

**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 2021 – MARCH 2022



North West Regional College



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2021-22**

Contact:

- Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Name: Ms Michelle Breslin
Telephone: 02871 276004
Textphone 02871 276167
The College welcomes calls via Relay
Email: michelle.breslin@nwrc.ac.uk

- Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan

As above ✓
Name:
Telephone:
Email:

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 2021 and March 2022

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 2021-22, 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 2021/2022, business of the College continued throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with both curriculum and support areas continuing to work together during these times.

This Progress Report again outlines the valuable work that progressed through the work of committed staff, not to let Covid-19 undermine the College's commitment to its Equality Scheme and to the promotion of Equality.

Details of how the promotion of Equality progressed are as follows:

- Due to the recognition of how important mental health and wellbeing is for student success, the Learning and Teaching Team organised a Hope and Wellbeing Festival to take place before Easter. Wellbeing across the student body starts with staff wellbeing. The programme was filled with keynote, practical workshops and resources to offer meaningful health and wellbeing support to staff and in turn, students. The event gave the opportunity to re-connect with colleagues and celebrate what the College has achieved over the past two years.
 - Resources included *"The Science of Power and Hope"*, a chance to listen to a hopeful minds project developed by the International Foundation for Research and Education on Depression. There were various workshops around art, health, team building and beauty therapy sessions, as well as a workshop on *"# I am remarkable"*, an initiative empowering women and underrepresented groups to speak about their accomplishments in the workplace and beyond.
 - Participants were invited to challenge their perception around self-promotion and share data and research regarding self-promotion and unconscious bias. This workshop was particularly for women and those from underrepresented groups, e.g. LGBTQI+, or ethnic minorities.
 - As part of the festival, the outdoor activities on offer included canoeing, rock climbing, orienteering and frisbee golf.
- There are a range of key activities / training opportunities to ensure Equality is naturally embedded into all aspects of staff development. 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.

- As referred to in previous reports, an increasing body of international research has identified the long-term harms that can result from chronic stress during childhood. This research about the traumatic impact of child maltreatment and other adverse childhood experiences, as well as newly identified means of promoting resilience and recovery for individuals, is being integrated into policy and practice in health, education and justice sectors under the umbrella term 'trauma-informed practice'.
- A number of training activities linked to this research on ACEs has resumed post Covid. These have been designed to cultivate a trauma-sensitive learning environment at the College, which will help to improve outcomes for students. Building a trauma-informed environment across the College is one of the key priorities for the Learning and Teaching Development team. To this aim, the following activities are offered across all areas in the organisation. These include:
 - Screenings of the award-winning documentaries: 'Resilience: The Science of Hope and the Biology of Stress' and 'Paper Tigers' followed by panel discussions.
 - The Level 4 Certificate in Understanding ACE and Building Resilience is accredited by OCN. This course is designed to support the dissemination of ACE and resilience science and promote understanding and application of the science to improve health and wellbeing and educational outcomes across the lifespan.
 - Level 1 & Level 2 ACEs training which was disseminated through workshops.
- 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.
- The Learning and Teaching Team also held a workshop for staff on Introduction to Sign Language. This workshop covered the following:

- a brief overview of the local Deaf community
 - locally used signed languages and the differences between them
 - a handout of basic everyday signs relating to meeting and greeting with Deaf people and some fingerspelling alphabet practice
 - Dos and Don'ts when dealing with Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - an overview of the available technology which can assist communication with Hard of Hearing
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- The annual Learning and Teaching Conference this year “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) - Creating a Culture where everyone grows”, challenged participants to consider ways of implementing and embedding the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals into all aspects of College life. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is the process of acquiring the knowledge skills and attitudes needed to build local and global societies that are just and equitable and living within the environmental limits of our planet. The conference explored how the College can contribute to a sustainable future and considered practical approaches to embed sustainability into our educational systems.
 - The conference was very well received and instigated the Sustainability Working Group which meets now on a bi-monthly basis to develop appropriate actions and interventions.
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- The DIAL (Design Innovation and Assisted Living) Centre has supported a multitude of collaborative engagements across the Health and Social Care sector, as well as other vocational areas. Throughout the year the DIAL Centre has continued to engage and strengthen links with a variety of organisations including Ulster University (UU), the Health Innovation Research Alliance (HIRANI) and the Medicines Optimization Innovation Centre (MOIC), SMEs and charities.
 - In December 2021, the DIAL commenced a Community Renewal Fund (CRF) project in partnership with UU. The aim of the eCareWell project is to understand how digital technologies can best meet the needs of carers in the Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) area and how these technologies can support their health and wellbeing. The College's contribution to the project was led by the DIAL Manager and has seen the appointment of three Project Workers who are based within the DIAL. The project is based within the DIAL Centre and will run until December 2022.
 - In March 2022, the DIAL Centre hosted a delegation in partnership with HIRANI. HIRANI (Health Innovation Research Alliance Northern Ireland) provide leadership to align Northern Ireland's health and life science ecosystem with the life sciences vision regionally and nationally. They also focus in clinical areas of national significance such as oncology and healthy ageing.

- As part of its work, HIRANI has been working to establish an MOU relationship between NI stakeholders and ABHI. This has involved connecting up with the wider ecosystem, linking to ABHI's US trade missions and medtech industry, whilst also further exploring the recent launch of their innovate-UK ABHI grant to unlock regulatory knowledge for UK companies.
- The DIAL Centre has become a test-bed for a variety of SMEs and their health tech including B-Secur, Kraydel, Ethel, Catapult, ItsElemental, Aflo analytics and Action Sense. The RNIB continued to deliver a programme on visual awareness training to staff and students within all College curriculum areas on a weekly basis within DIAL.
- The College's Careers Academy continued to provide essential support to students during the reporting period.
- The Inspire Employability Programme delivered by the Widening Access and Participation Officer supports participants to build aspiration, motivation and self-confidence while developing key employability skills. Through this programme people were supported to work on core employability skills such as CV writing, interview techniques, job search techniques, career planning workshops and teambuilding. As a result there has been a 9% increase in successful progression after its completion.
- The Safeguarding Team continually promote positive mental health throughout each academic year. From September 2021 to March 2022, the team carried out 263 listening ear referrals with students, an increase of 44 referrals from March 2021. The most common issues for students continues to be depression and anxiety. The total number of referrals presented for these conditions was 94.
- In addition, the Team continue to liaise 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 Ascert.
- During the reporting period, the Safeguarding Team achieved the Quality Standard in Carer Support accreditation. This accreditation (QSCS) will provide 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.
- Following the development of a new student support system for young adult carers, the Widening Access and Participation Officer also created "Pamper Packages" which are offered at various times throughout the year to registered Young Adult Carers to remind them to take time for themselves.

- The Safeguarding Team currently support 12 Young Adult Carers. The carers are in regular contact with the Deputy Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer completed a video with Driving Change on 8 February 2022, which consisted of being interviewed by a young adult carer to showcase the work completed by North West Regional College in supporting carers, which will be shared on the Driving Change website. Through their involvement in Driving Change, the College has achieved their original goal of confidently being able to identify and provide effective support for young adult carers.
- A key element of the College's plans for improvement was ensuring that the support for young adult carers was ongoing and accessible throughout their whole College journey. Focusing on making a difference to the lives of young adult carers, and having this at the forefront of their minds, was also key to successfully embedding support across the College.
- Action for Children attended Strand Road Campus 1 day per month to offer a drop in support facility for the College's Young Adult Carers. The Carers support officer from Action for Children also attended the College's Open Day and received names of 4 applicants who discussed caring responsibilities and showed interest in registering for support in September 2022.
- One of the College's current young adult carers worked with the local community in Strabane in March 2022, to collect much needed supplies to send to Poland for the people of Ukraine. They were one of the main organisers of the collection which involved 3 lorries with 57 crates of supplies leave Strabane for Poland. They were also supported by a local business owner in Strabane. It is important to highlight the work done by this young adult carer and highlight how they brought the community together involving many local people, businesses, schools, and the College to help those in need.
- The Health & Well-Being Officer, Safeguarding Officer and The Widening Access and Participation Officer arranged an Autumn wreath making workshop to allow carers to meet the Carers Support Team.
- One of the key elements of support which the College offers is the Young Adult Carers Pass Card. When Young Adult Carers are identified in the College, they will be given a card which they can show to lecturers or other support staff. This helps staff to recognise that they may require additional support and flexibility around deadlines or time out of class, etc, without having to explain their caring responsibilities multiple times.
- Following the College becoming partners with Elemental Software, there are currently 223 students on the Elemental Student Support Platform. The College supported cross border Recovery College projects 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.

- The Safeguarding Team experienced a rapid increase in referrals in October 2021. 83 students were referred to safeguarding, an increase in 47 students from October 2020. The increase in students in September and October was conceivably a result of students returning to College after lockdown and having the opportunity to meet with staff face to face and also having the listening ear open door policy, compared to the previous year with students having to meet Safeguarding staff via teams or by phone call for support due to the pandemic.
- To address the rise in student referrals, the Safeguarding Team recruited an additional Deputy Safeguarding Officer for Limavady campus. The Team also promoted Mental Health Awareness week on 14 October 2021 and Resilience week on 25 October 2021 which provided staff to signpost students and provide the information and resources to seek help and support with mental health conditions.
- The Safeguarding officer and The Widening Access and Participation Officer worked with Aware NI, Common Youth and the Pink Ladies to arrange workshops for students on Resilience, Mental Health, Coercive Control, Relationships, Cancer Awareness and Reduce the Risk Cancer Prevention. The workshops were scheduled throughout April 2022.
- The Safeguarding Team promoted Sexual Health Awareness week from 7 February to 14 February 2022 with information, leaflets and booklets provided from the Western Health and Social Care Trust. Information was displayed in the foyer of the campuses, on Canvas and College social media sites. The College also promoted *Time to Talk Day* on 3 February 2022, *Safer Internet Day* on 8 February 2022, *St Valentine's Day* on 14 February 2022 and *Random Acts of Kindness Day* on 17 February 2022 in the College and on social media sites.
- The Safeguarding Officer worked with the Head of Client Services to develop a new Visitors Policy. The purpose is to ensure the College is a safe environment for students and staff and to allow for the monitoring of visitors at all times. At the time of reporting, this is a work in progress.
- The College Student Welfare and Students' Union team were successful in the competition between universities and colleges across Ireland, winning the Welfare Campaign of the Year award at the United Student of Ireland (USI) Student Achievement Awards 2021.
- The College launched a charity calendar detailing life during lockdown in 2020. The *Life through a Lockdown Lens 2021* Calendar featured images captured by local

people across the North West. All funds raised from sales (£750) were donated to one of the College's nominated charities, Foyle Search and Rescue.

- *Dress for Success Foyle* is managed by Foyle Women's Aid which empowers women into the workplace from positions of disadvantage by providing professional clothing and styling, skills and confidence, interview coaching and ongoing support once they re-join the workplace. The Widening Access and Participation Officer is now linked with *Dress For Success Foyle* and will be delivering the Inspire Employability Programme to woman to help them develop their employability skills.
- As Part of the L1 Certificate Employment and Community Skills with the Princes Trust Team, the College teamed up with Rosemount Primary School to take the lead with the regeneration of an under-used and neglected piece of land. The long term goal is to bring additional funding to the site by gathering both the elderly and the young people of the school to complete projects that will help both groups with mental health.
- The College organised a fundraiser walk at Benevenagh. The walk was to raise money for the College's *Walk and Talk* event. This event was inspired by young people on the Prince's Trust programme in the Limavady Campus to raise awareness around mental health by encouraging people to talk more about their own mental health. The College and students collaborated with a local charity, Limavady Initiative for the prevention of Suicide (LIPS) as Limavady has one of the highest rates of suicide in the UK.
- The College is one of the local organisations that work with Foyle Foodbank and offer foodbank vouchers to students who are struggling financially. The College helps identify the cause of the crisis with practical guidance offered.
- The College piloted the *Good for Me Good for FE* campaign with a Christmas collection for local food banks. A good working relationship with the local Food banks has been established with £265 raised.
- The College has worked with local charities and such as Action Mental Health (AMH), Include Youth, Voice of Young People In Care (VOYPIC), Youth Action and a local hostel that offers accommodation and support for 18 - 25 year olds. The College also liaised with SAMS School Aged Mothers group and AEOTUS.
- The College worked with schools, community groups and businesses in Strabane and from surrounding villages, as well as students from Early Years and transition students for the ever-popular hay trail around Halloween. These groups transformed haybales into creative and colourful characters and creatures inspired by children's films.
- The Health and Wellbeing Officer and Student Union worked together during the pandemic to improve the pandemic impact on students. Focus was centred on

outside activities which benefitted students and built resilience. Activities included outdoor photography competitions, a busking challenge and virtual art exhibition.

- In September 2021, the Marketing Team arranged for the Magilligan Course guide to be translated into two other languages (Polish & Romanian) at a request via Magilligan. The College continued to promote the College's Equality agenda in publications in the areas of Learning Support, Equality, Widening Access and Participation and in the promotion of opportunities for all students, regardless of background.
- There has been general promotion of equality continued throughout all campus reception areas with the inclusions of hidden disabilities lanyards, loop systems, etc, and the provision of BSL/ISL signers at presentation ceremonies.
- 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:
 - At the beginning of the academic year in September 2021, the College had agreed internally to increase the provision of sanitary products to students by increasing its budget to accommodate this initiative. However, meetings at sector level and research provided outlined the need for an overarching plan sector wide. As a result, DfE provided additional funds of £2,000 to all FE Colleges. Therefore provision of further and additional sanitary products for students is now available in all female / non-gender toilets in all campuses, as well as in Student Services and with coordinators for SEN students. The College is presently developing a Student Period Dignity Policy for staff on this additional provision, points of contact and location of products.
 - The group's membership will increase for the next academic year to include further representation from Student Services and from the European & International Projects Office.
 - On an annual basis the College requests data from AccessAble to determine usage of AccessAble's guidance on accessibility of College buildings. The data indicated that traffic had decreased. As a result, the College increased the presence of AccessAble on internal staff and student portals. In addition, leaflets were provided by AccessAble and placed at all receptions to raise awareness. 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.
 - ParentingNI sessions were provided to staff. These were Worklife Balance, Parent's Emotional Health and Helping Children Manage Change.

- Potentially increasing male representation on the group from Springtown to ensure increased awareness and viewpoints from a male perspective.
- The College is currently reviewing options to allow staff to update their equality information. This will allow for up-to-date monitoring and reporting once the exercise has been completed.
- The College's Equality Scheme has been amended as part of the 5-year cycle requested by the Equality Commission. No major changes have been made other than those relating to the College's structure, organisational chart, consultee lists (both Sector and Local), as well as to the Scheme's Timetable for Measures that reflects the change in the College's responsible people to oversee the actions required.
- RNID have advised that the Louder than Words Accreditation no longer exists. However the College will continue to review their assessment template to ensure that best practice continues. For example, signage in all lifts in all campuses were reviewed and updated where necessary. This was to ensure that people who are deaf or hard of hearing using lifts would be aware that an engineer would respond should the lift breakdown.
- The College's Deaf Awareness Resource Pack, which was developed as part of the Louder than Words Accreditation, was reviewed and updated by the Equality Working Group. This document will continue to be updated on a regular basis to ensure staff are aware of the resources available to help individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- In addition, the Equality Administrator has met with RNID on several occasions to ensure the College continues a close working partnership. New initiatives such as their new Employment programme is being developed. The College hopes to sign up to this once available.
- In addition to the above, RNID offered licences for staff to undertake an Introductory e-Learning module so staff and/or students can study at their own pace. This was through Signature. The course allows individuals to have confidence and skills to allow communication with deaf customers. Following procurement already agreed and progressing, it is hoped that these licences could be made available for members of the Students' Union. Staff will also be offered further BSL Introductory sessions in the next academic year.
- The College has developed Miscarriage Guidance through the Miscarriage Association, a first in the sector. In addition, online training has been made available for staff and the College plans to sign up to the Miscarriage Association's pledge to support staff and students affected by miscarriage.

- Following the success of the Period Dignity and Miscarriage awareness raising, the Equality Working group agreed to organise male initiatives such as male health sessions and provision of male toiletries in male / all-gender toilets. This will be reported within the next progress report.
- The College recently signed up to becoming a *Breastfeeding Welcome Here* member organisation and has reviewed the Breastfeeding Policy to include students, as well as increasing the provision of breastfeeding rooms in Strabane and Limavady.
- In addition, a new policy, Children on College Campuses, was developed to provide guidance on when children are permitted to be on campuses. The College has a duty of care for the health and safety of all visitors to its campuses.
- The College is seeking further accreditation possibilities with the hope of increasing individuals with a disability to apply for employment, the College began working with RNIB to achieve their Visibly Better Employer Quality Standard and has had several meetings over the reporting period. Achievement is near completion at the time of reporting with one further aspect to be addressed regarding advertisements. This would be a first for an educational establishment in Northern Ireland.
- As a result of the work involved in achieving RNIB's quality standard, the College identified there were accessibility issues on the College website. An audit of documents currently on the website was carried out by Green 17, the College's website controller. Over 275 documents required 600+ amendments. The Equality Administrator co-ordinated several meetings among staff to review documents and accessibility check these documents, and to have them available for a bulk upload by Green 17. This resulted in a new process currently being developed to ensure all documents presented for uploading onto the College website should be accessibility checked beforehand.
- During the reporting period, work progressed on an Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment on the effect of a potential relocation of the Strabane Campus from Derry Road to the Canal Basin. A working group was established and chaired by the Equality Administrator. Membership included the Head of Client Services, Compliance and Admissions Manager, Compliance Officer and representatives from the Curriculum, HR Services and Strabane. Several meetings took place with staff and also with representatives from Derry and Strabane District Council. Staff and student surveys have been carried out to assess viewpoints and reflect on any issues identified. Further consultees were approached to increase the number within the Strabane area. As a result a further 8 organisations agreed to be a consultee on our Equality Scheme.

- During the reporting period, the College achieved the Disability Confident Employer Status (Level 2). This scheme provides advice to employers in relation to recruiting and employing people with disabilities. The College is compliant with the requirements set out by the Disability Confident Scheme in relation to recruitment and selection. Disability Confident is creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people. College staff have been informed of the recent achievement and can use the Disability Confident Employer Badge on all internal/external correspondence.
- Several awareness days have been highlighted on the College’s staff portal over the reporting period to raise awareness of equality.



April 2021 to August 2021 - International Day of Happiness, Deaf Awareness Week, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, Carers’ Week, and Playday.

September 2021 to November 2021 - World Suicide Prevention Day (*a candle was placed in the corridor over the Strand Road to be viewed through the night*), International Day of Peace, Black History Month, World Mental Health Day and World Sight Day.



December 2021 to March 2022 - World Science Day for Peace and Development, World Kindness Day, Universal Children’s Day, International Day of Persons with a disability (*staff were invited to update their MS Teams’ background during meetings to promote this day*), Human Rights Day, World Cancer Day, and International Women’s Day.

- Progress continued with the policy schedule system for reviewing, updating, screening and monitoring policies. During the reporting period the Equality Administrator advised staff that 60+ policies required to be reviewed and screened by various departments, with support provided by the Equality Administrator as necessary. Also, from September 2021 to the end of March 2022, all 38 policies approved at the Leadership and Management Team meeting were equality screened.

- Work progressed with CEDAR to provide a placement for a curriculum department in September. CEDAR were delighted that the College had approached them. This would be a trial run and if successful more placements could be put in place.
- Work progressed within the Stonewall Action plan to gain momentum in the initiative for the College to become a Stonewall Diversity Champion. For example, guidance has been prepared for staff similar to students who may request support during their transgender process. Also, work is in progress to update policies to gender neutral language.
- The College has signed up to become a member of Employers for Disability NI. This is a network of employers—drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors—working to promote training and employment opportunities and accessibility for people with disabilities as employees and customers. The College will be able to receive additional resources to continue its commitment to raise awareness of disability.
- The College continued with 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.
- The Group continued to encourage all departments to undertake the Equality and Diversity online training. As at March 2022, the overall completion rate for the mandatory equality and diversity training was 85.8%
- The College has representation in the recently established Black FE Leaders Working Group. The aim of the Working Group is to raise awareness and understanding of diversity issues, in particular ethnicity, amongst learners, staff and Governors. The objectives of the Working Group include improving collective understanding of the evidence base on a) demographics and b) perceptions; as well as identify a range of immediate actions which can be taken forward by the six FE Colleges to raise awareness of diversity issues. A student survey is to be launched in the next academic year to seek student perception of ethnic and racial diversity in the College.
- Following the development of the process to provide students with a temporary car park space, where appropriate, due to a student's disability, the College did not receive any requests this academic year. This will continue to be arranged through Learning Link and their referral processes and through agreement from Learning Link, Estates, and the Quality Enhancement Unit.
- In relation to the encouragement to have disabled students participate in College life, the College is aware that 25% of the Student Union Officers within the Student Union's Council have a disability, with 19% of Student Class Reps across all

campuses have a disability. In addition, 57% of the students chosen to take part in a cross-community project in Sligo, running from 19 June 2022 to 2 July 2022 have a disability or learning need. Also, two Higher Education students who have disabilities are due to attend the Harkin Summit in Belfast on 7 June 2022 which sheds light on employability issues for people with disabilities as part of a Department for Communities initiative.

- Students on the Transition programme, which caters for students with learning disability, take part in a weekly walkabout as part of health and wellbeing. Students with disabilities studying on the Multicraft course had a canoe session on the River Foyle as part of health and wellbeing. Students who have disabilities also take part in focus groups, student surveys and surveys relating to disability services within the College, to ensure that their voices and recommendations are heard.
- Learning Link have provided support to 485 mainstream students who required basic support. The team also conducted 22 internal assessments and 13 external DSA assessments. 100% of DSA assessment reports were approved without amendments, by the Education Authority.
- Learning Link achieved the Autism Impact Award through Autism NI in March 2022 demonstrating the College's commitment to supporting students with ASD. Support that is now available includes cards created for students who found difficulty in speaking, Autism Champions established to ease visits with prospective students, Learning plans for 2022/2023 have been reviewed to include information on autism for lecturers
- In addition, a basic location map of Strand Road was created with other campus maps being developed, the necessity recognised to increase Quiet Rooms across campuses, the organisation of an orientation day for prospective students, training on autism awareness through Learning and Teaching with the inclusion each year in staff development opportunities going forward and the establishment of a Neurodiversity group in progress.
- It was also noted that 30 members of staff were also trained by Autism NI.
- During the reporting period, Learning Link managed Lost Learning Coaches to provide intervention for learning lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This initiative was available to all students.
- The Learner Services Team have undertaken other activities during the reporting period. These include:
 - through collaboration and partnerships, the College continued its intention to break down perceived barriers to education, widening access to all students regardless of socioeconomic background. This has expanded to include the Widening Access roadshows at each of the College campuses.

- Student induction continued to encourage participation and communication across departments and student class groups through 'Team Activities' social integration. It ensures students are aware of Student Services and the 7 areas they can access for additional support. It also starts the process of social and academic integration and makes students feel comfortable about being at College and helps with the transition, especially underrepresented learners.
- Continued to have 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 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](#) for further information.
- The College's Business Support Unit continued to support a number of companies through one-to-one bespoke non-accredited training. In addition students with varying disabilities have been supported via Learning Link through, for example, one to one support, extensions to deadlines and reduced workplacement hours.
- 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.
- The College recently recruited a member of staff with Asperger's Syndrome. A Project Worker from Cedar was assigned to support the staff member. As part of the Workable NI Programme an Employability Skills Action Plan was developed and meetings with the Project Worker held weekly.
- Cedar assisted the staff member with the completion of new start forms and attended the Induction with HR Services and the Line Manager to ensure any queries were answered on the first day of employment in the College.
- Cedar has provided support to the staff member and the Line Manager during the course of employment. In addition to development of the Employability Skills Action Plan, they have provided training support sessions to ensure the staff member was supported in the new role and they have also advised the Line Manager of useful applications that can be installed on an iPad in relation to stress management and also adding scripts to the iPad for the staff member to practice interactions with clients. The support from Cedar is ongoing for the duration of the fixed term contract.

PART A

- During the reporting period HR Services reviewed how people with disabilities were recruited. The review was carried out to ensure that legislative requirements were being met and to ensure the recruitment and selection process reflected best practice. The College explored the possibility of changing the Recruitment and Selection procedures in relation to offering guaranteed interviews for applicants who stated they have a disability on their application form.
- Equality Commission guidance is that it is good practice to provide guaranteed interviews for all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job. Based on the Equality Commission's good practice advice, the College made a proposal to the Leadership and Management Team to change the current applicant guidance to state that "**Applicants with a disability who meet all the essential criteria for the post will automatically be offered an interview.**" (If the criteria is enhanced to include desirable, applicants with a disability who do not meet the desirable will still be invited to attend an interview). The new procedure was approved by the Leadership and Management team and has been implemented.
- During academic year 2021/22 the College developed a Health and Wellbeing Strategy to promote and support staff wellbeing.
- To support the delivery of a holistic approach to staff health and wellbeing the College has adopted the Work Well Model developed by Business in the Community which identifies four key domains of Wellbeing:
 - Better physical and psychological health (promotes healthy behaviours). Examples include Initial steps taken to identify Mental Health first aiders, promoting positive mental health workshop delivered to line managers, delivery of personal effectiveness, personal resilience, mindful self-care, healthy eating and physical activity courses.
 - Better work (happy and engaging work environment). Examples include Conflict management course, Hybrid Working Framework in development, partnerships developed with Inspire, Parenting NI, ONUS (domestic abuse), Occupational Health Benenden and Health and Wellbeing Brochures.
 - Better relationships (effective communications / social relationships). For example Queens Leadership programme implemented, in-house management development programme underway and "*Good for Me, Good for FE*" initiative (see below).
 - Better specialist support (early intervention), for example Inspire – Employee Assistance provider, awareness raising initiatives and a range of courses, mental health awareness and living with worry and anxiety.
- Other activities offered through the Health and Wellbeing Strategy include menopause resources, "*Beware the Chair*" initiative, Resilience and fitness classes.

- The College, along with the other 5 FE NI Colleges, support the '*Good for Me, Good for FE*' Campaign spearheaded by three FE Principals in England. The campaign aims to generate £1 million worth of social value via a programme of community action in areas such as:
 - Building on the work of FE Foodbank Friday with Colleges continuing to collect donations;
 - Encouraging College staff to take part in volunteering activities within and outside the College community;
 - Develop corporate and charitable partnerships.
- 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 2022/2023.
 - As in previous years, the College offered outreach provision to reach members of the public that are disadvantaged through its community partners in 50+ venues throughout Derry~Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane. Covid-19 impacted again for this provision as a number of centres that were listed in the prospectus did not run any courses. This was due to non-engagement. Hopefully this will improve for the next reporting period.
 - 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.
 - The College's Erasmus+ funded projects unfortunately did not take place during this reporting period due to Covid-19 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 2022/2023.

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- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2021-22 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Equality Improvement Plan attached.

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3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2021-22 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

- Documents to be placed on the College's website now require confirmation that they have been accessibility checked. This follows the commencement of attaining the RNIB Visibly Better Employer Quality Standard.
- The Breastfeeding Policy was amended to include students who wish to breastfeed as well as the introduction of breastfeeding rooms in the Strabane and Limavady campuses. The College also signed up to the *Breastfeeding Welcome Here* campaign through the Public Health Agency.
- As RNID have advised that the Louder than Words Accreditation no longer exists, the College have agreed to procure 20 licences Introductory e-Learning module for staff/students to study at their own pace.

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:

- As a result of the documents being accessibility checked, the College will be identified as being an employer that acknowledges the need for documents to be accessible on the website. This allows the potential for individuals with a disability to apply for a job or to attend a course at the College where adjustments will be made for them to work/study.
- Due to the Breastfeeding Policy being amended, the availability of further breastfeeding rooms and membership of the *Breastfeeding Welcome Here* campaign, will show the College's commitment to encourage breastfeeding.
- The provision of e-Learning opportunities in BSL will show commitment the College has to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, especially when a BSL/ISL Act becomes legislative in Northern Ireland.

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

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

- 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 2021-22 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 and existing 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 2021-22 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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6 In the 2021-22 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 2021-22 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Please see Paragraph 5 above.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2021-22 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	15	Actions ongoing:	25	Actions to commence:	3
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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 2021-22 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 2021-22 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

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- ✓ [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 2021-22 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 commenced consultation 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;
- ✓ Strabane staff and students as a result of seeking feedback regarding potential relocation of Strabane campus
- ✓ Groups and organisations on the College’s consultee list through provision of Quarterly Screening Reports;
- ✓ Groups and organisations, particularly in the Strabane area, to determine if they wished to become a member on the College’s consultee list;

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- ✓ Disability groups, such as RNIB and RNID, to potentially be accredited an equality related quality standard;
- ✓ Various community groups through the work of Learner Services and Community Outreach provision, eg, NSPCC and groups such as Newbuildings Community Association;
- ✓ Disability groups to discuss potential work placements, eg, CEDAR, Employers for Disability NI and NI Union of Supported Employers;
- ✓ Derry and Strabane District Council regarding the EQIA for the potential relocation of Strabane Campus;
- ✓ 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 2021-22 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings (via MS Teams)
- Focus groups
- 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:

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Not applicable

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2021-22 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 2021-22 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)*:

77 screening exercises (some policies screened more than once)

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2021-22:

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

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

0* Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

*Please note that the EQIA Report for the potential relocation of Strabane Campus will be reported on in the next Progress Report for 2022/2023.

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. However the College undertook a EQIA on the potential relocation of the Strabane campus. This will be reported on within the next annual progress report for 2022/2023.

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 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

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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 2021-22 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

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 2021-22 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 2021-22, 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 remained restricted.

Course	No of Staff who attended / participated	Evaluation	Comments
Adolescent Neglect NSPCC	20 participants	Excellent 100%	<p>Very interesting and useful training. I really enjoyed the session and found the trainer so knowledgeable and easy to listen to.</p> <p>Important to realise that students may have experienced issues as younger people which may be impacting on their ability to engage and participate - not necessarily abuse but more neglect/omission.</p> <p>I am [now] mindful of the various (neglect) indicators when meeting with students and how to support them.</p>
Appraisal Training	40 participants	Excellent 100%	<p>Good training with good examples.</p> <p>An excellent and worthwhile session.</p> <p>Excellent course - delivered in a professional and engaging way.</p>
Domestic Violence Awareness Training	51 participants	Excellent 100%	<p>Amazing workshop with a lot of hard hitting case studies that have made me aware of domestic abuse and how to spot the signs of said abuse.</p>

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Course	No of Staff who attended / participated	Evaluation	Comments
			Information covered was sufficient without being overwhelming. Interesting and informative. Great interaction among those attending and very informative and interesting.
Leading Others Through Change (Leadership and Management Training)	26 participants	Excellent 100%	Informative, valuable and enjoyable session. Very good training and well delivered. Thoroughly enjoyable thought provoking session.
Resilience for you and your Teams Training	19 participants	Excellent 100%	Thought the trainer delivered the training in a very professional and engaging manner which made the session interactive and enjoyable. Trainer was very enthusiastic and strong delivery.
BSL Introductory Course	3 participants	Excellent 100%	The entire course was brilliant from start to finish. The lecturer was outstanding, and I think it is important to feedback on such a positive experience. I have learnt so much during the 10 week course.

Other training

Course	No of Staff who attended / participated
Basic First Aid Training	9 participants
Disability Awareness Training	36 participants
Emergency First Aid at Work	16 participants (mandatory for College First Aiders)
Interview Preparation Training	5 participants
Performance Levels Training	158 participants
Recruitment and Selection Training	15 participants
Sign Language Workshop	15 participants
Compliments and Complaints Training (online)	45 participants
Consumer Protection Training (online)	116 participants

Other training attended by Equality Administrator

Equality Commission Training	Date
Section 75 duties and equality assessment	26/10/21
Making it work – more and better jobs for disabled people	29/3/22
Positive action – disability	13/4/22
Race at work	7/6/22

Other training	Date
Visual Awareness Training (RNIB)	15/5/22

Mandatory Training

Course	No of Staff who completed training
Equality and Diversity	390 completions during the reporting period
GDPR	491 completions during the reporting period
Health and Safety	465 completions during the reporting period
Safeguarding	403 completions during the reporting period
SEND0	368 completions during the reporting period

The overall completion rate as at the end of March 2022 for the mandatory equality and diversity training is 85.8%.

Staff are reminded through monthly reports to complete all mandatory training, including Equality and Diversity. This is in addition to being a standing item on the College's Equality Working Group's agenda to ensure completion rates improve. This will continue for the next academic year to ensure all staff complete the training.

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:

Not applicable

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2021-22, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

- Working towards the RNIB Visibly Better Employer Quality Standard resulted in a huge exercise to improve accessibility issues within documents available on the College's website. An audit by Green17, the College's website controller recorded over 275 documents requiring 600+ amendments. This resulted in a new process being established to ensure all documents presented for uploading onto the College website should be accessibility checked beforehand.
- 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 provided statistics in relation the usage of their guidance for College buildings. As a result, the College increased the presence of *AccessAble* on internal staff and student portals, as well as the College's separate Business Support Centre website. In addition, leaflets were produced and provided by AccessAble and placed at all receptions to raise awareness.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2021-22?

Insert number here: 3

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

- Complaints relating to staff.

Complaints were not upheld.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Scheme is to be reviewed in January 2027

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 (2022-23) 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 - 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 2021/2022
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.	The College continued to promote this action with the Department for the Economy recruitment campaigns encouraging individuals with a disability to apply to become board members. One College board member is a trustee for Action for the Deaf Youth. The College plans to encourage students with disabilities to participate in the recruitment process to become the student governor.
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.	Two 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. One member was unable to attend due to other work commitments however, it is envisaged they will be able to recommence their membership of one of the College committees in 2022/2023.
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 Client 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.	Students who have disabilities continued to take part in College life in 2021/2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of the Student Union Officers within the Student Union's Council have a disability. • 19% of Student Class Reps across all campuses have a disability. • 57% of the students chosen to take part in a cross-community project in Sligo, running from 19th June 2022 to 2nd July 2022 have a disability or learning need. • Two Higher Education students who have disabilities are attending the Harkin Summit in Belfast on 7 June 2022 which highlights employability issues for people with disabilities as part of a Department for Communities initiative.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students on the Transition programme, which caters for students with learning disability, take part in a weekly walkabout as part of health and wellbeing. Students with disabilities studying on the Multicraft course had a canoe session on the River Foyle as part of health and wellbeing. • Students who have disabilities take part in focus groups, student surveys and surveys relating to disability services within the College, to ensure that their voices and recommendations are heard. • 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.
<p>Increase awareness of specific barriers faced by people with a disability with National Awareness days or weeks.</p>	On-going	<p>Head of Client Services</p> <p>Compliance and Admissions Manager</p>	<p>Increased awareness and understanding of barriers faced by people with a disability.</p>	<p>The College continued to raise awareness of equality related themes, especially in the area of mental health. For example, World Suicide Prevention Day (<i>a candle was placed in the corridor over the Strand Road to be viewed through the night</i>), World Mental Health Day and World Sight Day.</p> <p>Also, awareness was raised for International Day of Persons with a disability (<i>staff were invited to update their MS Teams’ background during meetings to promote this day</i>), and World Cancer Day.</p> <p>World Autism Day and National Epilepsy week were also promoted with confirmation provided to staff of the College achieving the Autism Impact Award through Autism NI in March 2022 and the provision of guidance and suggested training for staff regarding epilepsy.</p>
<p>Promote the use of AccessAble website to encourage participation of prospective students.</p>	<p>Annually and on-going</p> <p>Year 1 – Year 5</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Compliance and Admissions Manager</p>	<p>Benchmark usage of AccessAble webpage.</p>	<p>On an annual basis the College requests data from AccessAble to determine usage of AccessAble’s accessibility guidance of College buildings. The data indicated that traffic had decreased.</p>

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				<p>During 2021, North West Regional College Accessibility Guide had 612 Users and 2,618 Page Views. This breaks down to a monthly average of 51 Users and 218 Page Views.</p> <p>As a result, the College increased the presence of <i>AccessAble</i> on internal staff and student portals, as well as the College’s separate Business Support Centre website. In addition, leaflets were produced and provided by <i>AccessAble</i> and placed at all receptions to raise awareness.</p> <p>Also, <i>AccessAble</i> 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> <p>Furthermore, an audit of Limavady Campus was carried out in June 2022.</p> <p><i>AccessAble</i> have provided links to various videos and training modules for each of the six FE College’s Equality Forum members internal use.</p> <p>The Sector Equality Group are considering the renewal of the partnership with <i>AccessAble</i>.</p>
<p>Create an open an inclusive workplace culture which displays respect for those with mental ill health.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>HR Manager</p>	<p>Positive engagement, increasing provision of information and monitoring.</p>	<p>During academic year 2021/22 the College developed a Health and Wellbeing Strategy to promote and support staff wellbeing. The four key domains of Wellbeing are below with examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better physical and psychological health (promotes healthy behaviours). Examples include Initial steps taken to identify Mental Health first aiders, promoting positive mental health workshop delivered to line managers, delivery of personal effectiveness, personal

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			<p>resilience, mindful self-care, healthy eating and physical activity courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better work (happy and engaging work environment). Examples include Conflict management course, Hybrid Working Framework in development, partnerships developed with Inspire, Parenting NI, ONUS (domestic abuse), Occupational Health Benenden and Health and Wellbeing Brochures. • Better relationships (effective communications / social relationships). For example Queens Leadership programme implemented, in-house management development programme underway and “<i>Good for Me, Good for FE</i>” initiative (see below). • Better specialist support (early intervention), for example Inspire – Employee Assistance provider, awareness raising initiatives and a range of courses, mental health awareness and living with worry and anxiety. <p>Other activities offered through the Health and Wellbeing Strategy include menopause resources, “<i>Beware the Chair</i>” initiative, Resilience and fitness classes.</p> <p>The College, along with the other 5 FE NI Colleges, support the ‘<i>Good for Me, Good for FE</i>’ Campaign spearheaded by three FE Principals in England. The campaign aims to generate £1 million worth of social value via a programme of community action in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the work of FE Foodbank Friday with Colleges continuing to collect donations; • Encouraging College staff to take part in volunteering activities within and outside the College community;
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop corporate and charitable partnerships. <p>Due to the recognition of how important mental health and wellbeing is for student success, the Learning and Teaching Team organised a Hope and Wellbeing Festival to take place before Easter. Wellbeing across the student body starts with staff wellbeing. The programme was filled with keynote, practical workshops and resources to offer meaningful health and wellbeing support to staff and in turn, students. The event gave the opportunity to re-connect with colleagues and celebrate what the College has achieved over the past two years.</p>
<p>Explore the scope of offering meaningful placements and work shadowing and volunteering for people with a disability.</p>	On-going	<p>Head of Client Services</p> <p>Compliance and Admissions Manager</p>	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>Work progressed with CEDAR to provide a placement for a curriculum department in September. CEDAR were delighted that the College had approached them. Pen Pictures have been forwarded for consideration by the relevant department and a meeting is to be set up to discuss relevant adjustments and support.</p> <p>This would be a trial run and if successful more placements could be put in place.</p>
<p>Introduce training for front line staff on disability etiquette and relevant legislation dealing with disability and the provision of goods, facilities and services.</p>	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 36 participants attending.</p> <p>The overall completion rate as at the end of March 2022 for the mandatory equality and diversity training is 85.8%.</p> <p>The College has purchased 20 licences for BSL 1 Introductory module, through Signature, for staff and/or</p>

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				students to undertake the e-Learning training at their own pace.
Consider development of a (Sectoral) Disability Advisory Group that could involve staff and students.	Three meetings per year	Equality Coordinators Forum	Contribute to the development of communications, consultation, screening of relevant policies, monitoring etc.	<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 continued to work with 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>Furthermore, Disability is also a standing item on the College’s internal Equality Working Group agenda.</p> <p>The College has signed up to the Disability Confident Employer and have achieved Level 2 of this accreditation. Work is also in progress to complete the RNIB’s Visibly Better Employer Standard. Achievement is near completion at the time of reporting with one further aspect to be addressed regarding advertisements.</p>
Through Widening Participation scheme increase number of students with a disability entering the College.	Annually	Head of Client Services	Raise educational awareness, aspirations and educational attainment amongst the target group.	<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-</p>

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				time education allowing them to rethink their educational pathway.
Monitor and review the progress of the Disability Action Plan.	Annually August Year 1 – Year 5	Administrator – Equality	Provision of update contained within Progress Report.	On-going.

Appendix 1 – Equality Improvement Plan

Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/ Measure	Report	Equality Category	Update 2021/2022
Assess effectiveness of communication with students regarding equality	Annually	Head of Client Services	Address any concerns identified	Progress Report	All	<p>The Student Services Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites for students continues to increase the College’s social media presence. This presence continued to allow students to access equality information/resources, specifically targeting those with poor mental health.</p> <p>Students who have disabilities take part in focus groups, student surveys and surveys relating to disability services within the College, to ensure that their voices and recommendations are heard.</p>
Assess if equality is embedded into curriculum in new departments	To be assessed annually in June	Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards	To be approved by Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards	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. Some examples are below.</p> <p>In one department, where support or advice is needed for the learner, the Level 2 team engage Student Services and Learning Link. Where English is noted as a second language, concessions are made in relation to submission of written evidence and where necessary, alternative methods of assessment are utilised by the peripatetic assessors as well as the lecturers. Any issues are discussed with the Curriculum Manager and a problem-solving approach is implemented to support the learner to work towards achievement without bias or inequality of opportunity.</p> <p>In another course, the barriers to participation in sport amongst low-participation level groups are discussed in relation to gender, background, and social class.</p>

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					<p>Contemporary issues in sport are investigated in relation to media coverage of sport according to gender; racism in sport; equality in sport; relationship between culture and religion and sport; ethnicity and sport; socio-economic status and sport; and disability sport.</p> <p>Also, Diversity is embedded throughout one course from the outset of the qualification. In the first unit staff explored the need to respect diversity and challenge inequality. This aligns with a person-centred approach to meet the individual needs of the people support.</p> <p>Staff explored key concepts in equality legislation and how stigma and discrimination can be factors further impacting on service users and how the College can embed cultural competence into its practice.</p> <p>In addition, students who have additional learning needs are supported via the requirement for additional breaks during class time and extra time for assignments if required. Tutorials allow time to identify the diverse learning needs and put a plan in place to support the learners to reach their full potential.</p> <p>In one course RNIB and RNID both made visits to the College to present and talk to learners, training them and raise awareness within the learners of sensory difficulties and disability so that they are more aware of their presence in the community and also on how to help people who may have sensory impact.</p> <p>Officers from PSNI's Community Drug Department visited to discuss issues of drugs within the community and services and resources available to help people who are affected by this issue or who care for someone affected by this issue.</p> <p>Peer Research Project with QUB and Youth Action NI focussed on mental health peer research and enabling</p>
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						learners to both help their own mental health and contribute to research aimed to promote the mental health of people in the community.
Provision of Equality awareness training to all staff	Annually	HR Manager	Outcome of Evaluations	Progress Report	All	<p>Ongoing – there have been several equality-related staff development activities on the staff development programme throughout the year. See Section 24 of the Progress Report.</p> <p>In addition, the College is in the process of sourcing Race Equality Training as well as the Sector’s Dignity at Work training to be available for the next academic year.</p>
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	<p>During the reporting period, the QDP survey was replaced with a Learning and Teaching survey which ran from 1 February 2022 for 5 weeks.</p> <p>The two Sector agreed equality questions (1) <i>“The College treats me fairly and with respect”</i> and (2) <i>“I believe the College is committed to promoting an inclusive learning environment”</i> were added as well as a further equality question (3) <i>“I believe that the College is inclusive and welcoming and that staff and students have a mutual respect.”</i> The responses were</p> <p>1 – No 36 / Yes 2386 – (No - 1.5%) 2 – No 28 / Yes 2383 – (No - 1.2%) 3 – No 33 / Yes 2360 – (No - 1.4%)</p> <p>Although the negative responses were not high, Equality information was made more prominent for students to access.</p>

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<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>Compliance and Admissions 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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2021 to August 2021 - International Day of Happiness, Deaf Awareness Week, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, Carers’ Week, and Playday. • September 2021 to November 2021 - World Suicide Prevention Day (<i>a candle was placed in the corridor over the Strand Road to be viewed through the night</i>), International Day of Peace, Black History Month, World Mental Health Day and World Sight Day. • December 2021 to March 2022 - World Science Day for Peace and Development, World Kindness Day, Universal Children’s Day, International Day of Persons with a disability (<i>staff were invited to update their MS Teams’ background during meetings to promote this day</i>), Human Rights Day, World Cancer Day, and International Women’s Day.
<p>To maintain the “Louder than Words” Charter Mark</p>	<p>Academic year 2021/2022</p>	<p>LMT Members</p>	<p>Achievement of Award</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>RNID has advised the College that the Louder than Words accreditation is no longer in existence. However the College will continue to review their assessment template to ensure good practice continues.</p> <p>As a result of this review, it was identified that signage in lifts to assure the public that should the lift breakdown, an engineer would be available, needed to be re-added to all lifts therefore Estates procured the relevant signage.</p> <p>The Equality Administrator has met with RNID on several occasions to ensure the College continues a close working partnership. New initiatives such as their new Employment programme is being developed. The College hopes to sign up to this once available.</p>

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<p>Continue the provision of support for people with a disability to improve employability</p>	<p>February 2022</p>	<p>Student Services 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 Inspire Employability Programme delivered by the Widening Access and Participation Officer supports participants to build aspiration, motivation and self-confidence while developing key employability skills. Through this programme people were supported to work on core employability skills such as CV writing, interview techniques, job search techniques, career planning workshops and teambuilding. As a result there has been a 9% increase in successful progression after its completion.</p> <p>In addition, the Inspire Programme was undertaken by the Women's Centre to provide help, advice and support to those who are currently unemployed and to encourage movement towards training. Between September 2021 and November 2021, 33 individuals participated.</p> <p>The Princes Trust Team, linked with Rosemount Primary School to take the lead with the regeneration of an under-used and neglected piece of land. The long term goal is to bring additional funding to the site by gathering both the elderly and the young people of the school to complete projects that will help both groups with mental health.</p> <p>The College organised a fundraiser walk at Benevenagh. The walk was to raise money for the College's Walk and Talk event. This event was inspired by young people on the Prince's Trust programme in the Limavady Campus to raise awareness around mental health by encouraging people to talk more about their own mental health. The College and students collaborated with a local charity, Limavady Initiative for the prevention of Suicide (LIPS) as Limavady has one of the highest rates of suicide in the UK.</p>
<p>Review the Mental Health Charter (Equality Commission) to assess actions</p>	<p>Academic year 2021/2022</p>	<p>HR Manager</p>	<p>Awareness of College as Trauma</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>Building a trauma-informed environment across the College is one of the key priorities for the Learning and Teaching Development team. A number of training activities linked to research on ACEs has resumed post Covid.</p>

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<p>necessary to promote and raise awareness</p>		<p>Learning and Teaching Manager</p>	<p>informed College Number of staff attending Resilience Conference</p>			<p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screenings of the award-winning documentaries: ‘Resilience: The Science of Hope and the Biology of Stress’ and ‘Paper Tigers’ followed by panel discussions. • The Level 4 Certificate in Understanding ACE and Building Resilience is accredited by OCN. This course is designed to support the dissemination of ACE and resilience science and promote understanding and application of the science to improve health and wellbeing and educational outcomes across the lifespan. • Level 1 & Level 2 ACEs training which is disseminated through workshops. <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 employment / education</p>	<p>Academic year 2021/2022</p>	<p>HR Manager Compliance and Admissions 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>
<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 Client Services</p>	<p>Programme of events and evaluations</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>See item “Create an open an inclusive workplace culture which displays respect for those with mental ill health” from the College’s Disability Action Plan above for staff.</p> <p>In relation to students, to address the rise in student referrals, the Safeguarding Team recruited an additional Deputy Safeguarding Officer for Limavady campus. The Team also promoted Mental Health Awareness week on 14 October 2021 and Resilience week on 25 October 2021 which provided staff to signpost students and provide the information and resources to seek help and support with mental health conditions.</p>

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						<p>The Safeguarding officer and The Widening Access and Participation Officer worked with Aware NI, Common Youth and the Pink Ladies to arrange workshops for students on Resilience, Mental Health, Coercive Control, Relationships, Cancer Awareness and Reduce the Risk Cancer Prevention. The workshops were scheduled throughout April 2022.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Team promoted Sexual Health Awareness week from 7 February to 14 February 2022 with information, leaflets and booklets provided from the Western Health and Social Care Trust. Information was displayed in the foyer of the campuses, on Canvas and College social media sites. The College also promoted “Time to Talk Day” on 3 February 2022, “Safer Internet Day” on 8 February 2022, Valentine’s Day on 14 February 2022 and Random Acts of Kindness Day on 17 February 2022 in the College and on social media sites.</p> <p>The Team continue to liaise 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 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 Ascertain.</p>
<p>Continue partnership working with Innovation and Recovery project to maximise benefits to staff and students</p>	<p>Academic year 2021/2022</p>	<p>Head of Client Services</p>	<p>Raised Awareness</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>Following the College’s becoming partners with Elemental Software, there are currently 223 students on the Elemental Student Support Platform.</p> <p>The College supported cross border Recovery College projects integrated and developed workshops for staff and students during the academic year.</p> <p>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</p>

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						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.
Student Services to continue to strengthen the development of effective mechanisms to support students with poor mental health	Annually	Head of Client Services	Increased participation on social media Increased number of students attending College with mental health issues	Leadership and Management Team Progress Report	Disability	The Student Services Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites for students continues to increase the College's social media presence. This presence continued to allow students to access equality information/resources, specifically targeting those with poor mental health
Become a Just a Minute (JAM) organisation	June 2020	Administrator – Equality	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 possible. The College's membership has since expired and will not be renewed due to costs involved.
Develop a partnership with Foyle Hospice to assist students who are in need	September 2021	Administrator – Equality	Raised Awareness	Progress Report	All	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 experiencing hardship. Due to difficulties progressing this, the Equality Working Group agreed to remove this action going forward. This was due to the College also signing up to support the 'Good for Me, Good for FE' Campaign spearheaded by three FE Principals in England. The campaign aims to generate £1

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						million worth of social value via a programme of community actions. This will be removed from further action plans.
Become a trauma informed College	June 2022	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
Encourage all departments to promote equality throughout the year and report in Progress Report in 2021/2022	Academic year 2021/2022	Administrator – Equality	Awareness raising and number of activities	Progress Report	All	Staff were continually 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 2021/2022	Administrator – Equality Senior Administrator – Admissions	Action Plan	Admissions Survey Progress Report	All	The College had planned to undertake a student exit survey to ensure that students’ experiences while undertaking their study was in an inclusive environment. A separate survey for this was not conducted however, the question itself was added to the survey undertaken by the Learning and Teaching team. The response from the survey for this question was outlined above in relation to the QDP survey.
Increased participation of relevant staff in the screening of policies relevant to their respective areas	Academic year 2021/2022	Administrator – Equality	Increased awareness of the importance of screening by each department thereby influencing policy decisions	Progress Report	All	Progress continued with the policy schedule system for reviewing, updating, screening and monitoring policies. During the reporting period the Equality Administrator advised staff that 60+ policies required to be reviewed and screened by various departments, with support provided by the Equality Administrator as necessary. Also, from September 2021 to the end of March 2022, all 38 policies approved at the Leadership and Management Team meeting were equality screened. A system to update the Leadership and Management Team regarding the equality monitoring based on screening is to be provided for 2022/2023.
Consider staff network groups for staff with cancer or are carers	Academic Year 2021/2022	Administrator – Equality	Increased support and awareness	Progress Report	All	Work progressed on this action to support external organisations who work with people with cancer, however no staff network groups have yet been established. The College

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						will endeavour to have further updates on this action for the next annual report.
Roll out ParentingNI sessions to staff	Academic Year 2021/2022	Administrator – Equality	Increased awareness and training for staff	Progress Report	Dependants	There have been 3 ParentingNI sessions rolled out to staff over the reporting period. These were Worklife Balance, Parent’s Emotional Health and Helping Children Manage Change
Endeavour to increase female applicants on Apprenticeship programmes	Academic Year 2021/2022	Administrator – Equality	Promotion of College as committed to increase female participation in courses	Progress Report Curriculum Data	Gender	<p>The Training and Skills Department prior to Covid-19 liaised with various educational establishments to encourage applications from female students. The department had plans to continue this however due to Covid restrictions this was put on hold. Approval is needed before any visits can take place. This is a work in progress.</p> <p>Although physical visits were on hold, a former student was recently employed as the College’s first female Fabrication and Welding Lecturer. This employment has made an impact as there are now a number of female applicants on welding courses.</p>
Consider additional support mechanisms for staff who have experienced a miscarriage	Academic Year 2021/2022	HR Manager Compliance and Admissions Manager	Support provided to staff and increased awareness	Absence statistics Progress Report	Gender Dependants Disability Marital Status	The College has developed Miscarriage Guidance through the Miscarriage Association, a first in the sector. In addition, training has been provided for staff and the College plans to sign up to the Miscarriage Association’s pledge to support staff and students affected by miscarriage.
Commence the work involved for the College to become a Diversity Champion recognised organisation through Stonewall	Academic Year 2021/2022	Compliance and Admissions Manager Head of Client Services	Increase in numbers of applicants from the LGBTQ+ communities	Student Statistics FEMR Progress Report	Sexual Orientation	Work progressed within the Stonewall Action plan to gain momentum in the initiative for the College to become a Stonewall Diversity Champion. For example, guidance has been prepared for staff similar to students who may request support during their transgender process. Also, work is in progress to update policies to gender neutral language.
Completion of the nomination process to select a number of College charities	Academic Year 2022/2023	Administrator – Equality	Increased awareness of various charities	Progress Report Client Service Reports to GB	All	New action added

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<p>In addition to a calendar of events for equality related themes, College to organise 2 to 3 high level equality awareness campaigns</p>	<p>Academic Year 2022/2023</p>	<p>Administrator – Equality Equality Working Group</p>	<p>Increased awareness and support for various equality themes</p>	<p>Progress Report Website coverage</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>New action added</p>
<p>Commencement of work to obtain Race at Work Charter</p>	<p>Academic Year 2022/2023</p>	<p>Administrator – Equality</p>	<p>Increase in number of applications from ethnic minority groups for both employment and courses</p>	<p>Progress Report Website coverage</p>	<p>Race</p>	<p>New action added</p>