

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



**Warrington
& Vale Royal
College**



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Together we Transform

“As a girl studying construction at the college, I’ve learnt that there are no barriers to achieving my career goals - which will soon be owning my own business. If you’re a girl who wants to enter the construction sector I would definitely recommend Warrington & Vale Royal College because you will learn the skills you need to be successful, in an inclusive environment.”

Isabelle Higginson
Level 2 Brickwork



1 Introduction

1.1. The Annual Equality Report reviews our progress over the previous academic year in relation to equality and diversity and is one of the ways we make visible how we are meeting our obligations to recognise diversity and promote equality and inclusion. The report reflects the work of the College within our diverse communities as well as reporting key equality data/information.

1.2. We have firm expectations of our staff and students and work with various internal and external groups to consult and develop how we can improve and maintain a coherent approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, reflecting our organisational values:

We put our students first - prioritising their inclusion, learning and progress, supporting their health and wellbeing and realising their potential.

We recognise that people are our greatest asset - recruit and retain the most talented staff, investing in them to fulfil their potential, creating a wealth of opportunities for personal development and progression, creating a culture of co-prosperity, galvanising them through inclusive practice, recognising the difference they make and rewarding them for the work they do.

We pursue excellence in all we do - a passion for inclusive, high-quality education, training and skills solutions, holding ourselves to the highest possible standards, meeting (and exceeding) targets, making improvements, valuing creativity, supporting digital innovation and pedagogy.

We embrace change - looking forward to the future, maintaining a growth mind-set, exploring new routes to inclusion, partnership and collaboration, harnessing AI safely and ethically for efficiency, digitalising and embracing new technologies, anticipating and responding to ongoing economic and social needs and demands.

We collaborate and work in partnership with others - actively seeking opportunities to become more inclusive, working with others in the best interests of the college community and key stakeholders, delighting our customers.

We operate sustainably, ethically and responsibly - adding social capital through inclusion, working to achieve net zero carbon targets and enhancing biodiversity, acting with integrity, with high levels of accountability and complete transparency, treating others fairly and with respect, communicating clearly, concisely and openly.

We are guided by the principles of sound financial stewardship and operational efficiency - balancing an inclusive educational character with cost effectiveness, ever-mindful of an increasingly risk-laden and unpredictable operational environment, the need for broader sensitivity analysis in budgeting and forecasting and the importance of mitigating risks that could affect the college's solvency.

1.3. Our continual aspiration is to promote equality and social inclusion in all that we do and, in this regard, a new Strategic Aim has been added for 2025:

SA4 Undertake a root and branch review of the (whole) college's approach to inclusion to encompass: transition in, through and out of college, adaptations to the college estate and learning environment, changes to policies and procedures, ways of working and others. Develop an inclusion strategy.

We will achieve this through seven objectives, as stated in our 2025-2026 Development Plan.

- Agree a set of inclusion principles and develop an inclusion strategy with strong alignment to the related emphases in the new Ofsted inspection framework.
- Organise a logical series of workstreams, using the college's inclusion principles to undertake a systematic, cross-college review of policies, procedures and practises, developing a series of actions for positive change (the inclusion strategy).
- Monitor the progress of students from vulnerable groups and take appropriate action such that they do not underachieve i.e. there are no achievement rate, value added or positive destination gaps.
- Incorporate adaptive teaching and learning practices into lesson design and curriculum planning such

that learning is accessible to all students, especially those from vulnerable groups.

- Consider, develop and implement a cross-college response to the Supreme Court judgement about gender identity and its implications for trans people within the college community.
- Build on research already undertaken to address negative perceptions about masculinity and the associated impact on young people, working with students to take appropriate action in this regard.
- Develop the college's approach to mental health. Aligned with the AoCs mental health charter: leadership and ethos, support for students, tackling mental health through the curriculum and workplace wellbeing.

1.4. Arising from the College's last Ofsted Inspection in November 2024, Ofsted commented:

"Students and apprentices enjoy coming to the college. Staff have created a highly positive and respectful culture that permeates the college. Students and apprentices feel welcomed, well supported and cared for. They develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need for their next steps in an exceptionally supportive and nurturing environment"

"Students on ESOL courses, including refugees and asylum seekers, learn the language skills they need to integrate successfully into their community. They develop confidence in their daily lives to make medical appointments or apply for jobs"

"Students with high needs thrive in a supportive and inclusive environment. Most students increase their self-esteem and build resilience. Many confidently speak out in class and attempt to answer questions, giving them numerous opportunities to improve their communication skills and increase their social interaction with peers and staff"

"Teachers link fundamental British values to their industry sectors, making them real and relevant to students and apprentices. Apprentices develop and demonstrate a tolerant and inclusive approach at and beyond college. They enjoy harmonious relationships with peers, staff and visitors. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated"

1.5. The College Management Team (CMT) are responsible for implementing, promoting, and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across the College, and monitoring and evaluating the impact. The governing body leads the way in the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion, and governors receive training and information on the statutory legislation and organisational / individual responsibilities. The Board receives regular progress and impact updates on the Equality Objectives and the work of the EDI committee.



Together we Transform

"I started the college on a Preparation for Work course, and now here I am five years later at university! The support I've received from both my tutors and the support staff at the college has been brilliant, and has helped me to build my confidence and skills so that I am ready for my next steps."

Tae-Reece Brown
Level 3 Creative Media Practice

2 Student Equality and Diversity Demographics

2.1 The population of Warrington in 2024 was 215,391 people, with 61.9% aged between 16-64, There are slightly more females than males; 50.5%: 49.5%. Warrington's population structure is comparable to that of the North West and England; however, Warrington has higher proportions of those aged 45-49, 50-54 and 55-59. Warrington has lower proportions of the population in the 0-4, 30-34, 35-39,85-89 and 90+ year-old age groups.

6.5% of the resident population is non-white. Based on school census data from 2020, the proportion of pupils who are black minority ethnic (BME) is 13.9%, in comparison to the North West average of 24.8% and Cheshire West & Chester local authority at 10.1%.

Warrington is considered the 148th most deprived of 317 local authorities in England. Cheshire West & Cheshire are less deprived and ranked 161st.

Based on Jan 2020 School census data, the proportion of pupils across Warrington who are eligible for free school meals is 15.96%. Young people receiving SEN support is 9.2% and the proportion of pupils with a statement or Education Health Care Plan is 3.6%, a total of 12.8%. Cheshire West & Chester's combined average is 15.1%.

2.2 We identify and monitor equality, diversity and other socio-economic factors that may impact on our students, so as to inform future admissions policy and curriculum development.

2.3 Student Gender Profile

Year	Male Overall	Female overall	Male 16-18	Female 16-18
2022 - 2023	57%	43%	64%	36%
2023 - 2024	59%	41%	65%	35%
2024 - 2025	52%	48%	61%	39%

2.4 Student Age Profile

Year	16-18	19+
2022 - 2023	44%	56%
2023 - 2024	47%	53%
2024 - 2025	46%	54%

2.5 Student Ethnicity Profile

Year	White British overall	Other overall	White British 16-18	Other 16-18
2022 - 2023	83%	17%	86%	14%
2023 - 2024	80%	20%	85%	15%
2024 - 2025	79%	21%	86%	14%

2.6 Students Declaring Learning Difficulty or Disability Profile

Year	Yes overall	No overall	Yes 16-18	Yes EHCP
2022 - 2023	33%	67%	44%	11.5%
2023 - 2024	34%	66%	45%	11%
2024 - 2025	33%	67%	43%	11.9%

2.7 Students with a Disadvantaged Postcode Profile

Year	Yes overall	No overall	Yes 16-18
2022 - 2023	47%	53%	52%
2023 - 2024	47%	53%	51%
2024 - 2025	43%	57%	47%

2.8 Whilst the local population is slightly higher for females, this is not representative of the gender profile of students at college, which has more male students enrolled than females although the gap has reduced this year.

The proportion of 16-18 students in comparison to the full student cohort is similar to the previous year, through both over recruitment against target for 16-18-year-olds and a challenging adult market, impacted by funding and the cost of living.

The college ethnic population for 16-18 students aligns to the local BME population. Overall, the proportion of BME students enrolled at the college is greater, due to a large adult ESOL provision which meets the increasing local needs, including the significant rise of refugee and asylum seekers.

In comparison to School Census data, the proportion of students enrolled at the college with an EHCP is significantly higher. The college reputation for support and inclusion is showing an increase in the number of students declaring a learning difficulty or disability.

The number of students from a disadvantaged postcode is representative of the college location and the deprivation ranking of the town and is supporting the drive to address the economic divide and improve the prospects of young people and adults in the local area.



Together we Transform

“I have really enjoyed my time at college and have been fully embraced to achieve my career goals. All of the tutors are so supportive and have challenged me to be the best that I can be, which has ultimately helped me to secure my place at university.”

Ruvimbo Jali
Level 3 Health & Social Care

3 Student Equality and Diversity Progress Data

3.1 Equality and diversity data is routinely monitored and analysed, enabling us to track progression of our students throughout their student journey and to take positive action in dealing with inequalities faced by disadvantaged or protected groups.

16-18 and adult students

3.2 Attendance

College overall	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	88.4	87.2	87.6
Protected group			
Male	88.0	86.8	87.9
Female	88.3	87.7	87.2
Age 16-18	88.6	86.7	87.9
Age 19+	87.9	88.4	86.9
White British	88.0	87.2	87.8
Other	87.4	87.1	86.9
Students with a disadvantaged postcode	87.0	86.7	87.4
Declared learning difficulty or disability	87.6	86.9	87.4

College 16-18	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	88.6	86.7	87.9
Protected group			
Students with an Education, Health & Care Plan	88.9	90.0	89.3
Students in receipt of High Needs funding	89.1	90.0	89.2
Students in receipt of free college meals	86.5	84.9	85.6
Looked after children	85.5	84.9	87.1
Young Carers	83.5	80.2	85.8

3.3 Retention

College overall	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	91.2	89.7	93.
Protected group			
Male	92.0	89.9	92.6
Female	90.7	89.5	94.3
Age 16-18	89.2	88.3	89.4
Age 19+	93.1	91.0	95.5
White British	91.3	89.7	93.8
Other	92.2	89.8	92.3
Students with a disadvantaged postcode	90.7	89.3	90.7
Declared learning difficulty or disability	89.7	87.4	92.6

College 16-18	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	89.2	88.3	89.4
Protected group			
Students with an Education, Health & Care Plan	91.4	89.2	92.7
Students in receipt of High Needs funding	94.6	88.8	92.8
Students in receipt of free college meals	86.6	83.8	87.7
Looked after children	80.0	85.3	85.9
Young Carers	81.8	84.5	96.0

3.4 Achievement

College overall	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	86.6	86.6	89.7
Protected group			
Male	86.8	86.4	88.7
Female	86.4	86.9	90.8
Age 16-18	82.8	83.7	84.2
Age 19+	89.6	89.1	92.7
White British	83.0	86.5	90.1
Other	84.3	86.8	88.2
Students with a disadvantaged postcode	85.8	85.9	87.0
Declared learning difficulty or disability	84.5	83.3	87.3

College 16-18	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	82.8	83.7	84.2
Protected group			
Students with an Education, Health & Care Plan	82.4	84.2	82.6
Students in receipt of High Needs funding	84.2	80.6	84.1
Students in receipt of free college meals	82.7	79.3	80.2
Looked after children	70.0	76.0	79.7
Young Carers	81.8	84.0	96.0

3.5 Destinations

College overall	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	92.5	90.0	90.0
Protected group			
Male	92.5	89	90
Female	90	87	90
Age 16-18	92	91	92
Age 19+	93	88	86

College 16-18	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	92	91	92
Protected group			
Students in receipt of High Needs funding	96	97	88
Students with an Education, Health Care Plan			84
Students declaring a Special Educational Needs & Disabilities			85
Free College Meals			88

3.6 Persistent school absence is one of the most significant ongoing impacts of the pandemic and concerns are noted nationally regarding the rise in emotionally based school/college avoidance. Whilst overall and persistent absence rates decreased slightly in Autumn 2024, severe absence rates increased.

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england/2024-25-autumn-term>

At post-16, the college faces similar challenges, but noted an improvement in 16-18 student attendance in 2024-25 through relentless at-risk monitoring and high-quality interventions by curriculum and pastoral teams. Nationally, children with additional vulnerabilities; those eligible for free school meals, with an EHCP or receiving SEN support, continue to be more likely to be absent from school. College attendance for these student groups was more positive, and the gap has reduced significantly for students eligible for free college meals to 1.7% points. Students with an EHCP continue to attend better than their peers which bucks the national picture. Attendance for young carers and looked after children is within 2% points of peers as a result of increased support and intervention.

Retention and achievement are strong and above Provider Group Averages and the majority of protected groups are within 3% points of their peers.

Whilst achievement is lower for 16-18 students than adults, the volume of shorter length adult programmes is a predominant contributory factor and not a concern.

Retention and achievement for students that are Looked after Children and Young Carers are outside of the tolerance, although proportionally these are much lower. Students with free college meals, a larger cohort, do not achieve as well as their peers due to lower retention and pass rates and is an area of focus for 2025-26. Students with an EHCP and those with High Needs are retained well in comparison to their peers.

The pastoral team regularly engage and provide interventions for these students through the At-Risk monitoring of their progress and performance.

Destinations overall are strong and there is no disparity between males and females. The destinations for disadvantaged students (those that are eligible for free college meals and students declaring SEND, including those with an EHCP or funded as High Needs) do not progress to as positive destinations as their peers, although they perform better than the national statistics.

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/16-18-destination-measures/2023-24>

“Nationally, Disadvantage students were less likely to have a sustained destination than non-disadvantage students.

Students who were eligible for pupil premium in year 11 (just under a quarter of the cohort in all state funded mainstream schools and colleges) were 14.8 percentage points less likely to have an overall sustained destination when leaving 16 to 18 study compared to all other students. This gap in the previous year was 14.4 percentage points.

Students identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities were 9.0 percentage points less likely to have an overall sustained destination than those students with no identified Learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD) (66.3% compared to 75.3% respectively)”.

Apprentices

3.7 Attendance

College overall	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	88.8	91.7	85.2
Protected group			
Male	88.1	91.8	85.1
Female	90.1	90.6	88.6
Age 16-18	87.9	91.6	85.7
Age 19+	86.5	91.7	84.5
White British	87.8	91.6	85.3
Other	90.0	94.0	86.3
Declared learning difficulty or disability	86.2	90.2	85.5

3.8 Achievement

College overall	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	68.0	66.8	60.4
Protected group			
Male	65.0	64.3	60.1
Female	74.2	73.0	63.1
Age 16-18	60.5	52.2	44.2
Age 19-23	78.7	80.0	76.4
Age 24+	66.7	74.2	69.9
White British	67.6	66.8	61.1
Other	85.7	66.7	63.6
Declared learning difficulty or disability	55.6	56.7	55.3

3.9 Destinations

College overall	2022 - 2023 %	2023 - 2024 %	2024 - 2025 %
	94.5	94	95
Protected group			
Male	95.0	92	94
Female	93.0	100	95
White British	95	94	94
Other	84	100	90
Declared learning difficulty or disability	88	85	94

3.10 Analysis of apprentices' **attendance** data shows it was a challenge in the previous year, particularly for male students which is the greater proportion of the cohort. It is pleasing to note that apprentices with a declared learning difficulty or disability and those that are non-white British attend better than their peers.

The **achievement** for 16-18 apprentices is low in comparison to their peers at 19-23 and 24+ age groups and is a significant area of focus for 2025-26. The majority of 16-18 apprentices are in the construction, electrical and motor vehicle trade areas, which are 4-year programmes, and whilst quality has improved, historical data issues remain due in part to sectoral challenges in relation to staff retention which has negatively impacted. Challenges in relation to late submission for end point assessment have also impacted the end of year position. Leaders, managers and governors monitor the quality of the apprenticeship provision regularly to assure the experience and outcomes are of high quality. A full complement of experienced and qualified staff is in place in the construction area; however, improvements are required in relation to the retention of apprentices in this age group specifically. Actions are in train including improved IAG and interview process, a more streamlined offer, increased intervention and review regularity in the workplace. The achievement gap for apprentices that declare a learning difficulty or disability is reducing over time due to improved IAG, increased identification and provision of early support. Positively, non-white British apprentices achieve better than their peers.

Destinations overall are very strong, and the gap between male and female has reduced significantly. Apprentices in protected groups are very small proportionally (eg 1 student with 'other' ethnicity without a positive destination). The number of apprentices declaring SEND has increased, through improved reporting mechanisms and they have similarly strong destinations as their peers.



Together we Transform

“As a student at Warrington & Vale Royal College, one of the main things I have learned is to have more confidence in my ability. I have faced several personal challenges alongside becoming a mature student, and I am so grateful for the college community of tutors and peers that have supported me along the way.”

Aveesha Collins

Access to HE: Nursing & Midwifery



4 Staff Equality and Diversity Statistics

4.1 Data is obtained as part of the recruitment and selection process and current staff can check and amend their personal information to ensure its accuracy via the HR portal.

Analysis of the recruitment and selection data, and current staff data, assists us in:

- Informing actions for gender pay gap
- Promoting equality and diversity in the college
- Focussing recruitment drives and improving our recruitment processes
- Making recommendations and agreeing actions to ensure we value diversity and are operating inclusively
- Updating policies and procedures
- Improving our Employer Brand
- Analysing how our data compares to the local and sector data

4.2 At 31 December 2025 staff statistics and comparison to local/national data were as follows:

Staff Gender:

Year	Male	Female
2022 - 2023	32%	68%
2023 - 2024	32%	68%
2024 - 2025	36%	64%

Staff Gender Profile by job role type:

Year	Male academic	Female academic	Male management	Female management	Male support	Female support
2022 - 2023	18%	27%	1%	4%	12%	38%
2023 - 2024	18%	26%	1%	3%	13%	39%
2024 - 2025	20%	25%	1%	3%	14%	37%

Staff Age Profile:

Year	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
2022 - 2023	1%	13%	20%	25%	28%	13%
2023 - 2024	1%	13%	21%	24%	29%	12%
2024 - 2025	1%	11%	18%	26%	30%	14%

Staff Ethnicity:

Year	White	BME	Unknown
2022 - 2023	95%	3%	2%
2023 - 2024	77%	4%	19%
2024 - 2025	79%	4%	17%

Staff Disability:

Year	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
2022 - 2023	9%	91%	0%
2023 - 2024	9%	91%	0%
2024 - 2025	13%	87%	0%

Staff Sexual Orientation:

Year	Heterosexual	Bisexual	Gay man	Gay woman/lesbian	Not known/Prefer not to say
2022 - 2023	53%	1%	1%	1%	44%
2023 - 2024	61%	2%	1%	1%	35%
2024 - 2025	71%	1%	1%	1%	26%

4.3 Area and sector statistics:

Warrington census 2021 (ONS) - Key highlights:

- Female 50.4%, Male 49.6%
- Average age is 42 years old and the largest age group, by 5-year band is the 50-54 age groups (16,000) accounting for 7.6% of the total Warrington population.
- 17.8% are registered as disabled in Warrington (46% are male and 54% are female).
- 93.5% identified as White
- 92% of people aged 16 years and over in Warrington identified as heterosexual

Source: ONS

Winsford census 2021 - Key highlights:

- Female 50.9% Male 49.1%
- 61% of the population are 18 years to 64 years-old
- 18.4% disabled under the Equality Act
- 95.3% identified as White
- 91% identified as heterosexual

Source: ONS

FE Sector - Key highlights:

- 40% are teaching staff
- 65.5% of all staff are female
- Median age of 46
- Management and leadership proportionately more in higher age categories
- Latest gender pay gap 12.8% (ONS, April 2025)

Source: Education and Training Foundation, Workforce Data Collection, published May 2025

Comparative analysis:

Local census data shows an aging population, with the average age of 42 in Warrington reflecting the older age profile for the college. With a percentage of unknown in the staff ethnicity data and sexual orientation data, it is not possible to establish whether we reflect the local ethnic and sexual orientation population data.

As in the FE sector, the college employs a much higher percentage of female staff, although the percentage of female staff in teaching roles has slightly decreased and the percentage of males in business support roles has increased. 45% of our staff are teaching staff, compared to the UK figure of 40%. Like the sector, the college has an older age profile.



Together we Transform

“I love studying at the college because it’s such an inclusive and non-judgemental environment. My experience as both a school leaver and an adult student has been extremely positive - I’ve been given feedback and encouraged to improve, without any cruelty. I feel safe here.”

Lucian Hinchliffe

Level 3 Acting & Musical Theatre
and HNC Performing Arts

5 Key Actions and Achievements 2024 - 2025

Every year the College reviews and sets targets within its action plans to improve the equality of opportunity across our college community. The review for 2024/25 shows that there has been significant progress in the achievement of the key targets as outlined below.

Learning from Leaders in Diversity

The College engaged with a specialist, external Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) consultant to undertake a root and branch review of its EDI work. The College has since transformed its EDI policy and practice and submitted a nomination for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Heroes Award, with success, as one of three shortlisted for the Training Provider of the Year.

The college is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment that exceeds statutory equality requirements. Through strategic initiatives and a project-based approach, the college has made significant strides in enhancing the student experience, evolving professional development, and improving personal performance for its staff and students.

To achieve these outcomes, the college established Special Interest Groups (SIGs) focused on key areas such as learning from leaders in diversity, gender identification, supporting students with ALS needs (Additional Learning Support), addressing and combating sexual harassment, promoting British values, and enhancing the destinations for students to reduce NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) statistics.

These groups brought together cross-college teams dedicated to research, implementing change, and developing sustainable strategies. Examples include the creation of LGBTQ+ clubs and communities providing a safe and supportive space for students to express themselves and feel represented. These initiatives build confidence, improve well-being, and create a culture of belonging.

Regular in-year surveys for ALS students ensure their voices are heard and their needs met, fostering an inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive. Mental health first aid training for staff and students equips the college community to address challenges proactively, ensuring timely support for those in need.

The introduction of innovative online study skills support materials makes learning accessible and flexible, empowering students to succeed regardless of their circumstances. Comprehensive training programs on pronoun terminology, gender identity, and harassment equip staff with the knowledge to create an inclusive and respectful environment.

Initiatives such as sign language training not only enrich staff skill sets but also promote a more inclusive college culture, especially for students with hearing impairments. Surveys conducted among staff and students have highlighted areas for improvement, leading to action plans that foster a safer and more equitable working and learning environment.

By addressing barriers such as harassment, mental health stigma, and accessibility issues, students are empowered to perform at their best, with the confidence that their individuality is respected and valued. The ongoing development of EDI practices fosters a supportive workplace, encouraging staff to engage more effectively in their roles, which directly benefits students.

The College invested in CPD to improve awareness of 'inclusivity', another SIG area of focus. Staff reflected upon how they can embody, promote and embed the College's Transforming Lives strategy. Sessions included Looking after your mental health, LGBTQ+, Men's mental health, Financial wellbeing - Cost of living, and Menopause matters. The CPD sessions equipped our staff with skills to manage their own mental, physical and financial health as well as their students. Sessions provided staff with strategies to use and share with their students as well as raising awareness of LGBTQ+ language that is acceptable to our students, giving the teachers the confidence to discuss relevant issues. The newly introduced 'time to talk' days also encouraged participation and discussion amongst staff minority groups such as LGBTQ+, Carers, menopause, disability and wider groups, for example, apprentices employed at the College. For the first time, we have devoted a staff development day to 'well-being' with sessions offered to improve sleep hygiene for staff and sessions allowing for mindfulness during the day.

By integrating EDI practices into every aspect of college life, the college has set a benchmark for creating a culture that values diversity, promotes equality, and supports the development of all individuals. These

efforts not only enhance the student experience but also equip staff with the tools to deliver inclusive, impactful education, ensuring lasting benefits for the entire college community.

College People Plan and refreshed approach to staffing

The People Plan was updated to increase the responsiveness of provision through additional hourly paid positions and the development of recruitment processes and methods of attraction, particularly for hard to fill positions. Actions included; equal opportunities analysis and monitoring of application forms, to help inform actions and policies and transition to blind shortlisting to reduce risk of bias. The gender pay gap has slightly increased by 0.34% from the previous year.

The recruitment advert template has been updated to include the benefits of flexible working, promotion of the college as Menopause friendly, and the opportunities for flexible working options, such as part time or job share.

New staff profiles have been added to the website to promote underrepresented groups of staff. Unconscious bias training was delivered to our managers.

Active participation in government teacher training initiatives engaged 13 new staff, a slight decrease on the previous year, but continued to support the strategy of 'grow your own', which is most commonly applied in the construction areas. The college holds the Silver award for the Armed Forces Covenant, allowing advertisement of roles through the Career Transition Partnership and we continue with the Disability Confident Employer scheme, with guaranteed interview for disabled candidates who meet essential criteria.

Further development of our internal Employer Brand, included regular reminders of current staff benefits packages and support, reward and the continuation of the annual disability questionnaire with follow up. The annual staff survey was conducted and concerns followed up in staff forum and new staff profiles are on the website to promote underrepresented groups of staff. We have introduced a new optional online GP service, and 52 staff have elected to join the scheme this year.

Workload intensity remains a priority and steps have been taken to reduce the volume of additional evening events for 2023-24. Significant focus has been placed on the simplification of processes and systems to reduce workload and inefficiency and the college has invested in TeacherMatic, AI software to support teachers with planning. Further process reviews are underway with the aim to reduce workload further. Financial wellbeing workshops were held, with support from Medicash and money tips from Barclays. The staff foodbank and provision of emergency vouchers were employed.

The HR team have become central to the discussions about curriculum teams that are not performing as well as expected. Often, quality issues arise as a result of staffing instability - an inability to recruit and/or retain high quality staff - therefore, the HR team are, de facto, central in trouble shooting and resolving these issues, a part of the quality team you might say. For example, in the last two years, a pay review for the construction team led to more competitive remuneration to improve staff recruitment and retention. Similarly, in health and social care, where there are significant issues around students' safeguarding and welfare, the team was slightly over-resourced to absorb some of the resultant workload. To further improve quality amongst the health and social care team, the recruitment strategy was targeted to enable recruitment of experienced teachers, at a greater cost to the College, rather than NQTs who will bring their knowledge and skills to the students in their classroom. Additionally in Construction teams, individual Curriculum Managers have been appointed to curriculum areas to reduce the workload per team and allow the managers to better support their teams. Over-recruitment of staff in construction areas has allowed for better support and better work-life balance for teams and new teachers employed in these areas.

The college was awarded Investors in People (IIP) Platinum accreditation in March 2025. The college is performing at a High Performing (Platinum) level and demonstrates 'a deeply embedded culture of excellence in the way in which the organisation leads, supports, and develops its people'. In November 2025 the college was awarded the IIP Employer of the Year award.

Actions continue to provide staff access to career progression training and development opportunities. The college has introduced a new Business Support Career Development Programme, and a new Team Leader training programme. In January 2026 we will commence on our second cohort of Aspiring Leaders programme.

We have introduced a new Personal Performance Review process, which includes a section on future career aspirations, to help identify and offer support to staff wishing to progress, and aide succession planning.

94% of staff agree that equality of opportunity is embedded into the culture of the college (same as last year) and 93% agree that they are treated fairly and with dignity and respect in the college.

A holistic approach to support and welfare: Transforming Lives Strategy

The College has gone some way to embedding a holistic Transforming Lives Strategy post-pandemic to address the increasing numbers of students presenting with mental health issues including: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, eating disorders and toxic friendships and relationships. A review of students' programme of study - initial assessment, induction, tutorial, curriculum, industry placement preparation, enrichment, wellbeing and the learning support - has been reviewed and adapted year on year to respond to emerging trends. The curriculum, tutorial and enrichment programmes were further enhanced to support students' personal, social and emotional development, to garner a strong sense of their self-worth and aspiration. Students gain from a responsive tutorial programme which has been augmented with training for staff to address current and priority issues, such as mental health and sleep hygiene. The pastoral team has been expanded to cope with the significant rise in safeguarding referrals, which were up 50% compared to the previous year.

The impact of the strategy has, once again, been tangible as evidenced through the College's attendance, retention and pass rates and fewer disciplinary incidents and exclusions. Whilst the number of students accessing safeguarding has increased, fewer students proportionally have recurring referrals to wellbeing. The Transforming Lives Strategy will continue to evolve in order to address the factors that continue to impact adversely upon our students, for example (as areas of focus in the forthcoming year), poor sleep hygiene, lethargy and poor motivation to study.

The college has undertaken a significant amount of work to better understand the underlying causes of student absence. An attendance toolkit facilitated the opportunity to deep dive into the reasons for absence from college and identified patterns of emotionally-based college avoidance and the adverse impact of students' anxiety and ailing mental health. Subsequently, steps were taken to further develop the pastoral support model, with more precise, targeted support for priority groups in relation to attendance, referrals to safeguarding and wellbeing and early leavers.

Staff wellbeing

The college continues to focus on the physical, mental and financial wellbeing of its staff.

87% of staff agree that leaders and managers are considerate of their workload and wellbeing and 80% report that wellbeing has improved during the academic year (an increase of 3% for both from the previous year).

The college worked with a local law firm to offer a free will writing service to staff and their families, and a discounted vehicle breakdown cover was offered via RAC vehicle benefits. In 2025 38 staff accessed the free will writing service.

A new programme of Time to Talk sessions was introduced in September 2023, which included sessions on menopause, carers, LGBTQ+ and apprentices.

A new weekly Arts and Crafts club was introduced in January 2025, to facilitate mindful activities at lunchtime.

The new menopause action plan was launched in October 2023. Menopause training was delivered as part of the Management Development Programme and the college promoted Menopause Day and a new Menopause Mentor service offered by Care First, part of our Employee Assistance Programme. We have been working with a Senior Policy Advisor from the AoC to develop an article on 'Leading the way in Menopause support' which will be published in 2026.

HR provided a monthly focus on Health and Wellbeing topics, which included International Day of Happiness, Stress Awareness Month, National Walking Month, Mental Health Awareness Week, Suicide Awareness, World Mental Health Day, World Menopause Day.

Staff development throughout the year has focussed on improving workload and wellbeing. Training sessions have included personal resilience, building confidence, email management, AI, blood pressure and wellbeing checks, meditation, yoga, signature strengths, sleep therapy, and menopause awareness.

In February 2025 the college dedicated the staff development day to wellbeing, and staff had the

opportunity to choose from sessions including reiki, Zentangles, tai chi, Pilates, knitting and board games.

A staff sexual harassment survey was carried out in October 2023, and a new action plan was implemented. The policy has been updated, and employees were required to complete Bystander training. The staff sexual harassment survey will be redistributed in 2026 to monitor progress, and inform future actions.

6 Next Steps

A new Strategic Aim has been included for 2025-26; SA4 Undertake a root and branch review of the (whole) college's approach to inclusion to encompass: transition in, through and out of college, adaptations to the college estate and learning environment, changes to policies and procedures, ways of working and others.

We will achieve this through seven objectives, as stated in our 2025-2026 Development Plan, alongside our Inclusion Strategy, which will be monitored through the EDI Strategy Group:

- **Agree a set of inclusion principles and develop an inclusion strategy with strong alignment to the related emphases in the new Ofsted inspection framework.**

Particular understanding of and action regarding:

- Awareness of national and local context inc; GCSE pass rates and destinations for vulnerable groups.
 - Undertake research and collaboration with WBC and CWAC to establish wider context inc; Poverty data
 - Identify and strengthen partnerships to enable alignment with local area partnership strategy
 - Analysis of in year data regarding vulnerable groups inc; common/multiple vulnerable characteristics
- **Organise a logical series of workstreams, using the college's inclusion principles to undertake a systematic, cross-college review of policies, procedures and practises, developing a series of actions for positive change (the inclusion strategy).**

Particular consideration for all cohorts and all vulnerable groups across the Student Journey from pre-application to destination and all aspects of college functions and facilities.

- **Monitor the progress of students from vulnerable groups and take appropriate action such that they do not underachieve i.e. there are no achievement rate, value added or positive destination gaps.**
 - 16-18 apprentices
 - from disadvantaged postcodes and/or receiving free college meals
 - with SEND and/or with an EHCP
 - known or previously known to social care
 - Young Carers
 - known or previously known to youth justice
 - without level 2 English and/or maths
 - with other barriers to learning or wellbeing e.g. ESOL
 - previously NEET
- **Incorporate adaptive teaching and learning practices into lesson design and curriculum planning such that learning is accessible to all students, especially those from vulnerable groups.**
- **Consider, develop and implement a cross-college response to the Supreme Court judgement about gender identity and its implications for trans people within the college community.**

Continue to raise awareness and promote a better understanding of students' gender identity.

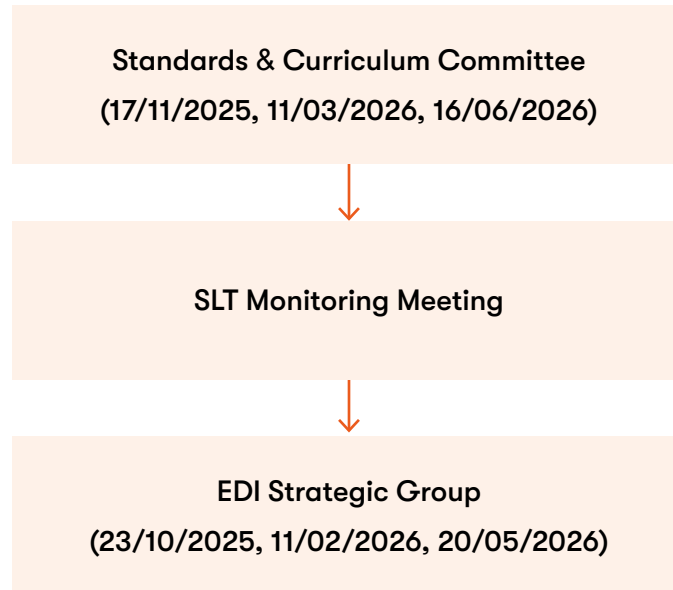
- **Build on research already undertaken to address negative perceptions about masculinity and the associated impact on young people.**

Working with students to take appropriate action in this regard. Review the impact of actions and interventions implemented as a result of the research into sexual harassment and assault amongst female students and staff.

- **Develop the college's approach to mental health. Aligned with the AoCs mental health charter:**

Leadership and ethos, support for students, tackling mental health through the curriculum and workplace wellbeing.

7 Reporting Mechanisms



Together we Transform

“As someone who has studied a number of courses at the college, my experience of student support and accessibility for people with disabilities has been excellent. I face minimal challenges navigating the campus, and the tutors and support staff are exceptional.”

Lara Ackers Glanvill
Access to HE: Social Work

