 to meet at least the National Rate of Achievement.
2. Reduce the gap to less than 1% for those that have a declared Learning difficulty or disability and those that do not for both classroom based and apprenticeship students.	In 2020-2021 there was a 1.8% achievement gap between those that did and those that didn't have an LDD in classroom based and an 8.1% difference for apprentices (however there were only 14 students who declared an LDD in 2020-2021). This needs to reduce to show parity between the groups and that support is effective.
3. Raise achievement rates for apprentices who are 24+ to be more in line with previous years to stop the decline in achievement rates.	24+ apprentices have significantly dropped in their achievement rate in 2020-2021 and needs intervention to be in line with the other age rates.
4. Increase White Male retention in UCBC from 63% so that it is in line with other ethnicities.	Identification of the barriers faced by white males within UCBC and action focused intervention to support these students to stay and achieve.



## **Workforce Diversity Objectives**

In summary, of the four Workforce Diversity Objectives which formed part of the Single Equality Action Plan, the College's Performance Indicator updates are as follows:

<b>Workforce Impact Measures</b>	<b>Expected Impact in 2021-2022</b>
<p>1. Promote and raise awareness through a calendar of scheduled events for celebrations of EDI focused themes for both staff and then students through delivery in tutorials and enrichment, including but not limited to LGBTQ+ history month, Black History month, Religious Celebrations, Mental Health, Disabilities, Hate Crime.</p>	<p>To raise awareness and confidence of staff to discuss and educate students of different EDI themes to promote respect, tolerance and acceptance.</p>
<p>2. Continue to maintain above 8% staff disability disclosure for the organisation (which is 2% above the Local Authority benchmarks)</p>	<p>To promote confidence and cultural awareness and support to those affected by disability in the workplace including "invisible disabilities such as Fibromyalgia and Mental Health.</p>
<p>3. Continue to foster greater recognition of being an inclusive College that celebrates diversity</p>	<p>With the use of CPD, staff wellbeing time staff events that not only address students but staff can also access support groups, guest speakers, that can address difficult topics such as local White supremacy and how to deal with that, hate crime, Mental Health discrimination.</p>
<p>4. Consideration in the staff survey to address EDI issues and themes that the college continues to address for both staff and students.</p>	<p>Staff should feel confident to address any EDI concerns within college and also confident to teach and address any EDI concerns that may be raised with students either on site or within the lessons.</p>

# Progress Update on Single Equality Scheme



Blackburn  
College



## 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 3-year action plan and the Annual Single Equality Action Plan addressing 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, success data to 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 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 X8
- Disabled toilets on each level X3
- Ambulant toilet in all male and female toilets X6
- 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 X6

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 X2
- Ambulant toilet in all male and female toilets X4
- 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-selected 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 LGBTQI+ 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 Lancs to actively engage in the Preston Pride for six years consecutively, this was halted unfortunately in 2019-2020 due to COVID. This highlights our continued commitment to promote the agenda to all prospective stakeholders.

The College has received feedback following our submission into 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 encourage 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 the East Lancashire Hospice as chosen by staff and students in 2021 which has continued.

Student Voice also works on tackling the issue of bullying and has anti bullying information on the Moodle page. Student Voice helps to promote fair trade, human rights issues, creates awareness sessions on anti extremism and Preventing Violent Extremists 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 the College community 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 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 our religious communities.

We have a policy on religion and belief for staff and students to highlight the College role and responsibilities

## **Gender Reassignment**

The College supports students in different curriculum centres to access careers of their choice, regardless of traditional gender under representation.

Bespoke Trans training is delivered to staff and students with the addition of a Transgender Policy.

The College commercial team work with local Trans group to provide access to our services. Established support groups within the College are able to refer individuals to support groups outside of the College environment.



The College can also provide 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 encourage 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 underrepresented 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 students 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 instance, we allow time for anti-natal appointments and care, carry out risk assessments to ensure the environment is safe in relation to 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.

We have a robust approach to pregnancy and maternity discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention and unfair behaviours and promotes a culture of respect. We have 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 considered 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

# 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 UCBC 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 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

#### **3.2.1 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.

### **3.2.2 - We will substantially increase success rates for all students, with a targeted proactive 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.

### **3.2.3 - 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

To Improve positive destination rates for students from areas of deprivation Quintile 1 and 2 and students from low participation neighbourhoods by 2025.

To 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 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.

A new retention and intervention process to be fully implemented in 2017-2018, 2018-19 and into 2019-2020, 2021-2022 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 the students the 'wrap around' support package on offer from across the College. Some examples of the support areas are 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 Centre 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.