

Coleg Gwent Strategic Equality Plan



2023 – 2026

This document is also available in Welsh.

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1. Introduction

We are delighted to introduce Coleg Gwent's Strategic Equality Plan for 2023 to 2026.

We are passionate about promoting the importance and benefits of embracing diversity and inclusion in all its forms. We want to role model an inclusive environment, where every staff member feels able to bring their whole self to work and feels safe sharing information about who they are.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan, builds on the ambition articulated in the College's People Strategy: "It matters that we act continually to ensure the college is supportive and inclusive of everyone".

Our EDI mission is to further integrate diversity and inclusion into the college culture to gain maximum advantage from the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive workplace.

The purpose of this Strategic Equality Plan is to ensure that Coleg Gwent operates with sensitivity to differences of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, pregnancy/maternity status, lifestyle, social background, country of origin, language or any other grouping of our society.

The College recognises that some different groups experience discrimination in society and is committed to challenging discrimination in all its forms by ensuring, the equality and diversity agenda has a high profile in the College environment. This new Strategic Equality Plan centres our focus on a number of streamlined, high level objectives underpinned by commitment from the Senior Management Team to ensure these are achieved.

We recognise that our credibility and impact as the FE college of choice is only strong, if we reflect and respect the hugely diverse nature of those in the education sector and the wider public we serve. We will strive to increase the diversity of our staff, to be as representative of the communities we serve as an inclusive educational organisation serving the public.

We have set ourselves an ambitious goal - By 2026, there will be an expected and natural consideration of diversity and inclusion in everything we do at all levels of the college. We need diversity of thought and as an educational establishment, we need to lead by example. For this, we need a collective commitment to embrace and own the aims of this strategy and to deliver on it.

All staff are encouraged and supported to play an active role in the delivery of this strategy. A number of key groups such as the Equality & Diversity Steering Group, Wellbeing Group, our affinity networks and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Forum will help us to drive forward our ambitions through their activities.

When we design and deliver training or create and review policies, we will continue to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the need to:

- promote authentic and respectful relations.
- advance equality and diversity in everything we do
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and annual staff surveys informs decision making. We also recognise that measuring the impact of our work is equally important. As we move

forward in our development, monitoring will play a fundamental role in understanding outcomes and the direction of future work.

We recognise that there is still much more for us to do. In the next four years we plan to be ambitious and this strategy document sets out four pillars of activity, the outcomes we want to achieve and the specific actions we will take to deliver them.

Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Manager
Coleg Gwent

Chair of Governors
Coleg Gwent

Principal and Chief Executive
Coleg Gwent

2. Strategic Equality Aims for 2023-2026

The following high level strategic aims have been identified which will channel the focus of attention into 4 key areas, which will, if achieved, move the college forward positively. The aims are:

Drive a diverse, respectful, and inclusive culture in all HR practice and College processes.

- Antiracism training for all staff with annual refreshers via our Inclusive Language college toolkit to model a culture of diversity and inclusivity from the top down.
- Visibly sponsor staff to run affinity networks & become ED&I champions to promote diverse and inclusive practices throughout the college.
- Visibly promote knowledge development through all engagement activities for all staff and check progress via annual staff ED&I surveys.
- Encourage open and honest two-way feedback and use staff feedback to inform decisions informing colleagues how their opinions played a part.

Create a culture where everyone feels they can be themselves.

- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments to ensure there is ample opportunity to understand the impact groups may experience within department practice.
- Promote the inclusive language toolkit in all department practice
- Allow team members opportunities to participate fully in all Affinity Networks and engagement activities. Use inclusive resourcing practice including blind resourcing, guaranteed interview schemes, diverse advertising, inclusive job descriptions and diverse recruitment panels and provide a framework of interviewing for recruiting managers.

Provide support, and professional development to all staff regardless of their background.

- Succession plan for women, disabled and ethnic minority representation including at the most senior levels of the college.
- Externally invest in targeted outreach and work in partnership with Trade Unions consistently, ensuring that colleagues are informed, involved and treated fairly.
- Uphold the inclusive language toolkit and challenge behaviours that are contrary to the Code of Conduct or the Equality Policy.

Ensure the diversity of our colleagues and learners is celebrated and inclusion promoted.

- Embed ED&I into the college curriculum framework from 23/24 through improving programme of training to increase awareness of diversity and inclusion best practice for all levels of leaders and managers.
- Extend reverse mentoring across the college to allow experience exchange among different generations and strengthen staff loyalty towards the college.
- Equip leaders to improve social mobility which will build on existing partnerships ensuring the College is an Employer of choice and leading in the ED&I arena.
- Empower Affinity Networks to drive change in all college practice and policy in line with key KPIs.

The Strategy is supported by an Action Plan, which will be reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis.

3. Objectives

Staff:

- The College will gain the Investors in Diversity accreditation by 2025 to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into Coleg Gwent's organisational culture.
- D&I Engagement scores of 75+ maintained between now and 2026.
- Inclusive resourcing with 5% increase in ethnicity and disability in the college by end of 2026, with a view to aligning with 2030 target of Anti Racist Wales.
- The staff diversity fully represents the diversity of our learners and each of the college communities we serve.
- Explore using learners as a recruitment source in order to help match the staffing profile with our learner demographic profile.
- Gender Pay Gap Report measure equal pay for men, women, and non-binary in all positions, voluntarily publishing our ethnicity pay gap by 2024.
- Increased knowledge and engagement from staff in all Affinity events, measured by attendees to events & membership numbers of affinity groups.
- Improve data quality and disclosure year on year in the coming years with more access to data for all staff. This will include demographics per department.
- The college diversity charter will be reviewed and updated based on consultation with staff and learners by September 2024.
- Sign the Antiracism charter by 2024.
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) will be collated in one place and reviewed annually. Collated and streamlined by 2025.
- Add EIA Training as an optional course for all, into the new staff training module in 2023/4. This will be mandated for managers and trade union representatives involved in policy creation, negotiation and change management.
- SLT will have EDI Action Plans for all departments which are reviewed and updated annually.
- By 2024 we set out to achieve the following: increasing the proportion of ethnic minority, Disabled, LGBTQ+, Welsh speakers' staff by 2%
- By 20-24, close the Gender Pay gap by 3%

Board:

The Governance & Membership Committee regularly reviews and advises on the skills and diversity profiles of the Board. The Board was pleased to note at the July 2023 meeting, that Board membership has continued to become more diverse since 2017.

Work is ongoing to improve the data collected on Board diversity and the intention is that Board diversity will be clearly reported on the college website in future.

GENDER

Our commitment - to maintain a gender split that includes a good balance of men and women, as well as members who identify as non-binary or transgender.

ETHNICITY

Our commitment - To have a membership that reflects the ethnic diversity of our communities and includes a minimum of five members who are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background.

SEXUALITY

Our commitment - To increase the number of members from the LGBTQ+ community
This data has only been gathered since 2021/22.

DISABILITY

Our commitment - To increase the number of members with a disability.

WELSH LANGUAGE

Our commitment - To have a minimum of four members who are fluent Welsh speakers or advanced learners.

AGE

The Board has not made a specific commitment in relation to age. It does however recognise that a good range of ages ensures a balance of perspectives and experience.
In 2023, the average age of our members was 51 years.

Learners

- Promote positive attitudes towards life in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith society
- Encourage Learners to acquire the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to recognise and challenge discrimination wherever they may meet it in their lives
- Development of innovative work experience and work encounter opportunities with employers
- Ensure minimum standards and provision of culturally sensitive and appropriate services, including provision of translation and interpretation. The college has introduced a new support line (CAWSS) for culturally sensitive and specialist needs to ensure our ethnic minorities have support mechanisms support them. All policies now refer to helplines for advice with culturally diverse options.
- Ensure our ESOL and Welsh speaking learners have translation and interpretation mechanisms
- Develop effective and sustainable parent engagement
- Develop interventions to tackle gender stereotypes, for example, by arranging for learners to talk to men and women who work in stereotypical jobs and raising awareness of the range of careers that STEM qualifications offer
- To explore using existing learners as guest speakers to discuss progression in to HE and apprenticeship opportunities and to share their experiences in the workplace.
- Develop learner's problem solving, entrepreneurial skills, teamwork and imagination to ensure greater success for learners progressing confidently into the world, equipped not just with vocational and hard skills, but also the skills they will need to ensure the impact of their learning at the College is lifelong.
- Enhance ALN careers guidance - to ensure that careers guidance for learners with additional educational needs and disabilities is differentiated, where appropriate, and based on high aspirations and a personalised approach.
- Promote aspirational progression routes for all learners with Neurodivergent conditions & vulnerabilities and to ensure that those who are at risk are appropriately supported and identified through close working relationships with the full range of educational and support agencies.
- Develop effective support for learners progressing to HE and those on HE programmes.

4. About the College

Coleg Gwent is one of Wales' largest and best performing Further Education colleges. We deliver a wide range of part-time and full-time academic and vocational courses to over 24,000 students annually. Operating across five local authorities, we pride ourselves on developing effective provision to meet the needs of our communities while providing the best opportunities for each individual learner to achieve their potential.

We recognise that inclusiveness is integral to achieving our mission to 'Change Lives Through Learning'. To support this, the College embraces diversity and recognises our responsibility to foster an open, welcoming environment where learners and staff of all backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs can collaboratively learn and work together.

We encourage staff and learners to report or raise any concerns or improvement suggestions through the available channels. This includes for staff, their line management or the HR Department and for learners, personal tutors or learner services.

We value the academic, social, and broader community benefits that arise from an inclusive environment and are committed to providing equal access to education for all students, regardless of background, ability and characteristic.

Coleg Gwent was the first college in Wales to be judged 'Good' in everything we do according to Estyn's (Her Majesty's Inspectorate in Wales) inspection framework (2018). Notably, the report identified the following strengths:

- the support we provide for learners, particularly vulnerable students
- our increasing success rates for vocational main qualifications
- providing suitable progression routes for our learners

At Coleg Gwent, we offer a comprehensive curriculum from A-Levels through to university level, with clear progression pathways to further study, and into the world of work. In 2022/23, we had an A-level pass rate of 97.4% (increasing from 96.2% in 2021/22) for full time learners, with 100% pass rate in 45 A-Level courses, while 91% of students successfully completed vocational courses - this is the top percentile for the sector.

We work tirelessly to raise the aspirations of our learners and are committed to ensuring that we provide added value to each learner. We do this by giving each student dedicated timeslots for enrichment, whether that's fundraising, volunteering, competing in a sports club or taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme. We also work with Citizens Cymru to give students the opportunity to be involved in the decision making of their local communities.

We encourage our students to take advantage of the many opportunities for foreign exchange trips, national and international competitions to help them develop all-round skills that can make learners more employable. We also encourage our staff to support these trips for professional development and enriching opportunities.

Coleg Gwent's Employer Partnership Pledge, which launched in September 2021, continues to grow in strength. The inspirational pledge aims to strengthen the College's links with industry and local employers, offering educational opportunities for learners while benefitting the companies involved. Fourteen key employers across the region work in

partnership with our learners to help them develop transferable skills in preparation for the world of work.

The college is proud of its commitment to support Wales and Welsh culture, as such we are signed up to the national Work Welsh Scheme to increase the language diversity of our staff. We are committed to put at least 32 members of staff through Welsh training annually.

The College is committed to the future growth of the region through investment in two state-of-the-art and inspirational facilities. With a growing need for STEM knowledge and skills in the local economy, our High Value Engineering (HiVE) Centre will offer high-quality engineering education to equip young people with skills for the future. Operating as a carbon-neutral and entirely digital education facility, staff will train the workforce of the future in advanced engineering disciplines such as robotics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, autonomous manufacturing, simulation, and augmented reality. The curriculum will be designed and led by industry experts, delivering new courses at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6, bringing expertise to the area and boosting the local economy.

Secondly, the Newport Knowledge Quarter, a brand-new, modern and fit-for-purpose facility will provide a more accessible location for our learners and staff. The state-of-the-art college campus will relocate the provision of a wide range of further education courses from Nash Road, bringing around 2,000 students and staff into the Newport city centre.

These new facilities will give staff opportunity for innovation, use of state-of-the-art equipment and enhanced possibilities to develop career opportunities.

Coleg Gwent focuses on nurturing talent and developing skilled and employable people, while being recognised as an outstanding College that empowers staff and learners and to create prosperity in our communities.

4a. Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities

Vision

By 2026 Coleg Gwent will be the College of choice, actively working with our communities, where all learners and staff are treated with respect, achieve their full potential and benefit from the best resources in an inspirational learning environment.

Mission

Changing Lives through Learning

Strategic Aims - By 2026

- All learners will be empowered by high quality teaching to learn, achieve, and progress as rounded, confident individuals.
- All our Enterprise and Academic Studies learners will be achieving outstanding results and will distinguish themselves in a pipeline of talent ready for university and industry.
- Our Care and Community Studies Faculty will be delivering a dynamic curriculum offer that is innovative and inclusive and is recognised as being sector leading.
- Every Creative & Technical Studies learner will be inspired to achieve their full potential because we will provide them with an industry led curriculum that embraces the future needs of society and themselves.

- We will have demonstrated that every lesson matters and every grade matters.
- We will be a college that delivers with, and for, employers. Where employer involvement enriches the teaching, learning and employability experiences we provide and is responsive to the needs of the local and regional economy.
- We will work in an environment that is safe, welcoming, inspiring, showcasing the college and responding flexibly and sustainably to the changing demands of learners, staff and employers.
- We will have built a reputation as technology enablers and provide access to secure, high quality ICT infrastructure, systems and support so that our learners and staff can thrive digitally in learning and work.
- We will be a prestigious employer where everyone thrives, feels welcome and can be themselves. A place where all colleagues are 100% committed and proud to be changing lives through learning.
- We will deliver innovative and proactive financial leadership that ensures continued robust financial health and further enhances financial sustainability; which aligns first rate financial policy with the delivery of College strategy and fully supports our aspirations for learners and staff.

4b. Core Values

The College's future growth and sustainability are based on four shared values and associated behaviours that guide all our activities. The Code of Conduct describes how we put these values and behaviours into practice every day. Our values are extremely important to us as they outline what we stand for, how we behave and what we expect. It is essential that all Coleg Gwent staff and learners uphold these values at all times as this will help us to deliver on our vision.



4c. Who does the Policy Apply to?

This policy applies to all sites utilised by Coleg Gwent and all members of the college community and stakeholders.

4d. Awards and Recognition

Over the last few years, we have won some prestigious awards and are so proud of everything we do here for our students and staff. The awards and accolades we have been awarded over the past few years include:

- CIPD HR Team of the Year - Winner [2022/23]
- CIPD Best D&I Initiative - Highly Commended [2022/23]
- 22 Finalists in WorldSkills UK [2022]
- South Wales Argus School and Education Awards - FE Lecturer of the Year, Peter Britton[2022]
- 35 medals won in Skills Competition Wales 2022 - 10 Gold, 14 Silver and 11 Bronze [2022]
- South Wales Argus School and Education Awards - Welsh Medium Teacher of the Year, Jacqui Spiller [2022]
- College awarded Carer Friendly Accreditation [2022]
- Coleg Gwent comes 2nd overall in Skills Competition Wales [2022]
- Commended in the Association of Colleges Beacon Awards for Engagement with Employers [2022]
- Affiliated with the Black FE Leadership Group [2021]
- ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health & Safety Management System [2021]
- ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System [2021]
- Winner of the National Environmental Awards School/College of the Year [2021]
- First college to achieve Careers Development Award - Careers Wales [2021]
- BGLZ A Level Team win Bronze Award in Pearson Team of the Year [2021]
- 29 finalists and 13 medals in WorldSkills UK 2021 - 3 Gold, 4 Silver, 2 Bronze and 4 Highly Commended [2021]
- 24 Gold, silver and bronze medals in Skills Competition Wales [2021]
- Young Pastry Chef of the Year semi-finalist [2021]
- Lecturer Kate Beavan Awarded MBE for Services to Agriculture [2021]
- Certificate of recognition and participation in BITC's Age-Inclusive Learning Network [2021]

In the coming years we will continue to celebrate the successes of the college and intend to become Investors in Diversity accredited.

4e. Board Commitment

Responsibilities

The Board acknowledges the importance of its role in leading the college to become a more diverse and inclusive community. The Board believes that it must lead by example and has committed to incorporating equality, diversity & inclusion considerations into everything it does. It is also committed to having a more diverse membership that reflects the range of different communities served by the college.

The Link Governor for Diversity & Inclusion attends meetings of the ED&I Steering Group, along with the Governance Officer (who currently chairs the 'Enabled' Staff Affinity Group).

Board Diversity Statement & Action Plan

During 2022/23, the Board developed a Board Diversity Statement. This statement sets out the Board's commitments, along with targets relating to the diversity of Board members. The Diversity Statement and targets will be reviewed annually.

Based on the commitments in its Diversity Statement, the Board has developed a Diversity Action Plan. **This identifies eight Key Actions:**

- To embed diversity & inclusive practice in the Board's decision-making practice and across all its work.
- To develop Members' overall awareness and understanding of diversity issues.
- To ensure that the Board recruitment process supports the commitments set out in the Board Diversity Statement.
- To develop a wider network of contacts (both individuals and organisations) to support a more diverse recruitment process.
- To better align the recording of Board diversity data to that held by the HR Department on college staff.
- To monitor (via the Governance & Membership Committee) progress against the commitments set out in the Board Diversity Statement.
- To publish the Board Diversity Statement & data on Board diversity on the college website.
- To annually review and update the Board Diversity Statement.

Achievements and actions to date include:

- Coleg Gwent staff and Governors became the first in Wales to complete Anti-racism training facilitated by Race Council Cymru. This training aligned to Welsh Government's pioneering work on creating an Anti-racist Wales.
- The Board's recruitment processes have been reviewed and updated. A new, more inclusive approach has already helped to attract a wider range of candidates.
- Board policies are being reviewed and updated to ensure they reflect the commitment to diversity and inclusivity. The Succession & Membership Policy outlines specific inclusive practices in relation to recruitment, reappointment, induction and development.
- The Board has requested that papers presented by management include an assessment of the impact on protected groups. Additional analysis of data by protected characteristic has also been requested, for example in relation to Safeguarding incidents.
- Governors (including the Chair and Vice Chair) joined Mrs Gill (Link Governor) at the July 2023 meeting of the College ED&I Steering Group. The Chair shared the Board Diversity Statement with the group and Governors engaged in interesting discussions on a range of issues including the Anti-racism training and social mobility.
- During Pride Month, some Governors attended a visit by 'Drag Queen Story Hour' at the Crosskeys Campus library.
- The Governance Officer is continuing to work with the college's Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing Manager to develop contacts across a wide range of communities and to identify opportunities for Governors to engage with ED&I related events in the coming year.

5. The Law

The statutory basis for the Strategic Equality Plan and its associated objectives is contained within the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which, in summary, places a duty on public bodies to have due regard in exercising their functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation,
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

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

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

- Carrying out and publishing impact assessments showing how its current and proposed policies and practices affect the college's ability to comply with the general duty
- On a biannual basis, collect and publish certain employee data by reference to protected characteristics
- To promote employees' understanding of the general and specific duties

The Equality Act, which consolidates existing anti-discrimination law into a single legal framework, came into force in October 2010. In total, nine pieces of primary legislation and over 100 pieces of secondary legislation have been incorporated into the Act, including Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Bringing these into one piece of legislation made the law easier to understand and apply.

The Act protects people with certain characteristics, as follows (in alphabetical order):

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex and Gender
- Sexual orientation

The college also has Dignity at Work and Equality policies with the purpose of assisting in developing a culture in which unfair treatment, discrimination; bullying, harassment, victimisation and exclusion are known to be unacceptable. The policies offer a variety of mechanisms to support incidents should they occur.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

The college has a duty to assess the potential impact of its activities on people with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

A template is available to assist each department to complete a thorough Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). It is an expectation that at policy development stage all new policies and procedures are assessed before approval and this assessment will be documented. All staff involved in developing and writing college policies should undergo training on the Equality Impact Assessment process.

The Duty builds on the previous duties in respect of gender, race and disability. It represents a significant shift in approach from a legal framework which relied on individual people making complaints of discrimination to a context where the public sector becomes a proactive agent of change. The Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) made it clear that public bodies must maintain equality in both their internal and external facing functions, and the Duty provides a mechanism for tackling institutional discrimination in policies, practices and procedures.

In order to ensure our plan is comprehensive, robust and relevant, in developing it we have been guided at all times by Welsh Government priorities, Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance and relevant UK legislation.

The College has worked to ensure this plan is both topical and comprehensive by relating it to the aims detailed within the Colleges Strategic People Plan. We have also recognised that, aspects of our data collection reveal a low disclosure rate for certain protected characteristics. To rectify this and ensure we move towards a better understanding of the diversity of our stakeholders we have included an objective specifically relating to the improvement of data quality and disclosure. The College has utilised the Equality and Human Rights Commission themes in the publication 'Is Wales Fairer?' (2018) drawing on the evidence it contains as a significant steering point for our Strategic Equality Plan. This publication provides a comprehensive review of how Wales is performing on equality and human rights. It offers a challenge to all interested parties and public bodies to address deep seated inequalities and promote equality to everyone living in Wales. The review looks across all areas of life including:

- Education
- Work
- Living standards
- Health
- Justice and Security
- Participation in Society.

The areas as set out by the review were considered alongside the protected characteristics to enable us to make a decision in formulating our equality objectives. In setting our equality objectives, the College has also given consideration to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and is committed to maximising its contribution to seven national wellbeing goals which are shown below. As an education provider and an employer, we need to

consider these goals when making decisions and the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.



Coleg Gwent is committed to these principles of mainstreaming equality and welcomes these legislative changes. We are committed to equity, inclusion, and wellbeing, with our diverse campuses offering academic, social, and wider community benefits.

In summary, prospects for disabled people, some ethnic minority people, and children from poorer backgrounds have worsened in many areas of life. This inequality risks becoming entrenched for generations to come, creating a society where these groups are left behind in the journey towards a fair and equal country.

Most specifically the following information from ‘Is Wales Fairer?’ has helped to inform our equality objectives:

- Overall, school children in Wales attain scores in reading, science and mathematics below those in England and Scotland and most other developed countries. - Educational attainment in children’s early years has generally improved.
- Due to faster improvements than the average rate, boys, children on free school meals (FSM) and children with additional learning needs (ALN) have narrowed the attainment gap since 2012.
- However, the attainment of children with some types of impairment, such as a hearing impairment, has worsened. - Attainment gaps at school-leaving age persist for children with ALN and those eligible for FSM.
- Poorer children, children with ALN, White children and children of Mixed ethnicity have higher than average exclusion rates.
- Certain groups of children are more at risk of being bullied than others. Sexist bullying tends to be targeted at girls, while lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

(LGBT) children, and children with ALN are also more likely to be victims of bullying.

- The proportion of young people that are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has dropped considerably in recent years.
- Overall participation in higher education has increased. But men, disabled people and those from ethnic minorities experience attainment gaps.
- Subject and career choices remain highly gendered, with girls being much less likely to continue studying science and maths after school.
- Engagement in lifelong learning (education courses or job-related training) has declined since 2013/14, including among younger people aged 25-34.
- Hate crime increased by 26% across the whole of England and Wales
- Overall, the gender pay gap for all workers (i.e., full and part time workers) has reduced in Wales to 11.3%. However, the gender pay gap varies significantly across Wales, and we did see an increase in the gender pay gap for full-time workers only over the past twelve months, up from 4.9% to 6.1%.

The College will build on the excellent progress in meeting our duties to our learners, staff and other stakeholders under equality legislation. We will address inequality across all the protected characteristics focusing on the objectives within this plan.

6. How the College plans to deliver the Duty

Our intent is to use education as a catalyst for positive social change and prosperity for the community we serve, leaving no one behind. We intend to do in the following ways:

Leading by example, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is part of everyday life, rather than a legal requirement. By building on the benefits of diversity within our leadership, teaching and support teams we will take an inclusive pedagogy approach to the teaching of our curriculum; to encompass the diversity of thought, life experience and identity.

Ensuring that our **statutory responsibilities** in relation to equality and diversity **and integrating them** fully into our shared services and everything that we do. The Equality Act places a special legal duty on public bodies which requires us to consider the needs of people with different protected characteristics and the impact our activities could have on them.

The aim of the Duty is to ensure that we, and all other public bodies are able to recognise, understand and meet the needs of the diverse range of people we exist to serve. Here's what we are doing to fulfil our responsibilities:



Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Instances of discrimination, harassment and bullying are treated seriously and dealt with vigorously in line with the College's Equality & Dignity at work policies. We are committed to ensuring staff and learners become active and informed people of the world who have been educated to take informed actions when faced with situations in their daily lives to identify and eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Strategies

Using our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2022 - 2026 (Appendix 1) which identifies key priorities for achieving improved equality outcomes in a targeted and consistent way across the college. We are developing and implementing systems relating to the capture of information and data on the membership of the protected characteristics within our student, staff and leadership communities. We monitor staff and student voice to identify emerging

issues pertaining to discreet groups with the intention of instigating appropriate remedial action including learner and staff development where appropriate.

Actions

We will raise awareness and embed EDI into all aspects of staff, learner and leadership journeys commencing from application and interview stage and including induction, classroom practice, industry placements tutorials and via delivery of the curriculum.

For learners, we will work with Curriculum and Quality managers to develop opportunities to raise awareness and deliver workshops using the EDI toolkit through subject lessons and tutorial time. This will include working with the curriculum team to develop resources for each of the nine protected characteristics to be used college wide.

In conjunction with the Safeguarding leads across the college, we will implement restorative justice methods as aligned to the Behaviour Policy for students, to resolve incidents of bullying and harassment, this will include a focus on the promotion of microaggression and harassment incident reporting, and staff training where appropriate.

For staff, action starts at recruitment with blind recruitment processes to remove bias, guaranteed interview schemes, inclusive language in adverts and job descriptions, bias training for all hiring managers, strong EDI focus at induction and regularly updated with mandatory training. The college is committed to ensuring we have Equality Impact Assessments for all policies and major change processes, to support this implementation training is given to managers and trade union representatives.

Advancing equality of opportunity

We support positive action by everyone to increase diversity - learners, staff, managers and governors and we promote a culture that gives equal value, access, treatment and service to all. The College has a Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group and affinity network champions who lead on embedding the principles of the Public-Sector Equality Duty. To ensure success, members of the groups engage with staff across the college to create opportunities where the profile of equality issues can be regularly discussed. The college's Diversity Steering Group meet four times a year.

The Steering Group is committed to influencing policy to ensure that the college is a welcoming space for all. The potential for working in FE to be an attractive career prospect for more diverse communities, is at the heart of the group's work. In addition to sharing best practice and facilitating thought leadership on EDI, the group also oversees the development of the college's Affinity Networks ensuring that our staff are supported with key initiatives which will help to create a truly inclusive environment where diversity and difference are celebrated, and everyone is treated with dignity.

6a. Communication

The College actively engages with learners and staff in a number of ways and in particular through

- Meet the Principal' Learner Forums and other Learner Voice activities
- Learner Experience Steering Groups
- Coleg Gwent Students' Union
- Learner Services Group (LSG) activities
- Health & Safety and Sustainability Steering Groups
- Staff Engagement Survey
- Departmental Strategic Implementations Plans which are reviewed quarterly
- Welsh Language Steering Group
- Joint Consultative Committee
- Management meetings including: OUMT, SLT & CLT
- Joint Trade Union meetings and regular Union Management Meetings through the spirit of social partnership. (At time of writing this document, the college and unions alike are embracing the working practices of social partnership as a trial until 2024).
- Colegau Cymru
- Affinity Networks: Race Alliance, Women Together, LGBTQ+, Enabled, Men's Alliance, Cynefin affinity network
- Focus Groups
- EDI steering group with staff and student representatives

We recognise that we can do more to ensure diversity is a regular feature for discussion at the college and this is acknowledged in our actions every day.

The college currently collates data on

- Staff profile and supporting information
- Learner profile and supporting information
- Applicant EDI Data

7. Principles and Behaviours

Our Diversity Statement:

We're an inclusive and diverse college where everyone is welcome. A place where you can be who you are without fear of judgement. A respectful environment, open-minded to different cultures, attitudes, beliefs, and outlooks, where everyone belongs.

By embracing diversity, we foster an open and welcoming environment where people of all backgrounds can learn and work together. We're committed to equity, inclusion, and wellbeing, with our diverse campuses offering academic, social, and wider community benefits.

Diversity enriches our college community and is a driving force in fulfilling our mission, so we'll continue to respond to changes in our increasingly interconnected world. By working together, we'll address the challenges of the future to remove barriers to success, while promoting a culture of inclusivity, compassion, and mutual respect.

We believe, if you create a team of talented people from diverse backgrounds, they'll each contribute their unique ways of thinking, responding, and problem solving. Naturally, the end result will be innovation, and combined with the diversity of experiences across our campuses, it will prepare you - our learners and staff - to thrive personally and professionally in a global society.

Our Diversity Charter ensures:

- No judgement - realising we are all different
- We appreciate other views
- We accept there is no right or wrong
- We have respect for all
- Our behaviour matters

The College commits to:

- publishing an equality information report each year and set equality objectives every four years.
- monitoring the objectives defined in the equality and diversity action plan on a termly basis.
- promoting equality and diversity in staff, learner, public and partner communications
- supporting a range of activities each year to celebrate key national equality events, religious festivals and Welsh Language and Culture events.
- completing Equality Impact Assessments to assess the impact of policies, procedures and initiatives to help prevent inequality.
- introducing positive action initiatives where there is evidence of failure to meet the principles and objectives.
- encouraging learners and staff to safely disclose demographic data relating to 'protected characteristics' knowing they will be supported.

- storing data in line with current Data Protection guidelines including Welsh Language preferences for staff and learners.
- providing developed support and complaints procedures to support those who have witnessed or experienced discrimination.
- Ensuring our procurement processes, do not disadvantage small - medium businesses (SME's), local organisations or diverse organisations.

8. Information Source

A variety of information has been used to formulate the equality objectives within this document, this includes:

- Learner enrolment and performance data 2020/21/22
- Staff EDI data 2020/21/22
- Learner voice information
- Board minutes
- Diversity Steering Group minutes
- Diversity Steering group student representative voice
- Complaints
- Procurement information
- Surveys undertaken with our Annual Engagement / Staff Survey
- Action plans for Anti-Racist College
- Quality assurance activities
- Quality improvement activities such as internal reviews

Staff and learner data are published with this report - College Performance Report and Staff Equality Report.

9. Consultation

We recognise that the involvement and engagement of appropriate stakeholders is critical to the success of our Strategic Equality Plan.

In preparing this Strategic Equality Plan 2023 to 2026, consultation has taken place with:

- the Corporation/ Boards of Governors;
- the Corporate Leadership Team;
- the Diversity Steering Group;
- Affinity Network Groups;
- Unions;
- Staff;
- and students.

10. Priority Areas

The following areas of Coleg Gwent have been identified as the most significant in respect of equality and the general duties. In broad terms they are:

- Curriculum and Quality
- Learner Services and Support

- Human Resources: Resourcing, Staff Development and Policy Advancements
- Physical Environment, Facilities and Sustainability
- Procurement
- Marketing
- ICT
- Welsh Language Steering Group
- Communications

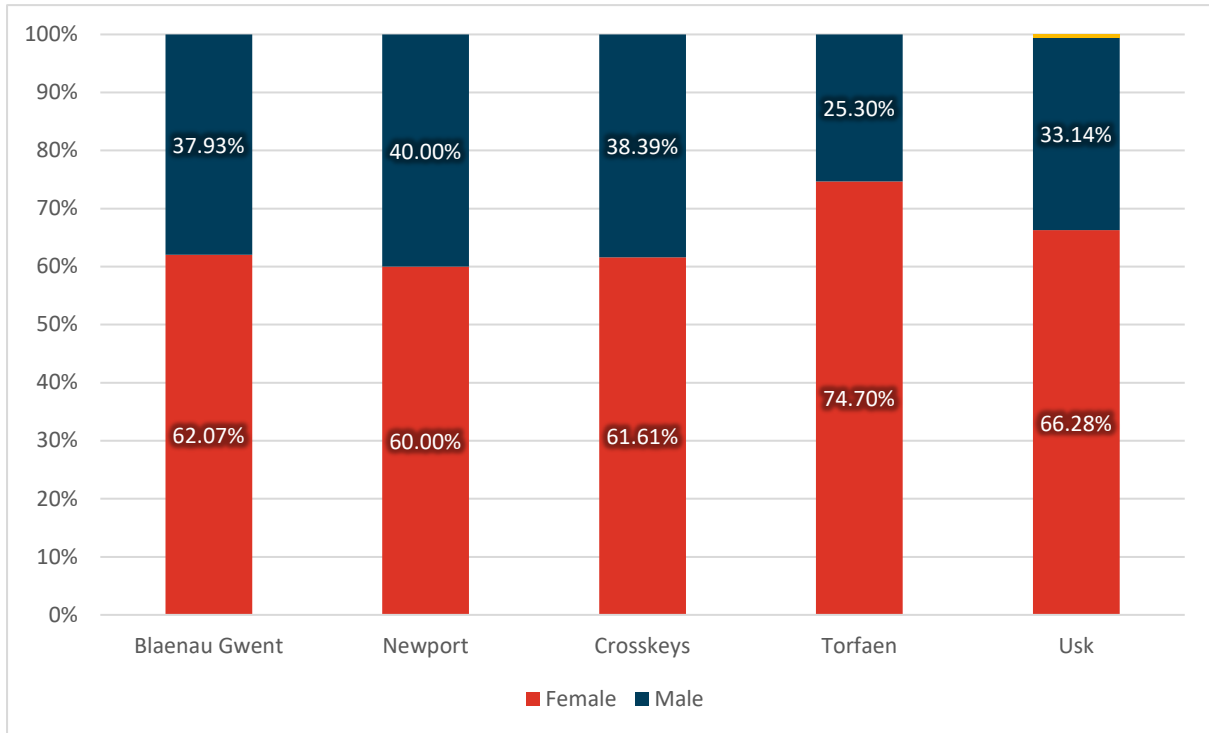
11. Contact details

For further information, please contact
The Principals Office
Coleg Gwent - Usk Campus

Should you require this information in alternative formats please contact the team as outlined above

12. Our Staff

Gender



Our college, like much of the FE sector recruits a high majority of females. We have seen these levels remain consistent over a three year period.

We have 100% staff disclosure within this demographic.

We are pleased to report that the gender split moves to become more balanced at the various management levels of One United Management Team (OUMT), Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Central Leadership Team (CLT) and the Board:

OUMT: 58% Female, 42% Male

SLT: 42% Female, 58% Male

CLT: 66% Female, 33% Male

Board: 48% Female, 52% Male

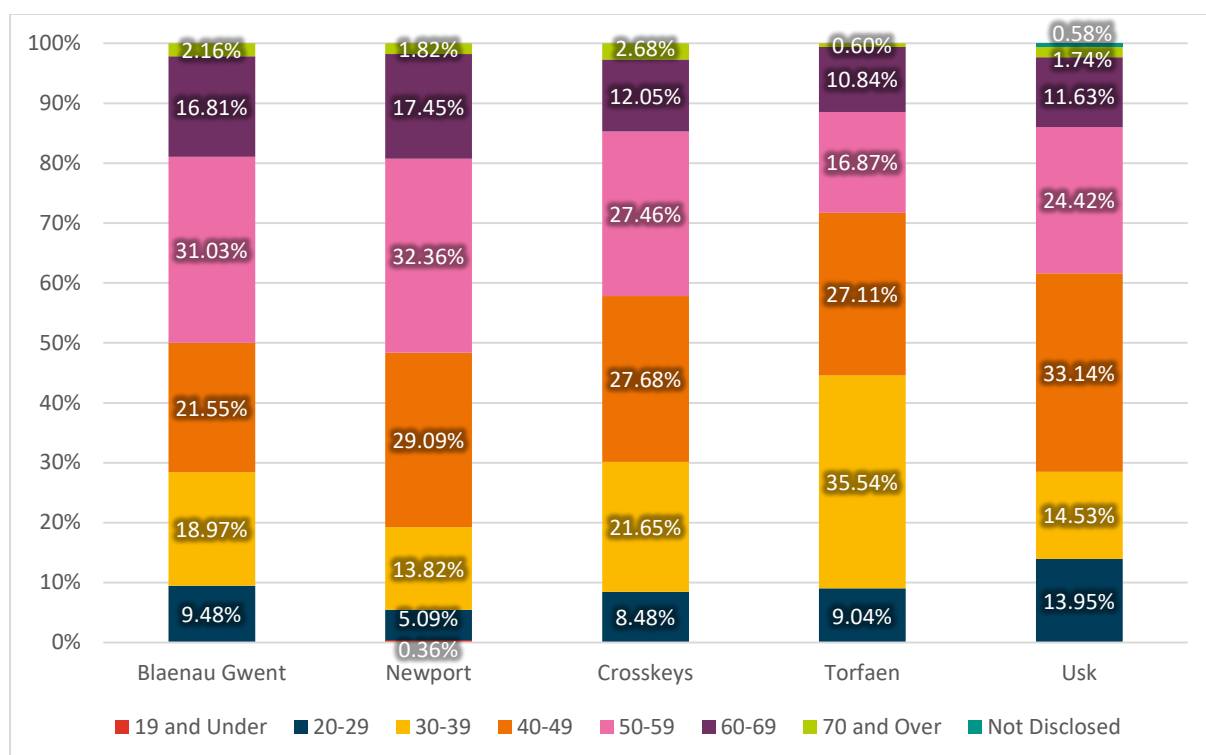
Despite the above statistics we are still reporting a gender pay gap on our annual report and we are actively focussing on closing the gap. We saw improvements of 3.74% from 2021 to 2022. With low levels of turnover (<5%) the gender demographics of the college are not dramatically changing however we are ensuring investment from our Learning and Development team in women across the organisation, ensuring equity of opportunity.

In recent policy developments we have ensured all genders have the opportunity to take extended family leave to ensure enhancements for all genders and family circumstances.

More care is also being taken when reviewing and compiling job descriptions and adverts prior to advertising, to eliminate any gender bias through the use of inclusive and gender-neutral language.

We will continue to implement best practice initiatives as suggested by the Government's Equality Office report and we are committed to nurturing an environment where everyone can reach their full potential. We have created two gender focused affinity groups: Men's Alliance and Women Together which focus on the needs of the individual genders and ensure adaptations are considered.

Age

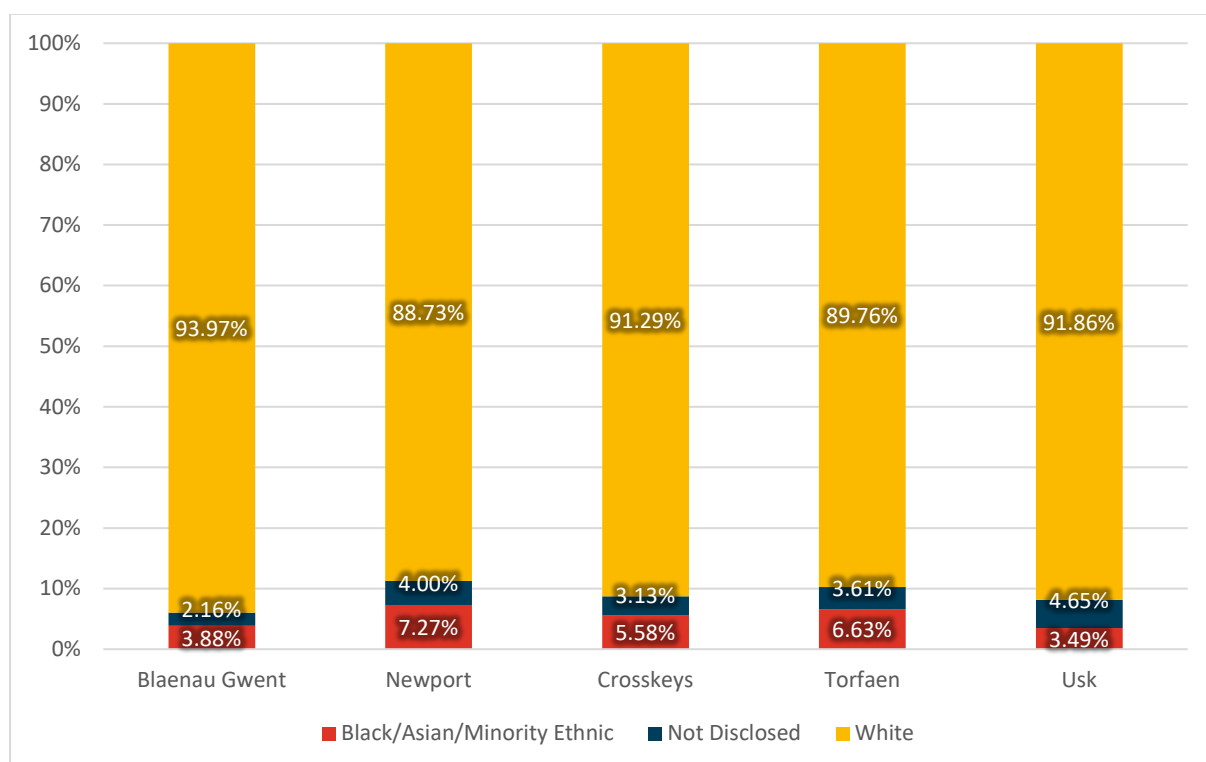


The college recognises it has an ageing staff population with a reduced number of younger employees joining the team. The college has created more succession and progression opportunities for our alumni students to join post education. More work with schools and community groups is also being undertaken to promote education as a career path.

We recognise that in the coming years over 10% of our workforce may be facing retirement and those individuals will need different support and development than many other colleagues. We have partnered with BITC in order to offer financial awareness, education and pension knowledge. In addition, leaving employment and commencing retirement can lead to mental health changes and therefore we are offering more support via our employee assistance programmes, Headspace App and CCAWS assistance programme. To show our commitment to age inclusion inter-sectionally, in 2022, we actively participated in BITC's Age-Inclusive Learning Network in 2022. We have developed an age-inclusive business action plan that will help Coleg Gwent become an age-inclusive employer.

Coupled with the statistics on gender we also recognise our duty to support our female colleagues who may be experiencing premenopausal and menopausal symptoms. Whilst the public education and awareness of menopause has improved in the last few years, we recognise the need for transparency and support in this area. Our Women Alliance network are creating more education and transparency around Menopause to ensure women experiencing any side effects are fully supported. To demonstrate the changes we have made in this area, in 2023 we signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge to demonstrate our commitment to taking action and to supporting colleagues.

Ethnicity



Coleg Gwent supports a number of communities within Wales with varying ethnicity demographics, these vary from Newport who report a 12.7% Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority population to Blaenau Gwent who report a 1.8% population. It is clear that with a 5% staff population of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority colleagues we sit between the average across our various geographical areas.

We only have 96% disclosure on this demographic and our Race Alliance Network is tasked with ensuring our colleagues are both educated and feel safe to discuss and disclose their ethnicity to the college.

In order to develop our minority ethnicity groups we have committed to being an Anti Racist college and created an Anti Racism Action plan, the priorities for building a solid foundation to advance anti-racism are below:

2022/23

- Ensure existing college policies fully address inappropriate behaviour around racism and other discriminatory practices
- Ensure that all Staff & Learners have equality of opportunity to achieve
- Value equally all members of the college community

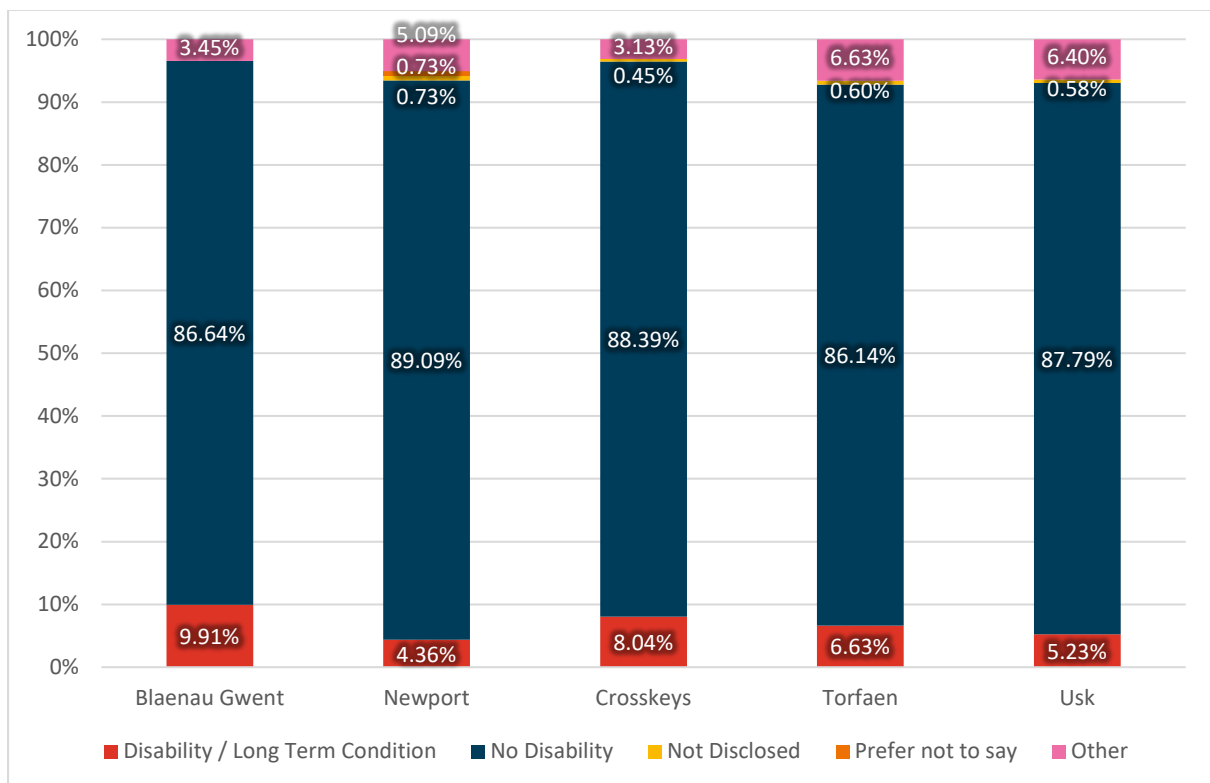
2023/24

- Promote positive attitudes towards life in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith society
- Encourage Staff & Learners to acquire the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to recognise and challenge examples of racism they may meet in their lives

The leadership team are committed to embarking on a journey of awareness, understanding and change to create both anti racist employer practices and to embed in the learner experience. The leadership team have attended various development and awareness sessions to educate themselves for the production of the anti racist plan. To ensure robust and well-rounded decision making, CLT & SLT is determined to achieve an appropriate balance of skills and experience on the Board. Our commitment is to ensure the leadership and workforce reflects the diversity of contemporary Wales.

We know recruitment and transparency is a key element of diversifying and therefore the college has implemented a guaranteed interview scheme for ethnic minorities which it will continue to track to measure its impact on our ethnicity as a college. We also aim to voluntarily disclose our Ethnic Pay Gap by December 2024.

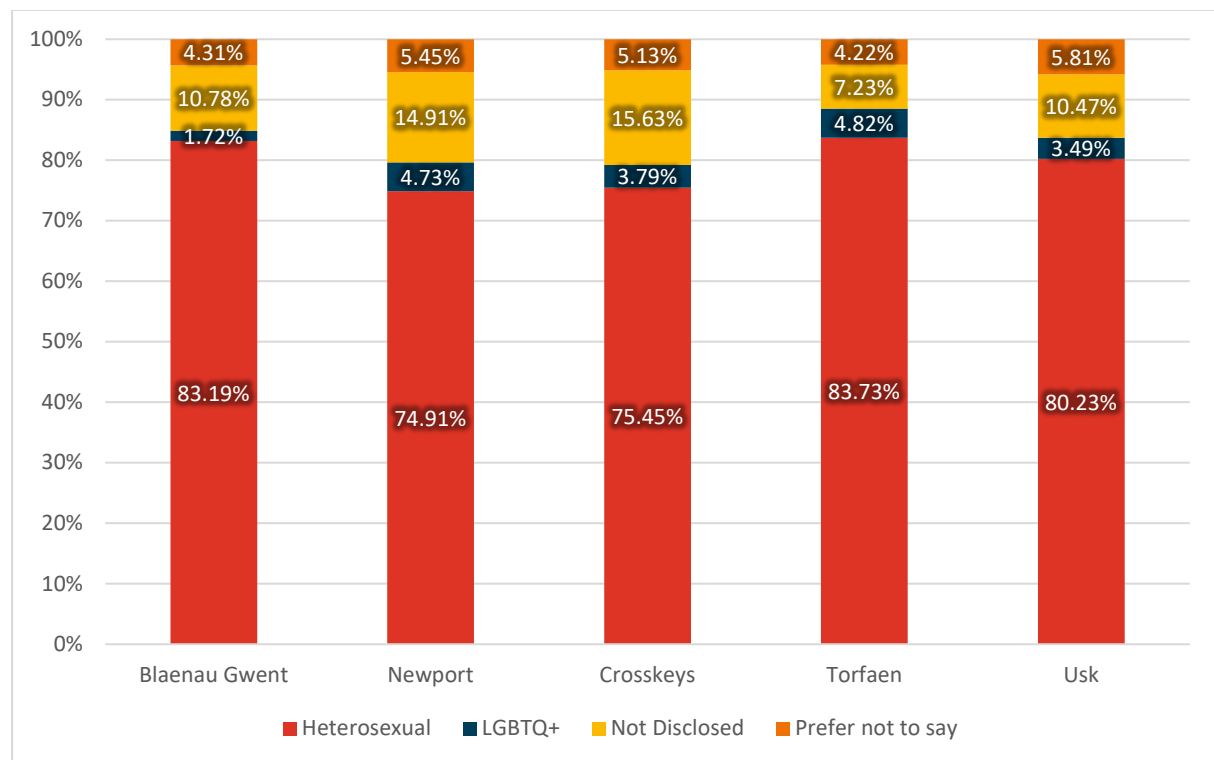
Disability



We have a small percentage of employees who have not disclosed within this area which we aim to reduce further. When the fields were set up on our system, it included an 'other' option which 7% of our employees have selected. Through our Enabled Network, Coleg Gwent wants to ensure that our colleagues are both educated and feel safe to discuss and disclose their disability to the college. In addition, as well as encouraging disclosure, the college is able to adapt, make reasonable adjustments and be understanding of everyone's needs.

The college continues to run its guaranteed interview scheme for disability and is working toward becoming a Disability Confident Employer.

Sexual Orientation



The college has a strong LGBTQ+ network which has over 50 active members. The college has created a lot of awareness and partnerships with the LGBTQ+ community by supporting Pride Month, attending Pride events and participating in awareness training throughout the year.

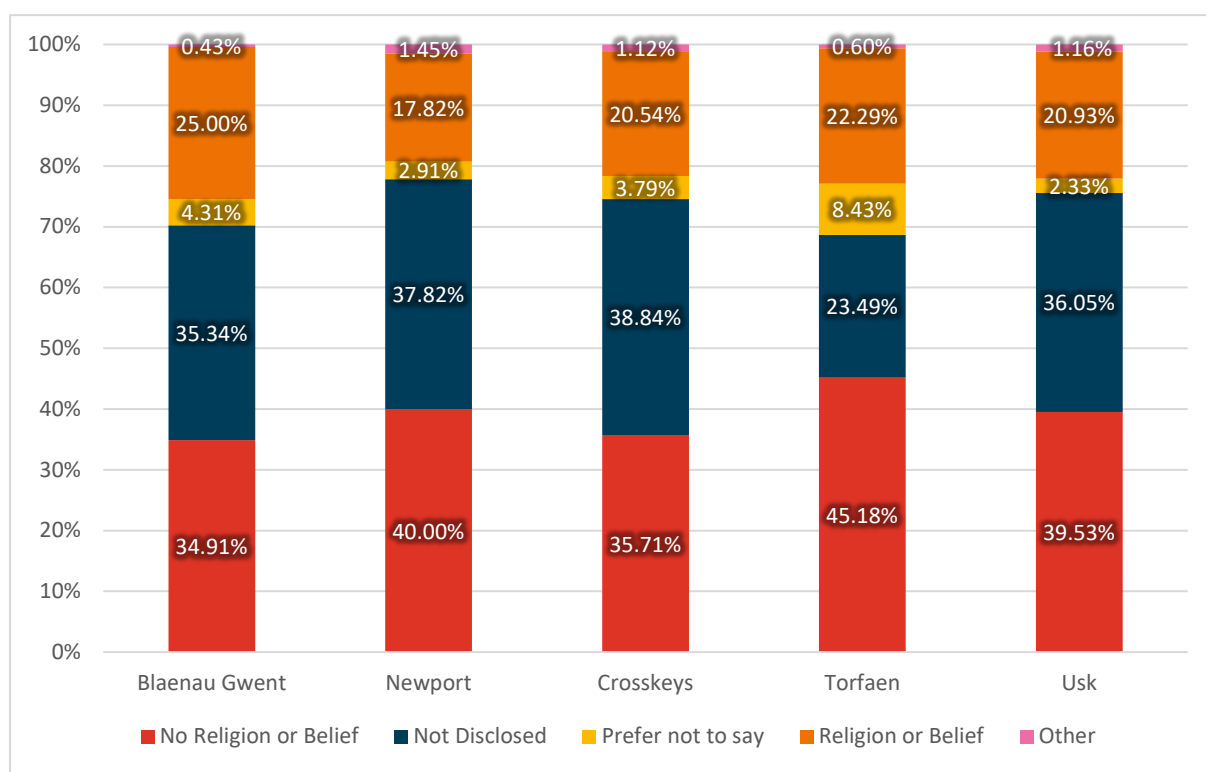
The college recognises the recent commitment from Welsh Government to reduce discrimination towards all members of the LGBTQ+ recognising the impact which can occur to confidence, employment and opportunity. The college has a transgender policy which is contained within the Equality Policy recognising that some members of the LGBTQ+ community need workplace adaptations and some colleagues may need educating and access to readily available information in order to better understand and support each other.

The college would like to reduce the percentage of colleagues who have not disclosed their sexual orientation. Whilst we appreciate individuals' privacy and recognise that some individuals' disclosure may change in this regard, we want to ensure that everyone feels safe to disclose who they are in Coleg Gwent and will be free from discrimination.

Religion or Belief

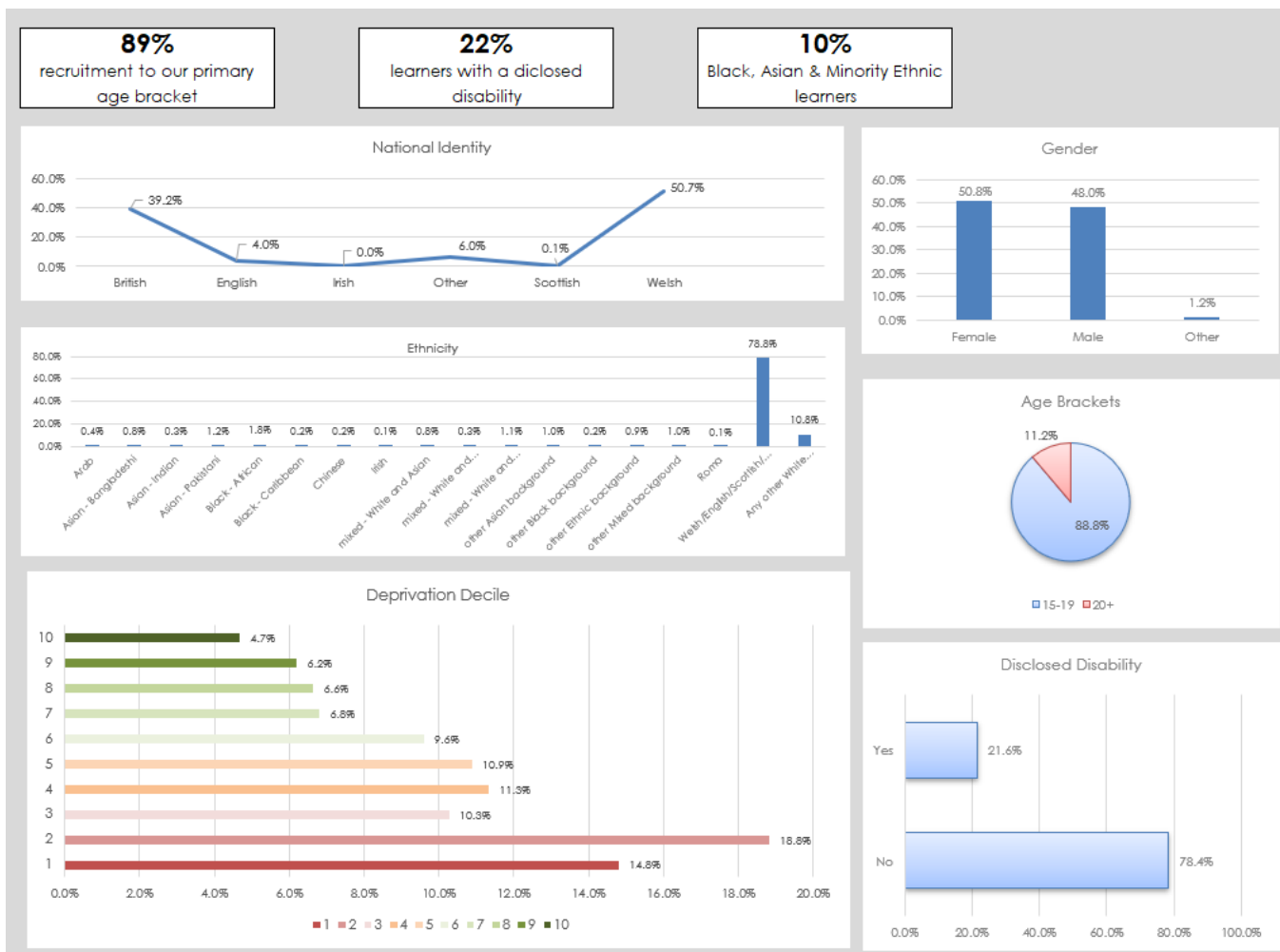
We recognise that religion and belief is the highest non-disclosed demographic amongst our staff. Some of the reasons for this is historic, as we didn't in the past, ask for this information and therefore it was not part of the initial set up for employees. Now however we do complete an annual declaration process and encourage individuals to update their information. We recognise that with 36% yet to declare we still have some work to do to improve this area.

We have an inclusion calendar which has multiple religious festivals and events, celebrating and bringing awareness of different beliefs and making all colleagues feel included. We recognise that some employees do not have religious or spiritual beliefs, however understanding and respect of others is important to team success.



13. Our Learners

This report will review the enrolment data of our learners across the various EDI strands. The aim of the report is to identify the backgrounds of our learners, to break down any barriers and to give our learners the most equitable learning experiences.



Graphic 1: Infographic of overarching summarised data

EDI Data

Notes for the reader

The College comprehensively tracks our learner EDI data through our enrolment processes. The fields captured are dictated largely by the guidance provided in the LLWR manual from the Welsh Government. Primarily, we monitor the following:

- Learners' age;
- Deprivation status;
- Disability;
- Ethnicity;
- Gender;
- National identity.

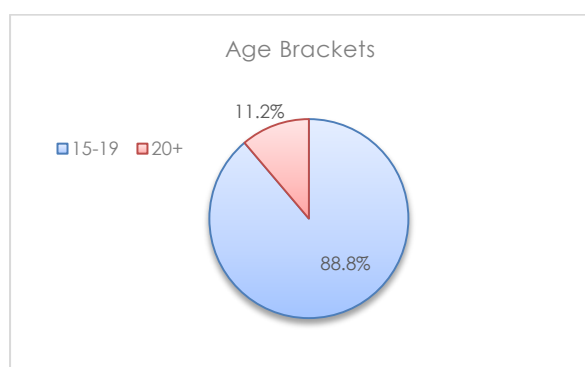
Coleg Gwent is committed to ensuring that we offer fair and equitable chances for all of our learners. Part of this aim involves comprehensively tracking our learner EDI profiles, therefore ensuring that we can put appropriate and proper support in place for learners, as well as emulating our real-world diverse society and workplaces.

To summarise the data, the majority of our learners are of a White ethnic background, not with a disclosed disability, and from a comparatively deprived socio-economic area. There is a slight weighting in favour of female learners over males, whilst the number of learners identifying as an 'Other' gender has increased since the previous year. It would be fair to comparing Coleg Gwent with other local, similarly sized FE institution, we have a more diverse ethnic profile of learners than our counterparts. In terms of Physical Disability / Neurodivergence, there is currently insufficient data available to ascertain the number of our learners with a physical disability/neurodivergence. As we move through the year, it is expected that we will ascertain more information to such, and this will be reported on at a later data capture

The reader is asked to be mindful that developmental changes are planned for capturing our learner data, and that further conversations will be had on this in November for the 2024-25 academic year intake.

Age

The College, and FE sector in general, is motivated to achieve full time, FE enrolments in order to better the life changes of our young people and to claim the relevant funding opportunities. In line with our recruitment priorities, the significant majority of our learners are within the 15-19 age bracket. A higher percentage of FT, FE learners this academic year are within this group compared to last year, of which 81.0% of learners were between these ages. More learners in 22-23 were therefore aged 20 or above.



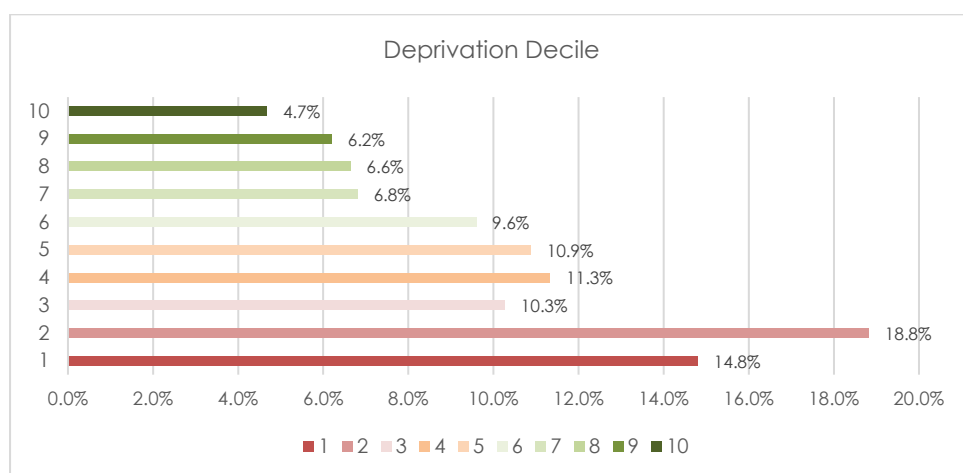
Country of Origin

The country of origin is not yet captured in our dataset, but there are plans to include this going forward.

Deprivation

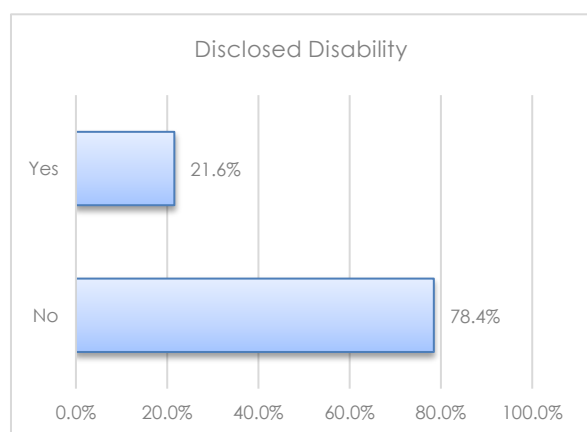
Over half of our current learners fall within deciles one to four, those being the most deprived areas according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (the WIMD). Recruitment of our learners is primarily from within the following Local Authority areas, and the WIMD status of our learners is reflective of our communities:

- Newport;
- Monmouthshire
- Caerphilly
- Torfaen
- Blaenau Gwent



Disability

This academic year, around three and a half times more learners do not have a disclosed disability, compared to those who do. There is a narrower gap this year between those disabled and not; 1.2% more learners are listed as with some form of disability this year than in 22-23.



Physical Disability / Neurodivergence

There is currently insufficient data available to ascertain the number of our learners with a physical disability/neurodivergence. As we move through the year, it is expected that we will ascertain more information to such, and this will be reported on at a later data capture.

Ethnicity

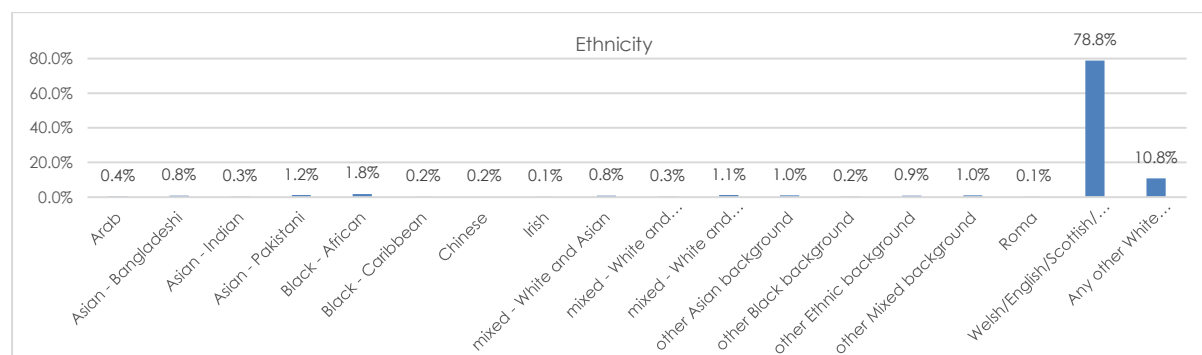
Those of any White background constitute nearly 90% of our full time, FE learners. Upon reviewing the data of our equivalent Higher Education learners, there is slightly more ethnic diversity amongst our FE learners. Those of any White background are more numerous in our full time HE population.

The author notes the occurrences of blanks in the ethnicity dataset, including unknown and undisclosed values:

Blanks – 27

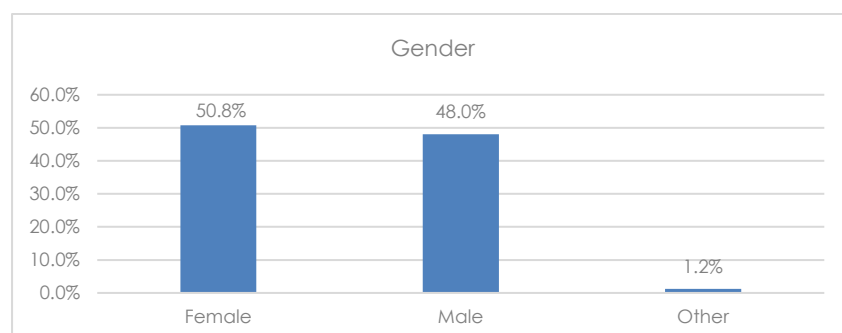
Information refused – 23

Not known – 61



Gender

There are 181 more female learners than there are males. Learners who identify as an 'other' gender account for 1.2%, or 81 learners. The number of learners in this category is increasing. In the 22-23 academic year, there were 57 learners whom identified as such, or 0.8%. Coleg Gwent's recruitment, selection and career progression support aims to ensure that learners of any gender get equal changes to develop and advance.



Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity

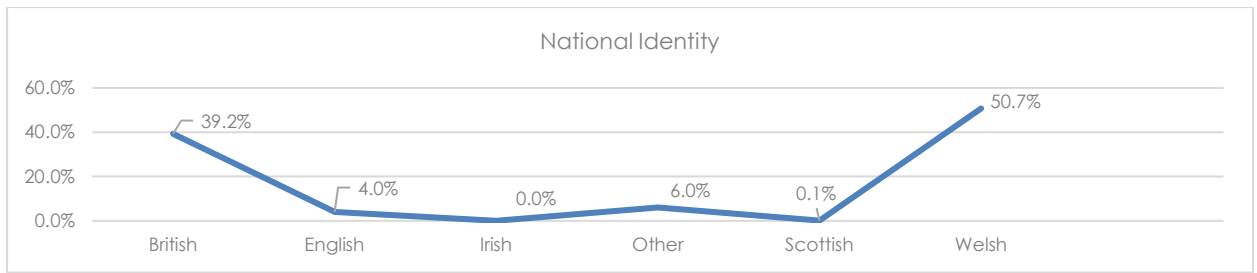
This category of data is not currently recorded centrally by the College. There is work being undertaken, however, to capture this information going forward.

Language

The primary language of our learners is not yet captured in our data, however, the appropriate steps for this data capture are being implemented currently.




National Identity

Our dataset reviews the data of our full time, further education learners for the 2023-24 academic year. The chart below provides a visual of the learners' national identity status. Please note, that those without information (25 learners), or those whom have chosen not to respond (35 learners) have been excluded so as to not distort the data.



Appendix

1. Diversity Strategy

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY 2022 - 2026		
FOUNDATION	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION
College Vision & Mission	P6. To promote equality, diversity and inclusion and to actively challenge all forms of discrimination	How will we measure success?
<p>Vision By 2026 Coleg Gwent will be the College of choice, actively working with our communities, where all learners and staff are treated with respect, achieve their full potential and benefit from the best resources in an inspirational learning environment.</p> <p>Mission To further integrate diversity and inclusion into the college culture to gain maximum advantage from the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive workplace.</p>	<p>The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy identifies key priorities for achieving improved equality outcomes in a targeted and consistent way across the college.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive a diverse, respectful, and inclusive culture in all HR practice and College processes. Create a culture where everyone feels they can be themselves. Provide support, and professional development to all staff regardless of their background. Ensuring the diversity of our colleagues and learners is celebrated and inclusion promoted. <p>1. Drive a diverse, respectful, and inclusive culture - Senior Leadership Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antiracism training for all staff with annual refreshers via our Inclusive Language college toolkit to model a culture of diversity and inclusivity from the top down. Visibly sponsor staff run affinity networks & ED&I champions to promote diverse and inclusive practices throughout the college. Visibly promote knowledge development through all engagement activities for all staff and check progress via annual staff ED&I surveys. Encourage open and honest two-way feedback and use staff feedback to inform decisions informing colleagues how their opinions played a part. <p>2. Ensure we are welcoming to all and create a culture where everyone feels they can be themselves - Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments to make sure there is ample opportunity to understand the impact groups may experience within department practice. Promote the inclusive language toolkit in all department practice Allow team members opportunities to participate fully in all Affinity Networks and engagement activities. Use inclusive resourcing practice including blind resourcing, guaranteed interview scheme, advertising, job descriptions and diverse recruitment panels and provide a framework for interviewing for recruiting managers. <p>3. Provide support, encouragement, and development to all colleagues regardless of their background - All Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Succession plan for women, disabled and ethnic minority representation including at the most senior levels of the college. Externally invest in targeted outreach and work in partnership with Trade Unions consistently, ensuring that colleagues are informed, involved and are treated fairly. Uphold the inclusive language toolkit and challenge behaviours that are contrary to the Code of Conduct or the Equality Policy. <p>4. Ensuring the diversity of our colleagues and learners is celebrated and inclusion promoted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed ED&I into the college curriculum framework from 23/24 through improving programme of training to increase awareness of diversity and inclusion best practice for all levels of leaders and managers. Roll out Reverse mentoring across the college to allow experience exchange among different generations and strengthen staff loyalty towards the college. Equip leaders to improve social mobility which will build on existing partnerships ensuring that the College is an Employer of choice and an exemplar in the ED&I arena. Empower Affinity Networks to drive change in all college practice and policy in line with key KPIs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The College will gain the Investors in Diversity accreditation by 2024 to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into Coleg Gwent's organisational culture. DEI Engagement scores of 75+ maintained between now and 2026. Inclusive resourcing with 5% increase in ethnicity and disability. Gender Pay Gap Report measure equal pay for men, women, and non-binary in all positions, voluntarily publishing our ethnicity pay gap by 2024. The staff diversity fully represents the diversity of our learners and the communities we serve Increased knowledge and engagement from staff in all Affinity events.
<p>Our Diversity Statement:</p>  <p>By embracing diversity, we foster an open and welcoming environment where people of all backgrounds can learn and work together. We're committed to equity, inclusion, and wellbeing, with our diverse campuses offering academic, social, and wider community benefits.</p> <p>See full statement here</p>		
<p>Our Values</p>  <p>At Coleg Gwent, our core values promote respect and acceptance for all. We're determined to do everything we can to make sure our college is a place where everyone, staff or learner, feels safe and respected. We should all hold the expectation that a place of learning will be an inclusive place that has the potential to change peoples' lives for the better.</p>		
<p>Diversity Statistic</p> 		<p>How will we hold ourselves accountable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring progress (including ED&I KPI's) is monitored. Encourage personal profile disclosure in itrap system to achieve 80% disclosure across all protected characteristics by 2024 ensuring progress (including ED&I KPI's). Reporting at quarterly SLT meetings. Reported to staff throughout the academic year via the ED&I Dashboard Completion of annual ED&I survey, ensuring year on year comparisons are made. Ensuring that action plans for improvement in relation to the Staff ED&I Survey and Strategic Equality plan are developed and delivered effectively. Ensuring full completion of the ED&I policy.