

**SECTION 75 OF THE
NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998**

PROGRESS REPORT

**Report on the implementation of equality and good relations duties
under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998**

APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021



North West Regional College



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2020-21**

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<http://www.nwrc.ac.uk/Equality/>

Signature: *Michelle Breslin*

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2020 and March 2021

If you require this report in an alternative format, please contact us using the contact details above

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme - Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

In 2020-21, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved. Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Throughout 2020/2021, new ways of working were established to ensure the business of the College continued throughout the global Covid-19 pandemic, with both curriculum and support areas adapting to these new methods during these unprecedented and challenging times. An increased teamwork ethos arose to provide support to staff and students, such as the provision of laptops and mental health support during this difficult time.

This Progress Report outlines the valuable work that progressed through the determination of dedicated staff, not to let the pandemic undermine the College's commitment to its Equality Scheme and to the promotion of Equality

Details of how the promotion of Equality did progress despite the challenges as a result of the pandemic are as follows:

- Equality is naturally embedded into all aspects of the training delivery. All training opportunities carried out are focused on ensuring that there is an improved learning experience for all participants. All participants are offered the opportunity to complete detailed evaluations. These are scrutinised and any concerns are followed up. Individual needs of all learners are met in all training and differentiated learning materials are provided, as appropriate.
- Middletown Centre for Autism offered another training session this year to staff discussing the difficulties and issues experienced by students with autism in Further and Higher Education. The session contained an overview of what exactly autism is and how it may impact on students, as well as supportive ideas that could be implemented in the College and classroom.
- The Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment ran three sessions at the College this year to both teaching staff and support staff on Disability Awareness Training. The purpose of this training was to increase staff's understanding of disability and focus on how staff can support the development of a more inclusive workplace for employees and customers (students). This training gave participants a better understanding of the impact of society on disabled people and provided information on good customer care for people with disabilities.

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- All lecturing staff are encouraged to complete TAQA training which focuses on the promotion of Equality in all aspects of Training and Assessment. This ensures that staff understand how legal and best practice requirements may have implications for the training and assessment processes with regard to gender, disability, race/culture/religion and language.
- A weekly Induction programme to support all new staff, both full-time and part-time, focused on embedding Equality in all aspects of College life. This includes a focus on legislative requirements through mandatory training including Equality, SENDO and Safeguarding. Cultural diversity information/training is also made available to all staff which also helps to heighten awareness of all anti-discrimination risks. There is also a workshop on Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) during the Induction programme to ensure that staff are informed about this important research.
- Launched in November 2019, the DIAL Centre has supported a multitude of collaborative engagements across the Health and Social Care sector, as well as other vocational areas. The DIAL Centre has firm links with organisations from the Housing sector, Adult Health and Social Care sector, universities, awarding organisations, and across several professional disciplines including occupational therapy, social care workers and nursing. The DIAL has been integrated to teaching and learning within the Department of Health and Sport. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) identified it as an excellent resource following an inspection in 2020. The next step for the DIAL Centre involves the launch of NWRC Academy of Enhanced Care and Clinical Skills, which will publish a prospectus of opportunities for upskilling and continuing professional development in Autumn 2021. As the sector continues to strive for excellence in practice, and the introduction of new roles, this academy will support the growth and development of those working in the Health and Social Care sector.
- The College encouraged the production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to meet the needs of medical and care staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was through the Business Support Centre and Product Design Centre based in Limavady. PPE was collected across all areas of the College, including Hair and Beauty, Science and Health and Social Care to support medical and care staff.
- The College's award winning Careers Academy continued to provide essential support to students during the reporting period.
 - In addition to the weekly Careers workshops and guidance on offer, the Careers Academy Team delivered 17 additional recruitment campaigns and themes in response throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, raising the profile of the College and the promotion of positive mental health.

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- As part of Virtual Higher Education week in February 2021, there was a timetable of student profiles shared via a zoom interview. The number of views reached 1,600 and 9 course queries on one of the Virtual Higher Education videos, raising the profile of the College, the Higher Education provision and the progression pathways that are available.
- As a result of the “*Careers Academy are here for you*” campaign, the Careers Academy received 53 new followers on the Careers Social Media channels, increasing awareness of North West Regional College and the Careers Academy. In addition, the Careers Team delivered 63 one-to-one remote guidance sessions from open day and the three days that followed. This resulted in 14 students changing their first course option to another course, the same level but only a different subject area via the “*talk don’t walk*” initiative.
- The Elemental workshop was delivered to 23 class groups. Since then, 49 students have registered on the platform and 10 have been self-referrals. This has had a positive impact, enabling support interventions for students in need.
- The National Careers Week video created by the Careers Team was shared 25 times and had a reach of 3,000. Derry City and Strabane District Council also used this as part of their intelligent cities campaign, raising awareness of Careers.
- The Widening Access and Participation Officer engaged with 35 current students and prospective students and provided one-to-one advice and guidance regarding careers. This took place from August 2020 to May 2021. In addition, they completed 43 one-to-one meetings with students regarding financial assistance through the HE Bursary and WAP Scholarship.
- As part of the new Carers Support Team at the College, the Widening Access and Participation Officer was appointed as the Carers’ Support Officer and has developed a new student support system for young adult carers, including the creation of an online guide for Young Adult Carers Guide to studying at the College. Engagement events organised included a ‘*Carers & Coffee Morning*’, which gave Young Adult Carers the opportunity to get together with their peers in a safe and friendly environment. Support was at hand through the Carers Support Team. A partnership has been made with Action for Children and Barnardos to offer support for the College’s Young Adult Carers. Since the new Carers Support Team began in January 2021, the College has worked closely with six young adult carers, offering one-to-one support and guidance.
- The Widening Access and Participation Officer worked closely with teams in Student Services to develop online content for students. With the Safeguarding Team, posters were developed, ie, ‘*What to Do If You Are*

Feeling Anxious' and *'10 Tips to Help NWRC Students Look After Their Mental Health in Lockdown'*, and with the Student Union created videos for student induction at the College. Since December 2020, the Widening Access and Participation Officer used the College's Student Services social media platforms to post regular updates and to increase awareness around Widening Access and Participation areas. From December 2020 to March 2021, the Widening Access posts reached a substantial number of people via Facebook, some of which are posts in partnership with the Safeguarding Team surrounding mental health. The total number of people reached was 4,005, with 259 engagements.

- Due to Covid-19, online platforms became the approach the College undertook to be able to interact with students. Because of the wider reach, the Widening Access and Participation Officer engaged with WAP groups, offered videos for a school fair to ensure that all their pupils and parents were aware of the options available for them at the College. They also connected with youth groups to highlight the College to young participants in their programme, with the possible inspiration for them to attend North West Regional College.
- The Safeguarding Team continually promote positive mental health throughout each academic year. From September 2020 to January 2021, the team carried out 154 listening ear referrals with students. The most common issues for students continues to be depression and anxiety. The total number of referrals presented for these conditions was 81. Other issues highlighted included bereavement and parental divorce/separation. The College's Safeguarding Canvas site was updated routinely with mental health information, videos and support contact details from the Western Health and Social Care Trust. In addition, the Team also liaised with mental health organisations and other relevant groups such as Start 360, Aware NI, Nexus, ZEST, CAMS, GP's and mental health practitioners from local health centres, Adult Mental Health Services, Health Improvement Western Health Social Care Trust, PSNI, NSPCC, Housing Executive, Apex, Recovery College, Parenting NI, Social Services, Action Mental Health, Men's Shed, Men's Action Network, Praxis, Common Youth, Elemental and Ascertainment.
- From September 2020, all students that returned to site following the Covid-19 lockdown had to complete a return to study questionnaire that outlined the Covid-19 regulations and guidance and were advised of the need to complete a health questionnaire. If an underlying health condition was declared, the Safeguarding Officer was responsible for ensuring suitable arrangements were in place for those students. This resulted in 251 students receiving support from the Safeguarding Team. A Health and Safety video was also delivered for each campus.
- At the time of reporting, the Safeguarding Team are working towards achieving a Quality Standard in Carer Support accreditation. The College will

be supported to undertake the Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support Accreditation (QSCS), which provides opportunities to review and improve best practice, provide greater consistency for young adult carers across the College and develop a sustainable approach to carer support. An update on the progress made on this Quality Standard will be outlined in the next annual progress report in 2021/2022.

- The College joined with Elemental Software in a partnership which will revolutionise the way students can access support services and programmes. This is a first for a Further Education College and by adopting Elemental's Digital Social Prescribing Platform, it will enhance student wellbeing, build resilience, and promote new ways of working, using social prescribing. The College introduced this digital prescribing due to the impact Covid-19 has affected young people.

The platform will bring the College's internal services together but will also be able to connect students to other services that are available in the wider community. Students will be able to make their own self-referral or referred through a staff member. This will all be co-ordinated through the Safeguarding Team and supported via the Careers Academy.

- The Safeguarding Team promoted World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2020 on social media sites and a positive mental health awareness tree displayed in the foyer of Strand Road campus. Mental Health Awareness badges were purchased from the Mental Health Foundation and made available for staff and students. The Safeguarding Team also promoted World Aids Day on social media sites on 1 December 2020.
- The College was successful in obtaining the Career Ready College of the Year for Northern Ireland, sponsored by Aviva UK. Students undergo preparation for their future using one-to-one mentoring from industry professionals, paid internships, and masterclasses. Support is also received from the Careers Academy through interview preparations, Team Building and Developing Communication skills.
- A new development has begun through collaboration with TELS, Academy of Excellence and Equality on online BSL / ISL training for staff through the cooperation of relevant signing staff. It will incorporate day-to-day queries that the College's front line staff encounter which could be converted into good interactive learning objects. It is anticipated to have this developed for the start of the next academic year.
- The College's Equality Working Group continued to meet during the reporting period, through Microsoft Teams. As a result, several actions were achieved. Examples included:

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- A new Transgender process was completed to support current and prospective students ensuring those who have identified as transgender can continue their studies in a safe and supportive environment. One-to-one support will be provided through the Head of Learner Services. The process was discussed with, and supported by, the Equality Officer, the Rainbow Project and Cara-Friend. In addition, further discussions are in place with Stonewall to determine further support that the College can provide for the LGBTQ+ community;
- A new process has been put in place to provide students with a temporary car park space, where appropriate, due to a student's disability. This will be arranged through Learning Link and their referral processes and through agreement from Learning Link, Estates, and the Quality Enhancement Unit;
- New consultees were added to the College's consultation list representing disability and religious belief Section 75 equality categories. In addition, work is in progress to streamline the consultation process through the use of electronic methods;
- A photography competition was organised to raise awareness of World Food Day in October 2020, with the successful applicant receiving £75. In addition, the group agreed to raise awareness of a number of days.
- The College continued to raise awareness of equality related themes, especially in the area of mental health. For example, World Suicide Prevention Day, World Mental Health Day and Children's Mental Health Week were all promoted. In addition, encouraging staff to wear odd socks promoted Anti-bullying week. Also, for International Men's Day staff were encouraged to appreciate the men in their lives.
- Further promotion included World Aids Day (through Student Services), LGBTQ+ History Month, International Day for Older Persons, International day of Women and Girls in Science, Young Carers Action Day, International day of Happiness, World Day for Cultural Diversity, International Purple Day to support epilepsy, and Deaf Awareness Week.
- The College has again obtained the Louder than Words accreditation;
- The Group attended LGBTQ+ Training provided by the Rainbow Project with all in attendance commenting that it was very beneficial and impressive;
- The Group has increased its membership with representation from HR Services and Health and Sports. This will ensure that equality will remain integral to the work of College staff;

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- A new Student representative from the Students' Union attended all meetings including the training provided by the Rainbow Project;
- The College's Policy Screening Process has progressed with staff in a number of functional areas receiving advice on the process involved in equality screening their respective policies. In addition, further screening advice / resources will be provided by the Equality Commission;
- The College signed up to the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme. This organisation dedicates itself to helping businesses identify customers with a hidden disability and to become confident to be able to provide additional help or assistance if needed. This has been beneficial during the pandemic for those who could be exempt from wearing facemasks;
- The Group continued with the extension of the period poverty initiative across all campuses, which was again supported by the Directorate. This will continue into the next academic year;
- The Group continued to encourage all departments to undertake the Equality and Diversity online training. In line with the Equality Improvement Plan action to consider further online equality training, the Group agreed that the training itself should be updated with new fresh training resources. This was achieved and rolled out during 2020/2021;
- The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 created a duty on public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing policies, strategies, and plans. Although Further Education Colleges are not listed in the Act at present, the Department for the Economy have asked Colleges to apply the provisions of the legislation, where necessary. The College has agreed, upon discussion with DAERA and the Leadership and Management Team that Rural Needs Impact Assessments (RNIAAs) will be conducted for high level strategies only, with support provided by DAERA as necessary. Work is ongoing at present to create a consultee list for RNIAAs.
- The Learning Link Support Workers provided learning support to 69 students on mainstream courses. The Learning Link has worked with the Sector to agree a DSA Quality Framework alongside the Department for the Economy. In addition, Learning Link continued to assess and create exam contracts for registered students on advice from the Joint Council for Qualifications, albeit examinations having been cancelled, with 405 Exam Contracts created.
- The Learning Link created and disseminated 27 Exemption Cards to those students on site who were exempt from wearing a facemask.
- There has been a significant review of Learning Link's database in line with the SENDO Committee's recommendations and is active. Learning Link has

continued its presence at all five campuses of the College therefore being able to ensure students are assessed at their preferred campus.

- Learning Link have been liaising with another Further Education College to create Online Pastoral Forms and a Learning Support Database through the Education Business System (EBS). This project is ongoing.
- Learning Link have provided support to 432 students who required basic support with a further 66 requiring discrete provision. Furthermore, Learning Link continued to culture strong links with a range of public and community supports groups including the Education Authority, WHSCT, CEDAR Foundation, Disability Employment Centre, RNIB, Action on Hearing Loss (now RNID) and Middletown Centre for Autism.
- The Learning Link Team have commenced work on the Autism Impact Award and Accreditation with plans to appoint two Autism Champions. An update will be provided on the progress of the Accreditation in the next reporting period.
- The College's Students' Union and Wellbeing joined forces to ensure student welfare was paramount during the Covid-19 pandemic and as a result, they won two Project Based Learning Awards (Sector and College) as well as the Union of Students in Ireland Student Achievement Award. They also developed online material for students to support them with any mental health concerns ([Mental Health Videos](#)). In addition, the Students' Union are to create a Boccia Club, a Paralympic sport similar to bowls. It is hoped that recruitment will begin in September 2021 in conjunction with UUSU Magee.
- The Learner Services Team have undertaken other activities during the reporting period. These include:
 - the continued delivery of the Inspire Project within Urfuture Careers Academy, the aspirational and inclusive support of the Widening Access and Participation Plan and Access to Success. The College continued to support students to embrace Further Education as they progress;
 - continued to have Strategy Meetings between the Safeguarding Officer and the Learning Link Staff to review current and all prospective students that fall within the remit of Learning Link;
 - through collaboration and partnerships, the College continued its intention to break down perceived barriers to education, widening access to all students regardless of soci-economic background. Induction was aimed to encourage participation and communication across Departments and in student class groups through 'Team Activities'. Induction continued to incorporate a video element which allowed new

part-time and full-time students, who were unable to attend the scheduled induction sections, to become familiar with the staff and range of services offered;

- continued strong links with the Western Health and Social Care Trust and development of a student finance guide for Social Workers ensuring Care Leavers are supported financially in their pathway to Further and Higher Education;
- The Library had an increase of remotely accessible resources for students. In addition, Covid-19 introduced new ways of working for library staff. This included enhanced digital library provision, encouraged computer booking systems online, facilitated the distribution of laptops to students and the distribution of Lateral Flow Test kits. This all required new skills for library staff in order to help students and staff navigate and troubleshoot the Covid-19 environment.
- The Inspire Employability Project seeks to remove the barriers for those groups and individuals who face challenges in engaging in formal education. The College's inclusive and flexible approach allowed participants to select the employability skills training most appropriate to meet their needs and aims to provide them with employability skills from which to launch further training or study.
- The College continues to be committed to making lives better for students, businesses, the community, and staff and aims to create a great place to work and in doing so, positively impact on the health and wellbeing of staff and students. Please see the [College's Development Plan 2020/21](#) for further information.
- The College, with collaboration from another FE College, helped local businesses steer through Brexit, offering the means to gain a valuable Level 3 qualification from the Institute of Export and International Trade. The Department for the Economy funded the course.
- The College's Business Support Unit continued to support a number of companies through one-to-one bespoke non-accredited training. For example, they supported one early year's organisation that had increased clients presenting with complex issues and agreed that support was needed. The BSU supported the organisation by directing them to the qualifications provided by the College to overcome the problem. Staff were trained in specialist Early Years Award, Mindfulness and Reducing Anxiety. In addition, curriculum staff helped the organisation develop a sensory and growing garden.
- In addition, the BSU provided a course that was specifically targeted to female applicants. This course was Future Females ILM Level 5 and had 35

individuals enrolled. An update on progress will be reported in the next annual report.

- The College's Governing Body and Leadership & Management Team are committed to ensuring the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. All statutory returns to the Equality Commission are reported to, and approved by, the Governing Body. In addition, and through the College's review of the Equality Commission's Section 75 Self-Audit Checklist, the Quarterly Policy Screening Reports will be tabled at the Leadership and Management Team meetings.
- The College has continued their working partnership with the Innovation and Recovery project to integrate and develop workshops for staff and students during the academic year. The courses developed were delivered by people with lived experience of mental health issues, alongside those with professional experience and knowledge, with the aim of helping staff and students tap into their personal resilience and resourcefulness; become experts in their own self-care and improve work towards achieving their goals and ambitions.
- Young people who took part in North West Regional College's Prince's Trust Team Programme used their skills to help in a charity project remembering '*Those Lost and Loved in 2020*.' The students handcrafted Christmas baubles for a special Christmas project with the Brighter Days group, in partnership with Derry and Strabane District Council. Each bauble was inscribed with the name of a family member or loved one who passed away during 2020. The baubles were then delivered by the College's Students Services Team, via the River Foyle with the help of Driftwood Canoe Club. The baubles were then placed on Christmas trees at the Peace Garden in Foyle Street and the Alley Theatre courtyard in Strabane, with families receiving a small version of the bauble to keep for themselves.
- Following on from Derry and Strabane's success in becoming a member of UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities, a Virtual Learning Festival took place in July 2020, with the College being one of the key contributors. Lecturers from the College hosted a series of online events ranging from swing dance style combinations, health, and sport activities to include tips for a healthy lifestyle, first aid and holistic health as well as online cooking demos. The College's Careers Academy Team also ran a series of CV and interview preparation workshops. Also, during the Festival, the Careers Academy highlighted the importance of transversal skills via video which received 3,800 views and 14 enquiries about transversal skills workshops. This raised the profile of the College and the workshops available.
- Since the renewal of the contract with AccessAble, and up to May 2021, the College's Accessibility Guide had 1,613 page views on the AccessAble website. The information on the AccessAble website in relation to College

buildings is not only suitable for disabled people, but also for those who are older and who are parents with young children. The College has also been presented with a plaque to highlight its partnership with the organisation.

- Due to the nature of online interview processes during this reporting period because of Covid-19, the College did not receive any requests from applicants for reasonable adjustments.
- An example of reasonable adjustments in one Department highlighted the need for a variety of adaptations to ensure the full involvement of a student who uses a wheelchair. Adaptations included a change of venue to one more suitable for and accessible to the student, alternative transport arrangements to ensure optimum comfort and enjoyment and the selection of activities that would enable the student to participate fully (with adaptations in place). Further adapted equipment has also been considered in order to ensure the student can take part in climbing and canoeing activities.
- Finally, in relation to the disruption to work in the College due to Covid-19, the procedures that are in place in relation to Covid-19 have been led by the Head of the Quality Enhancement Unit, and with the assistance from the expertise of other areas/departments which were the Directorate, HR Services, Estates Manager, Health & Safety Officer, GrahamFM, IT Services Manager, Head of Learner Services, TELs Manager, Heads and Deputy Heads of Departments, Marketing Manager, Administration & Training Support Manager, Compliance Officer and with representatives from NIPSA, UCU and UNITE. Covid-19 risk assessments were completed fully to mitigate, where possible, the risk of community transmission. An incident report was designed and reviewed continuously with Lateral Flow Testing put in place as part of the Northern Ireland's Executive's phased plan to return to a normal education provision. Hopefully as the new academic year approaches, students and staff can return, with College business resuming including further progression of Equality.

Details of how the promotion of equality partially progressed or did not progress due to the pandemic are as follows. Please note these actions will remain within the College's Equality Agenda for 2021/2022.

- Building a trauma-informed environment across the College continued to be one of the key priorities for the Learning and Teaching Development Team. To this aim, a training programme was designed to help cultivate a trauma-sensitive learning environment at the College, which will help to improve outcomes for students. The online environment, however, is not considered a suitable vehicle for the delivery of this subject because of its emotional nature and the high potential for reactivity among participants. As a result, this training will recommence when classroom teaching is resumed in order to ensure safety and support.

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- Although participation in certain activities organised by the College's Health and Wellbeing Committee were deferred due to Covid-19, online sessions did take place. Staff were invited to attend various Inspire webinars and sessions such as *"Getting a Good Night Sleep"*, *"Nutrition in Menopause"* and *"Pandemic Pantry"*. Resources were also provided to staff on *"C-eeing is Believing – a focus on Calm, Consideration, Compassionate and Chilled"* as well as *"Mindfulness"*.
- The College continued its aim to work in partnership with Foyle Hospice where staff and students could donate clothing and other items to their charity shops in Derry~Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane to help assist young students experiencing hardship. Although not fully progressed due to the pandemic, this will remain on the College's Equality agenda and will hopefully be a success in the next academic year.
- The College continued to offer outreach provision to reach members of the public that are disadvantaged through its community partners in 50+ venues throughout Derry~Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane. Unfortunately, some of the classes covered in the Community Education Programme, for example, in Irish Street Community Association, were not able to progress due to Covid-19.
- Although the Group had arranged to work with CEDAR and Action on Hearing Loss (now RNID) in order to establish work placement opportunities for individuals with a disability, this was not possible due to Covid-19 and health and safety precautions. This work is ongoing and will be reconsidered at the beginning of the new academic year;
- As outlined in the last annual report, the College had over 130 staff members trained in the Just a Minute (JAM Card) training and had a plan to train a number of key individuals in the Students' Union to ensure that other students with learning difficulties and/or communication barriers were not disadvantaged when attending student union activities. Unfortunately, this was not progressed due to Covid-19. However, this training is scheduled again in the new academic year as staff and students return to the College.
- Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, links with the prison systems for those with criminal convictions to gain access to education, training and employment post release were put on hold. A further update will be provided in the next reporting period;
- The College's Erasmus+ funded projects unfortunately did not take place during this reporting period due to Covid-19 and Brexit issues, therefore no comments are possible in relation to these annual events that promoted social inclusion and equality. The College hopes that some projects take place in 2021/2022.

PART A

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2020-21 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Equality Improvement Plan attached.

PART A

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

- A new Transgender process has been completed to support current and prospective students ensuring those who have identified as transgender can continue their studies in a safe and supportive environment. The process has been discussed and supported by the Rainbow Project and Cara-Friend. In addition, further discussions are in place with Stonewall to determine additional support that the College can provide for the LGBTQ+ community.
- A new Student Services Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites for students has been established.
- The College joined with Elemental Software, in a partnership which will revolutionise the way students can access support services and programmes. This is a first for a Further Education College. The College introduced this digital prescribing due to the impact Covid-19 has impacted on young people.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices, or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

- By providing support to transgender students as well as those from other LGBTQ+ communities, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in participation at the College from the LGBTQ+ community.
- Due to the establishment of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites for students, equality events will be able to be promoted to all students and across all campuses over the next academic calendar.
- By adopting Elemental's Digital Social Prescribing Platform, it is anticipated this will enhance student wellbeing, build resilience, and promote new ways of working, using social prescribing.

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

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- As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

- As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

- As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

- Other *(please specify and give details):*

As a result of monitoring College Equality Scheme.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this has been actioned previously
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

All new job descriptions for College members of staff include the reference *“All staff have an obligation to comply with the statutory duties relating to section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and will be required to contribute to the implementation of the College’s Equality Scheme drawn up in accordance with this legislation.”*

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- [Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- Commitment to the full implementation for the Widening Access and Participation Plan continued to be a fundamental aspect of work within the College.
- Equality training is identified as mandatory and must be undertaken every 3 years. This ensures equality training features in all staff development plans.

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In the 2020-21 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? (*tick all that apply*)

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- [No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2020-21 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Please see Paragraph 5 above.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2020-21 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Not applicable

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2020-21 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

Not applicable – included in plan

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2020-21 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- [Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the promotion of equality
- [Action(s) to address the promotion of equality in a different way
- [Action(s) to address newly identified /recently prioritised actions to promote equality
- [Measures to address the promotion of equality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

- 10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

All the time Sometimes Never

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2020-21 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The College continued to consult with and new consulted with:

- ✓ Students through use of focus groups, students voice and social media platforms;
- ✓ Staff through exit questionnaires to ensure there were no issues in relation to equality of opportunity for staff;
- ✓ Groups and organisations on the College’s consultee list through provision of Quarterly Screening Reports;
- ✓ Groups and organisations to determine if they wished to become a member on the College’s consultee list;
- ✓ Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs as a result of the implementation of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process;
- ✓ LGBTQ+ groups in relation to new Transgender support for students’ process;
- ✓ Newly appointed staff in relation to service provided during recruitment process, including any issues in relation to equality of opportunity;
- ✓ The Sector Equality Co-ordinators Forum in relation to the promotion of equality throughout the six FE Colleges;
- ✓ The Equality Commission in respect of all consultations.

- 12 In the 2020-21 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

Face to face meetings

Focus groups

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- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*):

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

Not applicable

- 13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2020-21 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Not applicable

- 14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2020-21 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

<https://www.nwrc.ac.uk/assets/files/Equality-Scheme.pdf>

- 15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

33

- 16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2020-21:

33

Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

PART A

0
0

Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

All policies screened during the reporting period were screened out and listed on our website as part of the College's commitment to publish its Quarterly Return.

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Not applicable

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2020-21 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Not applicable

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2020-21 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No, already taken place
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

Please provide any details:

Not applicable

PART A

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Not applicable

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2020-21 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Not applicable

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2020-21, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Each academic year the College provides a variety of equality-related staff development sessions for staff. Outlined below is an indication of the training attended by members of staff and where applicable, an outline how each staff member evaluated the overall training. Due to Covid-19 however, the number of sessions available was restricted.

Course	No of Staff who attended / participated	Evaluation	Comments
Domestic Violence & Abuse Awareness (Level 1)	36 participants	Excellent 100%	The training session was very informative and interactive with lots of opportunities to get involved in discussions with the trainer and other participants. I really enjoyed it! I really enjoyed this training. I found the group very engaging and interactive. I thought the trainer was amazing. The trainer was very good at presenting the topic and very passionate and knowledgeable on the topic. I would recommend this course to other colleagues as it has certainly been very insightful for myself.
Disability Awareness Training	42 participants	Excellent 50% Good 50%	My position in the College is not a teaching role nor student facing but the training was excellent and it will make me think before I act

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Course	No of Staff who attended / participated	Evaluation	Comments
			<p>and speak when interacting with people who may have a disability.</p> <p>This session was relaxed and informative. There could have been more interaction at times but that's difficult through Zoom.</p> <p>Very comprehensive coverage of a challenging topic.</p>
<p>Workshops (<i>range of workshops including Autism Training</i>)</p> <p>Specifically the Autism Training</p>	126 participants	<p>Excellent 64% Very Good / Good 36%</p> <p>Excellent 85% Very Good 15%</p>	<p>Very good and very thorough with a lot of examples on how to help students.</p> <p>Good training sessions with interesting and knowledgeable presenters.</p> <p><i>[Helps]</i> support students with autism in class that may be struggling.</p> <p><i>[Provides]</i> more awareness of autism in the College Strategies to support autistic students.</p>
<p>Workshops (<i>range of workshops including Transgender Awareness & NSPCC Online Safety</i>)</p> <p>Specifically the Transgender Awareness Training</p> <p>Specifically the NSPCC Online Safety</p> <p>Specifically the Safeguarding in the Online Classroom</p>	120 participants	<p>Excellent 53% Very Good / Good 47%</p> <p>Excellent 53% Very Good / Good 47%</p> <p>Excellent 63% Very Good / Good 37%</p> <p>Excellent 58% Very Good / Good 42%</p>	<p>I enjoyed these sessions more than I imagined despite the fact they had to be delivered remotely. In fact, I think it was easier, less stressful.</p> <p>The conference was outstanding and given the limitations of the speakers being online they were excellent. Really enjoyed the whole experience and felt it was so well pitched to us as lecturers as it was relevant and beneficial.</p> <p>I thoroughly enjoyed this short course, and it has helped me to better engage my students remotely.</p>
Workshops (<i>range of workshops including How to cope with change,</i>	81 participants	Excellent 64% Very Good / Good 36%	I thoroughly enjoyed each session and found them all beneficial to my area of work.

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Course	No of Staff who attended / participated	Evaluation	Comments
<i>Safeguarding and Wellbeing in Uncertainty)</i> Specifically the How to cope with change Training Specifically the Safeguarding Training Specifically the Well-being in Uncertainty Training		Excellent 50% Very Good / Good 50% Excellent 100% Excellent 83% Very Good 17%	Was excellent range and very suited to all my requirements. Got a lot out of each session. Fantastic Staff training event.

Furthermore, the percentage breakdown of staff who have completed mandatory equality and diversity training is 60%. Staff are reminded through monthly reports to complete all mandatory training. This will continue for the next academic year to ensure more staff complete the training.

25

Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Please see list of staff development sessions below with an indication of how some staff plan to incorporate their training into their day-to-day work within the College.

Course	Comments on how training will benefit them in their job role and generally
Domestic Violence & Abuse Awareness (Level 1)	Look out for signs that you would not think are too obvious and be aware of the policies and procedures to follow. When dealing with students or customers at reception, the training has provided me with the signs to look out for and how to deal with situations if they arise with an employee or student. An increased awareness in staff behaviour within the working environment to be able to look out for colleagues' welfare in case they need a safe space to talk.
Disability Awareness Training	The training will make me think before I act and speak when interacting with people who may have a disability. Be more aware of disabilities that are not always visible. Increased knowledge, awareness and understanding of disabilities and how best to address students with a specific disability and to use the appropriate use of language.

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Course	Comments on how training will benefit them in their job role and generally
<p>Workshops (<i>range of workshops including Autism Training</i>)</p> <p>Specifically the Autism Training</p>	<p>Identification of the technology used for the demo's Teaching style for very practical sessions.</p> <p>Being creative when delivering of lessons Improve teaching techniques.</p> <p>Looking for more way to let my students with Autism feel comfortable with my teaching styles during my classes. Being more aware of how children with autism might feel during situations in my class.</p>
<p>Workshops (<i>range of workshops including Transgender Awareness & NSPCC Online Safety</i>)</p> <p>Specifically the Transgender Awareness Training</p> <p>Specifically the NSPCC Online Safety</p> <p>Specifically the Safeguarding in the Online Classroom</p>	<p>Being aware of additional remote learning resources support available.</p> <p>How to improve resilience whilst teaching in the midst of the current pandemic. Teaching and learning strategies that will make classes more interactive whilst online and will improve student engagement.</p> <p>I will be more aware of the challenges transgender students face on a daily basis. I am now using retrieval practice when teaching and I am now aware how a team approach is important for students who are struggling.</p> <p>Passing on my knowledge of online safety when teaching safeguarding and trying different ways to engage students according to their needs.</p> <p>I am more aware regarding the importance of online safety and will be applying the recommended strategies. I have also become more familiar with using break out rooms on teams and how beneficial this can be.</p>
<p>Workshops (<i>range of workshops including How to cope with change, Safeguarding and Wellbeing in Uncertainty</i>)</p> <p>Specifically the Safeguarding Training</p>	<p>Attending the staff development sessions where examples of best practice in learning and teaching were shared, especially by staff within my Department afforded me another opportunity to see at first hand the great work that is ongoing and to gain a better understanding of the types of learning and teaching activities that our students are experiencing across the range of courses.</p> <p>I can improve my use of TEL in classroom delivery creating engaging lessons where I can improve and develop my e-resources and learning material.</p> <p>The safeguarding training provided up-to-date information and detail which I can continue to apply in my day-to-day job, especially when working online and out of office in the current circumstances. The importance of promoting best practice in this very important area was very well highlighted.</p>

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2020-21, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to **access to information and services**:

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- Public Information Guidelines requires that information on the College’s website and within Corporate, Marketing and Student sections of the website should be continually monitored and updated where necessary. This is ongoing.
- The information on the AccessAble website in relation to College buildings is not only suitable for disabled people, but also for those who are older and who are parents with young children. AccessAble carried out their review in August 2020 and has updated on their website. The College will add more referral links on its website for AccessAble and will roll out refresher training by AccessAble to front line staff.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2020-21?

Insert number here:

1

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

- SENDO.

The investigation is ongoing.

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The Scheme is to be reviewed in January 2022

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

- Please see Appendix 1.

In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2021-22) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- [Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

PART B

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

Please see Disability Action Plan attached.

Action	Timescales	Responsible Person(s)	Performance Indicators / Intended outcomes	Comments 2020/2021
The College will endeavour to influence the Department for the Economy to ensure participation of disabled people on the Governing Body of the Colleges.	When vacancies exist and on an on-going basis	Principal & Chief Executive / Governing Body	Governing Body will include members with disabilities.	Representative from RNIB continues to be a member on the College's Governing Body thereby ensuring representation for those with disabilities.
Continue to encourage the participation of disabled people on committees, student representatives on the Governing Body and groups across the Colleges.	Reviewed annually Year 1 – Year 5	LMT / Committee Chairs	Membership of committees / groups to demonstrate participation of those with disabilities.	Three staff members with a disability have continued to be members of College committees and have contributed to matters relating to College work, environment and decisions made. In addition, one member participated on the College's Covid-19 recovery committee which was set up to determine how best to manage the Covid-19 situation.
Encourage students with a disability to participate more fully in College life.	Annually as part of induction and on-going throughout the year. Year 1 – Year 5	Head of Learner Services	Increased participation in student focus groups, student surveys and sporting activities, Student Union Membership and where applicable, non-curricular activities such as students' union and sporting activities.	The continued success of the College's Sailability club, a sailing club for students with a disability, was unfortunately put on hold due to Covid-19. However, communication among the group continued online. In relation to the Irish Heritage Society, which is organised by SEN student recruiting members, the group had all club activity postponed except for members of the Gaming Club who were able to continue to meet and game online. It is anticipated that the Erasmus+ funded project with Korsør School in Denmark, will continue after Covid-19 travel restrictions are lifted. In addition, the College's Students Union are to create a Boccia Club, a Paralympic sport similar to bowls. It is hoped that recruitment will begin in September 2021 in conjunction with UUSU Magee.

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				The College's Equality Working Group continued to have a Students' Union Equality and Diversity Officer as a representative attend its meetings in 2020/2021 following their election.
Increase awareness of specific barriers faced by people with a disability with National Awareness days or weeks.	On-going	Administration and Training Support Manager Head of Learner Services	Increased awareness and understanding of barriers faced by people with a disability.	<p>The College continued to raise awareness of equality related themes, especially in the area of mental health. For example, World Suicide Prevention Day, World Mental Health Day and Children's Mental Health Week were promoted. In addition, staff were encouraged to wear odd socks to promote Anti-bullying week. Also, for International Men's Day staff were encouraged to appreciate the men in their lives in general and particularly through the pandemic.</p> <p>Further promotion included World Aids Day (through Student Services), LGBTQ+ History Month, International Day for Older Persons, International day of Women and Girls in Science, Young Carers Action Day, International day of Happiness, World Day for Cultural Diversity, International Purple Day to support epilepsy, and Deaf Awareness Week.</p>
Promote the use of AccessAble website to encourage participation of prospective students.	Annually and on-going Year 1 – Year 5	Director of Finance and Economic Engagement Administration and Training Support Manager	Benchmark usage of AccessAble webpage.	<p>Since the contract with AccessAble has been renewed, and up to May 2021, the College's Accessibility Guide had 1,613 page views on the AccessAble website. The information on the AccessAble website in relation to College buildings is not only suitable for disabled people, but also for those who are older and who are parents with young children.</p> <p>Due to Covid-19, the review of the Springtown Campus was not carried out until August 2020 and the new accessibility guide has since been updated on the website. The annual review has now been scheduled to take place in August 2021.</p> <p>Furthermore, AccessAble continued to be promoted on the College's recruitment information, certain staff email signatures, eg, HR Services and Administration Staff, prospectuses and the College's website.</p>

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				The College plans to add more referral links on its website for AccessAble, and to roll out refresher training by AccessAble to front line staff.
Create an open an inclusive workplace culture which displays respect for those with mental ill health.	On-going	HR Manager	Positive engagement, increasing provision of information and monitoring.	<p>Although participation in certain College activities organised by the College’s Health and Wellbeing Committee were deferred due to Covid-19, online sessions did take place. Staff were invited to attend various Inspire webinars and sessions such as <i>“Getting a Good Night Sleep”</i>, <i>“Nutrition in Menopause”</i> and <i>“Pandemic Pantry”</i>. Resources were also provided to staff on <i>“C-eeing is Believing – a focus on Calm, Consideration, Compassionate and Chilled”</i> as well as <i>“Mindfulness”</i>.</p> <p>Although the College hoped to procure Mental Health First Aider Training during the reporting period, this was not possible. However, the College continued to work on the Mental Charter and has re-established connections with Business in the Community.</p>
Explore the scope of offering meaningful placements and work shadowing and volunteering for people with a disability.	On-going	Administration and Training Support Manager Head of Learner Services	Develop capacity of people with a disability to find employment.	<p>The College’s Student Services section has continued to be supported by a few student volunteers who have a disability.</p> <p>Due to Covid-19 the College was unable to progress with offering placements for clients with a disability through the participation with CEDAR and Action on Hearing Loss (now RNID) due to health and safety implications. This will be reviewed at the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year.</p>
Introduce training for front line staff on disability etiquette and relevant legislation dealing with disability and the provision of goods, facilities and services.	On-going	HR Manager	Increased use of services and facilities of those people with a disability.	<p>The staff development programme continued to include opportunities for staff to undertake training sessions on Disability Awareness with 42 participants attending and evaluating the training as 50% excellent and 50% Good.</p> <p>An updated online equality training module was procured therefore staff will have been able to participate in more up-to-date training. This updated training includes elements of disability awareness.</p> <p>Furthermore, by the provision of training on Just a Minute, 130 staff members will be able to communicate easier with</p>

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				<p>individuals who have a communication problem thereby ensuring individuals feel at ease when speaking to a College employee.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the training to members of the Students Union and new staff did not proceed due to Covid-19.</p>
<p>Consider development of a (Sectoral) Disability Advisory Group that could involve staff and students.</p>	<p>Three meetings per year</p>	<p>Equality Coordinators Forum</p>	<p>Contribute to the development of communications, consultation, screening of relevant policies, monitoring etc.</p>	<p>As a result of the Disability Action Plan being a standing item on the Sector Equality Forum’s agenda to ensure issues relating to disability are raised and addressed where necessary, the College signed up to the Hidden Disabilities Scheme. This organisation is dedicated to helping businesses identify customers with a hidden disability and become confident to provide them with additional help or assistance.</p>
<p>Through Widening Participation scheme increase number of students with a disability entering the College.</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Head of Learner Services</p>	<p>Raise educational awareness, aspirations and educational attainment amongst the target group.</p>	<p>The College continued with the delivery of the Inspire Project within Urfuture Careers Academy. The aspirational and inclusive support of the Widening Access and Participation Plan and Access to Success. The College continued to support students to embrace FE as they progress.</p> <p>The College’s aim is to continue to improve well-being for everyone by providing academic pathways which are economically viable and lead to employment. The continued collaboration with the Universities allows ‘Access’ to Higher Education for adults who were previously made redundant, or change career direction, those who are disabled or unemployed or those who had not considered progressing in education to access both Full-time and Part-time education allowing them to rethink their educational pathway.</p>
<p>Monitor and review the progress of the Disability Action Plan.</p>	<p>Annually August Year 1 – Year 5</p>	<p>Administrator – Training Support</p>	<p>Provision of update contained within Progress Report.</p>	<p>On-going.</p>

Appendix 1 – Equality Improvement Plan

Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Report	Equality Category	Update 2020/2021
Assess effectiveness of communication with students regarding equality	Annually	Head of Learner Services	Address any concerns identified	Progress Report	All	The student voice will be held in June 2021 and has been moved virtually. Learner Services have continued with weekly student newsletters and have successfully passed the student engagement audit with no recommendations made. Social Media presence has been increased and a student services, Facebook, Instagram and twitter site have been established. This has enabled the College to promote equality events across the academic calendar.
Assess if equality is embedded into curriculum in new departments	To be assessed annually in June	Head of Curriculum and Operations	To be approved by Head of Curriculum and Operations	SER	All	<p>Completed and ongoing. On an annual basis, the College reviews curriculum areas to determine how effective equality is embedded into the curriculum.</p> <p>In reference to one department, with increasing numbers of students with lived experience of mental illness and who face challenges, teaching teams provided increased one-to-one support through video chats. Also, by providing a quick turnaround on formative feedback, this allowed more time for completion of assignments.</p> <p>Since March 2020 and as part of the remote teaching occurrences due to Covid-19, Curriculum Managers and Course Co-ordinators in one Department liaised with the Curriculum Administrator to provide laptops to students who have limited or no digital/IT access. This helped support the students in completing their coursework.</p>

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						As a whole, the teaching teams within another Department provided additional support to students who required it throughout the remote teaching periods in response to Covid-19. This was particularly relevant to students who have caring responsibilities (children and/or younger parents) who may have been more inclined to withdraw from their programme of study.
Maximise the involvement of disabled people in internal groups within the College	September To be reviewed annually	Leadership and Management Team	Groups with representatives to be reviewed to maximise opportunity to include membership where applicable	Leadership and Management Team Minutes	Disability	Three staff members with a disability have continued to be members of College committees and have contributed to matters relating to College work. In addition, one member participated on the College's Covid-19 recovery committee.
Create 2 opportunities for work placements in the College for those with a disability	Each year ending 31 August	Administrator – Training Support	Survey outcome to assess impact on individuals and others Number of placements who have engaged with Careers Academy	Progress Report	Disability	Due to Covid-19, the College were unable to progress with offering placements for clients with a disability through participation with CEDAR and Action on Hearing Loss (now RNID). This was due to health and safety implications. This will be reviewed at the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year. The College's Student Services section has continued to be supported by a few student volunteers who have a disability.
Provision of Equality awareness training to all staff	Annually	HR Manager	Outcome of Evaluations	Progress Report	All	Ongoing – there have been several equality-related staff development activities on the staff development programme throughout the year, albeit restricted due to Covid-19. See Section 24 of the Progress Report.
Provision of specific training to those with key roles	Annually	HR Manager	Outcome of evaluations	Progress Report	All	The College's Staff Development Programme continued to provide opportunities for staff to request specific training associated with their role.
QDP survey reviewed to ensure equality is adequately covered	Annually	Head of Quality Enhancement	Action Plans	Action Plan and Progress Report	All	As outlined in the previous Progress Report, only a few questions were specifically equality related in

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						<p>the QDP survey. Therefore, two equality questions were agreed through discussion at Sector level.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the QDP Survey, which was scheduled for October 2020 / November 2020, did not take place. This will remain on the College's Equality Agenda.</p>
<p>Develop a programme of awareness raising for the year – Calendar of Events to address all categories of equality over the year</p>	<p>September to August</p>	<p>Administration and Training Support Manager</p>	<p>Evaluation of Each Event</p>	<p>Evaluations</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>The College raised awareness of several equality-related awareness days. These were World Suicide Prevention Day, International Day for Older Persons, World Mental Health Day, World Food Day, Anti-bullying week, International Men's Day. Also, awareness was raised for World Aids Day (through Student Services), LGBTQ+ History Month, Children's Mental Health Week, International day of women and girls in science, Young Carers Action Day, International day of happiness, International Purple Day to support epilepsy, and Deaf Awareness Week.</p>
<p>To maintain the "Louder than Words" Charter Mark</p>	<p>Academic year 2020/2021</p>	<p>LMT Members</p>	<p>Achievement of Award</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>The College underwent Year 5 of the Louder than Words Chartermark assessment in January 2021 and was successful in maintaining the Accreditation.</p>
<p>Continue the provision of support for people with a disability to improve employability</p>	<p>February 2021</p>	<p>Careers Academy Manager</p>	<p>Delivery of WAPP</p> <p>Number of students attending Inspire Programme</p> <p>Number of students enrolled through College's Connect Programme</p> <p>Number of students enrolled on Princes Trust Programme</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>The Widening Access and Participation Officer has worked closely with teams in Student Services to develop online content for students. Since December 2020, the Widening Access and Participation Officer has used the College's Student Services social media platforms to post regular updates and to increase awareness around Widening Access and Participation areas. From December 2020 to March 2021 the Widening Access posts has reached a substantial number of people via Facebook, some of which are posts in partnership with the Safeguarding Team surrounding mental health. The total number of people reached was 4,005, with 259 engagements.</p>

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					<p>Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, links with the prison systems for those with criminal convictions to gain access to education, training and employment post release were put on hold. A further update will be provided in the next reporting period.</p> <p>College Connect had 19 completers of the OCN Level 1, and 2 early leavers who progressed into employment across both Strabane and Derry campus. Over the year, 34 Level 1 and 10 Level 2 certifications were gained additionally, plus 22 passes in literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>One student was an award winner in the Virtual Project Based Learning Awards for their entrepreneurship and recently received funding from the 'Go for it' initiative to support the launch of their art business from home. Another student who wishes to progress with their passion for performing rap music, performed at this year's DALFEST to over 5,000 people through College Connects links with the S.I.G.N.A.L foundation. All students who completed are progressing into education or employment with an increase in all soft skills areas also. Students report increased self-confidence, esteem, focus and direction.</p> <p>The Limavady campus retained 90% (19 out of 21) of young people who enrolled this year on Prince's Trust programmes, which indicated a 1% improvement of retention rate on last year. 100% of these completers progressed to a positive outcome; 10 to further education, 2 to training, 1 to volunteering, 1 to PT employment and higher education, 5 to further education and training. 1 early leaver progressed to FT employment. Success rate (full qualification obtained by those who</p>
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						<p>enrolled) has improved by 12% from 78% last year to 90% this year.</p> <p>The Strand Road campus retained 90% (19 out of 21) of young people who enrolled, which indicated a 10% improvement of retention rate on last year. 100% of these completers progressed to a positive outcome; 14 to further education, 4 to volunteering, 1 to full time employment with 1 early leaver due to mental health issues. Success rate (full qualification obtained by those who enrolled) has improved by 10% from 80% last year to 90% this year.</p>
<p>Review the Mental Health Charter (Equality Commission) to assess actions necessary to promote and raise awareness</p>	<p>Academic year 2020/2021</p>	<p>HR Manager</p> <p>Learning and Teaching Manager</p>	<p>Awareness of College as Trauma informed College</p> <p>Number of staff attending Resilience Conference</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>One of the key priorities for the Learning and Teaching Development Team is to continue to have a trauma-informed environment across the campuses. To this aim, a training programme was designed to help to cultivate a trauma-sensitive learning environment at the College, which will help to improve outcomes for students. The online environment, however, was not a suitable vehicle for the delivery of this subject because of its emotional nature and the high potential for reactivity among participants. As a result, this training will recommence when classroom teaching resumes.</p> <p>The College continued to work on the Mental Charter and has re-established connections with Business in the Community.</p>
<p>Continue to positively engage with people with mental ill health and their representatives to identify and address barriers to</p>	<p>Academic year 2020/2021</p>	<p>HR Manager</p> <p>Administration and Training Support Manager</p>	<p>Barriers identified and an increase in applications from individuals with a mental health illness</p>	<p>Equal Opportunities Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>The College continued to liaise with a number of mental health organisations such as Inspire in relation to employment, however the Safeguarding Team liaised with numerous other relevant mental health organisations. Please see below.</p>

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<p>employment / education</p>						
<p>Health and Wellbeing Programme to continue to address concerns regarding poor mental health among staff and students</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>HR Manager Head of Learner Services</p>	<p>Programme of events and evaluations</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>Although participation in certain college activities organised by the College’s Health and Wellbeing Committee were deferred due to Covid-19, online sessions did take place. Staff were invited to attend various Inspire webinars and sessions such as “<i>Getting a Good Night Sleep</i>”, “<i>Nutrition in Menopause</i>” and “<i>Pandemic Pantry</i>”. Resources were also provided to staff on “<i>C-eeing is Believing – a focus on Calm, Consideration, Compassionate and Chilled</i>” as well as “<i>Mindfulness</i>”.</p> <p>Although the College hoped to procure Mental Health First Aider Training during the reporting period, this was not possible. However, the College continued to work on the Mental Charter and has re-established connections with Business in the Community. In addition, a photography competition was organised for staff to encourage outdoor activities. This will be reported in the next Annual Report.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Team promoted World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2020 on social media sites and a positive mental health awareness tree was also displayed in the foyer of Strand Road campus. Mental Health Awareness badges were purchased from the Mental Health Foundation and made available for staff and students. The Safeguarding Team also promoted World Aids Day on social media sites on 1 December 2020.</p> <p>The Team also liaised with Start 360, Aware NI, Nexus, ZEST, CAMS Western Health and Social Care Trust, GP’s and mental health practitioners from local health centres, Adult Mental Health Services, Health Improvement Western Health Social Care</p>

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						Trust, PSNI, NSPCC, Housing Executive, Apex, Recovery College, Parenting NI, Social Services, Action Mental Health, Men's Shed, Men's Action Network, Praxis, Common Youth, Elemental and Ascertainment.
Continue partnership working with Innovation and Recovery project to maximise benefits to staff and students	Academic year 2020/2021	Head of Learner Services	Raised Awareness	Progress Report	Disability	The College has invested in a social prescribing platform called Elemental. This will enable a bespoke and targeted approach for students, ensuring they gain local support. This platform operates alongside the current safeguarding system and counselling service. The College continued to promote the Innovation and Recovery project and students are able to avail of their online resources and classes.
Student Services to continue to strengthen the development of effective mechanisms to support students with poor mental health	Annually	Head of Learner Services	Increased participation on social media Increased number of students attending College with mental health issues	Leadership and Management Team Progress Report	Disability	A new Student Services Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites for students has been established and social media presence increased during the reporting period. This allowed students to access equality information/resources specifically targeting those with poor mental health.
Become a Just a Minute (JAM) organisation	June 2020	Administrator – Training Support	Awareness	Progress Report	Disability	As outlined in the last annual report, the College had over 130 staff members trained in the Just a Minute (JAM Card) training and had a plan to train a number of key individuals in the Students' Union to ensure that other students with learning difficulties and/or communication barriers were not disadvantaged when attending student union activities. Unfortunately, this was not progressed due to Covid-19. However, this training has been scheduled again in the new academic year as staff may have the opportunity to return to working at campuses.
Develop a partnership with Foyle Hospice to assist students who are in need	September 2020	Administrator – Training Support	Raised Awareness	Progress Report	All	Ongoing - The College's aim was to continue to work in partnership with Foyle Hospice where staff and students could donate clothing and other items to their charity shops in Derry~Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane to help assist young students who are

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						experiencing hardship. This continues to remain on the College’s Equality agenda.
Become a trauma informed College	June 2021	Learning and Teaching Manager	Raised Awareness	Staff Development Report	All	Building a trauma-informed environment across the College continued to be one of the key priorities for the Learning and Teaching Development Team. See above
Review the process for handling sensitive personal data for transgender students	October 2020	Administrator – Training Support	Number of students enrolling at College	Progress Report	Sexual Orientation	<p>The EBS system was updated to include an additional confidential field to include a student’s “preferred” name and is only accessible to a few key staff members.</p> <p>The College approved its Statement on Transgender Awareness which is available on the website. This outlines the College’s commitment to encourage Transgender students to enrol at the College.</p> <p>A new Transgender process was completed and referred to in the College’s Admissions and Enrolments Policy. This was established to support current and prospective students ensuring those who have identified as transgender can continue their studies in a safe and supportive environment. Students will now have a direct link to one member of staff who will provide support and guidance. The process was discussed with, and supported by, the Rainbow Project and Cara-Friend.</p> <p>In addition, further discussions are in place with Stonewall to determine further support that the College can provide for the LGBTQ+ community, including the possible introduction of Diversity Champions.</p>
Event to address the issue of mental health to be held in 2020/2021	Academic year 2020/2021	Administrator – Training Support	Evaluations	Progress Report	Disability	An event had been organised to take place during Mental Health Week in May 2020 however, due to Covid-19, this had to be postponed and was scheduled to take place on World Mental Health Day

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						in October 2020. A positive mental health awareness tree was displayed in the foyer of Strand Road campus. Mental Health Awareness badges were purchased from the Mental Health Foundation and made available for staff and students.
Encourage all departments to promote equality throughout the year and report in Progress Report in 2020/2021	Academic year 2020/2021	Administrator – Training Support	Awareness raising and number of activities	Progress Report	All categories	Staff were encouraged to provide updates on progress in relation to raising awareness in equality throughout the year and reporting more regularly. This continued to ensure that equality remained high on agendas.
Consider student exit survey to ensure experience at College was in an inclusive environment	Academic year 2020/2021	Administrator – Training Support Administrator – Admissions	Action Plan	Admissions Survey Progress Report	All categories	Although the College had hoped to undertake a survey with students to determine if they felt their experience in the College was inclusive, this was not progressed. The Equality Working Group reviewed this, and it was agreed that due to the repercussions of Covid-19 and the stress experienced due to online classes impacted on this action however, it will remain on the equality agenda for the 2021/2022 academic year.
Consider procuring an additional equality related online training opportunity for all staff	Academic year 2020/2021	Administrator – Training Support	Success rates of training Increased awareness of all equality categories	Progress Report	All categories	The College procured a new online training module from Legal Island therefore all staff will now undertake refreshed mandatory training.
Increased participation of relevant staff in the screening of policies relevant to their respective areas	Academic year 2020/2021	Administrator – Training Support	Increased awareness of the importance of screening by each department thereby influencing policy decisions	Progress Report	All	The introduction of the College’s Policy Screening Process has progressed with staff in a number of functional areas receiving advice on the process involved in equality screening their respective policies. In addition, further screening advice / resources will be provided by the Equality Commission.
Consider staff network groups for staff with cancer or are carers	Academic Year 2021/2022	Administrator – Training Support	Increased support and awareness	Progress Report	All	New Action Added

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Roll out ParentingNI sessions to staff	Academic Year 2021/2022	Administrator – Training Support	Increased awareness and training for staff	Progress Report	Dependants	New Action Added
Endeavour to increase female applicants on Apprenticeship programmes	Academic Year 2021/2022	Administrator – Training Support	Promotion of College as committed to increase female participation in courses	Progress Report Curriculum Data	Gender	New Action Added
Consider additional support mechanisms for staff who have experienced a miscarriage	Academic Year 2021/2022	HR Services Manager Administration and Training Support Manager	Support provided to staff and increased awareness	Absence statistics Progress Report	Gender Dependants Disability Marital Status	New Action Added
Commence the work involved for the College to become a Diversity Champion recognised organisation through Stonewall	Academic Year 2021/2022	Administration and Training Support Manager Head of Learner Services	Increase in numbers of applicants from the LGBTQ+ communities	Student Statistics FEMR Progress Report	Sexual Orientation	New Action Added