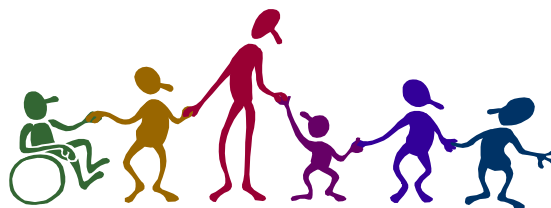


**SECTION 75 OF THE
NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998**

PROGRESS REPORT

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

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023



North West Regional College



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2022-2023**

Contact:	
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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	http://www.nwrc.ac.uk/Equality/
Signature: <i>Michelle Breslin</i>	

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 2022 and March 2023

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 2022-23, 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 2022/2023, business in the College began to revert back to a sense of normalcy with curriculum and support staff working together to support students' education.

Details of how equality of opportunity progressed are as follows:

- There continued to be a range of key activities/ training opportunities to ensure that Equality is embedded in all aspects of Staff Development. All training opportunities carried out were focused on ensuring that there is an inclusive learning experience for all participants. All participants are offered the opportunity to complete detailed evaluations. These are scrutinised and any concerns are followed up.
- There has been a significant increase in mental health problems among young people following the pandemic and as a result training opportunities and the annual learning and teaching conference focused on supporting the mental health of students at the College. For example, the annual learning and teaching conference held in October 2022 focused on '*Hope Matters: The Science and Power of Hope*'. Research has revealed the importance of hope for predicting academic success and wellbeing in schools and colleges. Hope keeps students motivated, on track and filled with a sense of agency and determination. It builds self-efficacy, persistence, optimism and resourcefulness. Hope is recognised as an important psychological resource for academic achievement, career development and job performance. Contributors to the conference provided an overview of the Student Psychological Intervention Trial (SPIT), a study which was conducted as part of the World Mental Health International College Student Initiative. This highlighted the importance of monitoring student mental health and that early intervention, prevention programmes, and treatment, are of utmost importance. Another contributor provided an overview of the Irish Student Wellbeing and ADHD Project (I-SWAP), a project that aims to improve wellbeing and help seeking behaviours among students with ADHD.
- In addition, one contributor explored the Science and Power of Hope which is based on a project developed by [iFred](#), the International Foundation for Research and Education on Depression. It is based on research that suggests hope is teachable (a skill). Action Planning following the conference was facilitated by the *Resilio* team who provided an opportunity for reflection and focused on building an action plan for the College. This culminated in an action plan to become a 'Campus of Hope.'
- Unicef UK has worked with Derry and Strabane City Council (DCSDC), Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) and the Education Authority (EA) Youth Service towards

recognition as a UNICEF Child Friendly City/ Community. This specifically has implications for key courses at the College which employ the WHSCT: Early Years and Health and Social Care. As a result, training on Children's Rights was delivered to 28 lecturers with follow-up sessions focusing on embedding Children's Rights in these curriculum areas.

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Training continued at the College during the reporting period. As previously reported, research in relation to 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 events linked to this research on ACEs continued. These have been designed to cultivate a trauma-sensitive learning environment at the College.
- **SWEAR: Student Wellbeing Engagement And Resilience Workshop** training was delivered by College staff and was designed to support lecturers when dealing with students in crisis. It covered presentation of poor mental health, stigma, support available within the college, engagement with self-care and resilience strategies.
- The NSPCC Regional Manager continued to deliver workshops on Online Safety and Adolescent Neglect. This year the focus was on the mental health of young people. Childline, the NSPCC's service for young people, has reported a significant increase in the number of counselling sessions in relation to mental health with young people. Over the last number of years, Childline's trained counsellors have heard first-hand about the devastating impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on young people's mental health. This training focused on how staff can respond appropriately to students who report loneliness, low mood, self-esteem issues, depression and anxiety.
- Following a training session by Employers for Disability NI in January 2023, a Neurodiversity Learning Object was created by the Learning and Teaching Team and made available to staff. This provides an understanding of the impact of common neurodiverse conditions and strategies to use to support students to create an inclusive environment. All new full-time and associate lecturers have completed this training.
- All digital resources created and used must comply with accessibility directives. This includes creating resources for use in Canvas that are in a format that makes them easily readable by a screen reader. Training was provided by the TELs team which focused on making resources accessible for students.
- All lecturing staff continued to be 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 have implications for the training and assessment processes relating to gender, disability, race/ culture/ religion and language.

- A weekly Induction programme continued to be available to support all new staff, both full-time and part-time focuses on embedding Equality in all aspects of College life. This includes a focus on legislative requirements through mandatory training including Equality, SEND and Safeguarding. Cultural diversity training is also made available to all staff which also helps to heighten awareness of all anti-discrimination risks.
- The DIAL (Design Innovation and Assisted Living) Centre continued to provide a unique innovation space to integrate education, business and the broad health and social care sector within a state-of-the-art facility that can improve collaborations across many vocational disciplines, eg, IT, Engineering, Architecture, Health & Social Care, Media and the arts, whilst also improving the impact of health in the local and global economy.
- DIAL is a health innovation hub with a focus to promote greater collaboration, learning and innovation so that improved practice models and solutions are developed that will support independence and a quality of life for greater numbers of people to live well.
- DIAL hosted several local and international events throughout the academic year 22/23, with a range of external and internal stakeholders.
- RNIB used the centre as a resource to deliver Visual Awareness Training with members of the public throughout the year. They also used the centre to hold two events, ie, one in October, World Sight Day, to raise the awareness of visual impairment; and one in June, to thank their volunteers.
- The DIAL Centre is also working with Derry City and Strabane District Council and RNIB to provide training, information and best practice in order to improve accessibility within the council area for people who are blind or partially sighted. It is hoped that the council's commitment will also help raise awareness over the challenges faced by blind and partially sighted people.
- The Ulster-led eCareWell project (partnership with the College) ended in December 2022, whereby over 100 carers were recruited to take part in active research, exploring the use of technology to support their own health and wellbeing needs. DIAL provided space resource, innovation, and staffing resource to support the research project.
- A partnership with Ulster University, and their Occupational Therapy faculty, was initiated at the beginning of the year. The relationship provided Ulster staff and students to use the DIAL Centre to support teaching, learning and assessment in a simulated homecare setting. In return, Ulster provided College students the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding, through workshops, throughout the year, about the role of the Occupational Therapist.
- Occupational Therapists from Western Trust used the DIAL homecare area to assess their clients, in relation to types of technology, equipment and/or furniture that would be required to support their independence in future.

- Information and open sessions, for members of the public, were hosted in DIAL, to observe the future of technology to maintain an individuals' independence, eg, Level 4 Healthcare Practice (OU validated).
- International guests to the College, including staff and students, were provided tours of DIAL and discussions were held around the use of technology enabled care, IoT, and assistive technologies for independent living.
- In May 2023, an event themed: Design for Digital Inclusion (Connected NI funded) was delivered in DIAL, bringing together a range of digital innovators, SMEs, academics, and members of the public. The half-day conference provided opportunities for both internal and external stakeholders to connect, and to explore how technology could be used to support and maintain independent living for those living with a disability. All of the technology innovators were from the local and regional area, that demonstrated the high-quality tech innovations that were being developed across Northern Ireland.
- The College's Career Academy continued to provide essential support to students during the reporting period. For example, the Widening Access and Participation Officer delivered the College's Inspire Employability programme at the Women's Centre. This programme included various workshops including CV building, interview preparation, building resilience and the provision of information of courses available at the College and the support available.
- The Safeguarding Team continued to promote positive mental health for students during their time at the College. From September 2022 to May 2023, there have been 357 Listening Ear referrals made, an increase of 21 from the previous year. Anxiety continues to be the most common reason for referral (148). In addition, 98 students have been engaging with Inspire Counselling since January 2022, with 27 new referrals received. To support these students, the College has promoted Inspire's Student Hub with features such as iHelp Chatbot, Mood Tracker and Resource Library. There is also a LiveChat feature which allows students to chat to the team for support and signposts.
- In addition, the College's Safeguarding Team promoted Mental Health Awareness week in May 2023 by organising a schedule of events that ran throughout the week in all campuses. These included a mental health fair with support from, for example, NSPCC, Aware NI and Ascertain. Support was also provided by the Rainbow Project. Staff and students were encouraged to wear green to support the Mental Health Foundation and a mental health walk took place for staff and students.
- The Safeguarding team with support from other staff held a range of successful campaigns during the reporting period including Gender Awareness, Sexual Health Week and Victim Support Awareness.
- The Safeguarding Team have been supporting 15 Young Adult Carers and on 15 March 2023, the Team celebrated Young Carers Action Day. The theme was "Make Time for Young Carers" with Student Services provided free coffee tokens for all young carers as well as sharing a range of self-care ideas.

- Between March and April 2023, the Widening Access and Participation Officer worked with the youth club in the newly established Galliagh Community Centre in Derry. The workshops prepared 14–16-year-olds for job applications, provided guidance on interviews skills as well as the curriculum provision and courses available at the College.
- Following the College's becoming partners with Elemental Software, during the reporting period over 130 students were referred through this platform for support. This Social Prescribing Platform continued to enhance student wellbeing, build resilience, and promote new ways of working, using social prescribing.
- In addition, the Team continued 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 Ascertainment.
- The Safeguarding Officer and Head of Client Services continued to work on the development of the Visitors Policy. The purpose of this policy 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 remains a work in progress.
- The College continued with its School Engagement programme. Over 20 schools in the North West area have been visited by the College, reaching out to over 900 students from schools in the Derry and Strabane District Council area to those in Co Donegal and Co Leitrim.
- The College continued their relationships with other cities to promote and support lifelong learning, focusing on adult learning, continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education as part of the UNESCO Learning Cities network.
- The College continued its strong links and collaboration with the local community and support organisations. Over the past year, a number of organisations have attended college events and provided support and guidance. These include the British Red Cross, Youth Action, Action for Children, Action Mental Health, Aware NI, Inspire Counselling, CAWT Innovation Recovery Project and the Samaritans.
- The College's Students' Union set up a Sustainability Society over the past year. The aim of the Society is to run campaigns and events to raise awareness and bring about change. A number of projects have been undertaken since its inception, including the planting of fruit trees and the construction of a greenhouse to produce products for the College's Foodovation Centre.
- As a direct result of the cost of living crisis, the College provided students with almost 990 winter warmer and hygiene packs. These were initially targeted to students groups

from Quintiles 1 and 2, then later to the wider population. Also over 7,500 lunch vouchers were made available to students on full-time and significant part-time courses.

- The College continued its liaison with Foyle Foodbank through appeals and volunteering opportunities. Over the reporting period a total of 1,700 plus volunteering hours were completed by both students and staff, equivalent to £28,800 in social value.
- There continued to be general promotion of equality 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.
- A number of equality related news stories were promoted during the reporting period by the College. For example, sixteen students from Ardnashee College created miniature replica boats planted with flowers to present to each of the captains of the Clipper vessels as part of the Foyle Maritime Festival.

Also, students within The Prince's Trust Programme volunteered for a number of projects such as Foyle Down Syndrome Trust, Creggan Country Park as well as with Glens Community Association where they built picnic benches for vulnerable people in the community.

In addition, nine students received an award from The Prince's Trust having launched a week long "Walk and Talk" initiative that supported the Limavady Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide (LIPS). They were successful in winning the Dell Technologies Community Impact Award.

A lecturer from Greystone Campus was awarded the Skills Competition Diversity Champion Award at the 2023 WorldSkills UK Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Heroes Awards for his work on a skills competition at Magilligan Prison. The award is sponsored by the Education and Training Foundation.

- Over the 2022/2023 academic year, a range of Equality days were promoted on the College's staff and student portals in our continued commitment to raise awareness. These were as follows:
 - World Autism Day, Breastfeeding Week, Deafblind Awareness Week, World Suicide Prevention Day, International Day of Peace, Good Relations Week, Black History Month, International Day of Older Persons, World Mental Health Day, World Sight Day, World Menopause Day, International Stand up to Bullying Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Movember, International Day for Persons with a Disability, International Day of Education, Chinese New Year, LGBT+ History Month, Time to Talk Day, World Radio Day, International Women's Day, Disabled Access Day, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Stress Awareness Month, Deaf Awareness Week, Carers Week and World Music Day

- The College raised awareness of Movember in 2022. During November each year, Movember is responsible raising awareness for prostate and testicular cancer, and mental health. A number of staff took part in the Movember Challenge and provided a photo of themselves before and after with the chance to win the “Mo Tro” trophy.



- February 2023 was LGBT+ History Month and a range of activities took place and resources made available for staff to use. For example, use of a rainbow-coloured college logo and emojis on college emails. In addition, the College’s LGBT Student Group held a “Design a T-Shirt” completion to raise awareness on how best to promote LGBT+ History Month. Student Services also organised activities over the month of February. These included a Student campaign about LGBT+ history and the development of guidance on Pronouns from a student perspective.
- The College, as well as the other five FE Colleges, updated its Equality Scheme following its five-year review. As this is a Sector scheme, the College added its own actions it planned to carry out over the next 5 years, with additional actions identified as part of completing the annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission.
- 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. As part of the College’s membership with EFDNI two training sessions on Neurodiversity took place during Staff Development days. In addition, the College has undertaken their Disability Positive Accreditation, the three As – Action, Audit and Accreditation are the key steps involved. Those who complete these steps successfully will be recognised as a Disability Positive Employer with AAA or AAA* status. The audit focuses on employment-related disability good practice.

As at 29 June 2023, the College successfully achieved AAA status of the accreditation.

- The Equality Administrator has met with RNID who have advised on several initiatives they are developing that will allow the College to continue raising awareness for people who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. They are developing an Employment programme to encourage organisations to employ people with disabilities. The College will sign up to this initiative once available.

As the Louder than Words Charter Mark is no longer available, the College annually reviews their template to ensure that the good practice that had been put in place remains on the equality agenda.

- The College procured 20 licences for staff to undertake an Introductory e-Learning module through Signature so they can study at their own pace. The course will allow

staff to have confidence and skills to allow communication with deaf colleagues, students and stakeholders. Following their procurement, staff were invited to register their interest on a first come, first served basis. All 20 expressions of interest were quickly requested, with another 19 registering their interest.

- Over the past few years, the College acknowledged the work undertaken by mental health organisations and has supported mental health charities with donations from both staff and student fund raising initiatives. It was agreed that other charities across the North West region could benefit from monies raised by staff and students and as a result, other themes were suggested. These related to those assisting with homelessness, men and women’s issues, environmental issues, as well as carers/volunteers and those representing ethnic communities. Following a staff survey, the charities chosen were

Campus	Charity	Category
Derry ~ Londonderry (including Springtown)	Foyle Food Bank	Homelessness
Limavady (including Greystone)	Limavady Initiative for Prevention of Suicide	Men’s Issues
Strabane	Strabane Ethnic Community Association	Ethnic Minorities

- The Sector Equality Group met on several occasions during the reporting period and is chaired this year by the College. The group liaised with the sector Learning and Development Forum to work on a few training initiatives, as well as reviewing disability initiatives, renewal of the AccessAble contract, a Student Equality training module and a presentation from NI Union of Supported Employers, regarding removing potential barriers to recruitment, a potential student survey and guidance on the equality screening of sector policies.
- The Equality Working Group has met 4 times this academic year and has continued to promote equality in the College. The range of discussions that took place have been documented throughout this Progress Report, for example, the progress of RNIB’s Visibly Better Employer Standard; the Disability Positive accreditation with Employers for Disability NI, partnership with the North West Migrants’ Forum, provision of Refugee UK training on the application process for asylum seekers and refugees and additional support for LGBTQIA+ students and staff.
- HR Services have progressed further with Gov.uk for the Disability Confident Employer initiative and are currently working on Level 3.
- The College developed a Student Period Dignity Policy for staff on the provision of free sanitary products, which outlined where products are located and who to contact, eg, coordinators for SEN students. Products continued to be placed in all female / all-gender toilets in all campuses. This will continue into academic year 2023/2024.

- Work continued on updating documents audited by Green17, the College's website controller as a result of undertaking the RNIB's Visibly Better Employer standard. A second audit highlighted further accessibility issues and the need to have a policy in place to ensure staff have accessibility checked their documents before they are uploaded onto the College website.
- The College continued its progress with Stonewall's Diversity Champion. As a result the College has agreed to strengthen its collaboration with the Rainbow Project who have provided Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to staff on three occasions. Links are being extended to other groups to facilitate actions identified such as the development of a staff network, potential allyship training and links to help with policy development and review.
- The College has received confirmation of membership to the *Breastfeeding Welcome Here* campaign from the Public Health Agency to ensure people are aware of our commitment to breastfeeding. In addition, a room in Strabane was identified with appropriate equipment procured. Certificates have been placed at all receptions open to the public in all campus buildings to raise further awareness.
- Work on the EQIA and RNIA has progressed with regard to the proposed Strabane relocation. Students and staff have been surveyed to assess viewpoints, as well as the Equality Administrator meeting with representatives from Derry and Strabane District Council in relation to accessing relevant data for the EQIA. This has been parked and will be reported within next year's Progress Report.
- The Department for the Economy provided the six FE Colleges with £2,000 to fund the procurement of additional sanitary products for distribution in all female and non-gender toilets and across all campuses. This will continue in 2023/2024.
- One Department at the College agreed a placement in mid-September 2022 with CEDAR. CEDAR are delighted that the College had approached them as usually it is they who approach other organisations.

The work placement commenced in the College's DIAL Centre and has made substantial progress within that department. The client was transferred and has fulfilled a really invaluable function by staffing the main departmental office. Work continues in relation to placing a further client from RNIB.

- Following the development of a Miscarriage Policy, the College has signed up to the Miscarriage Association's Pregnancy Loss Pledge to support staff who are experiencing loss and to ensure they receive the support necessary during their grief. Guidance was therefore developed for managers.
- Work progressed in relation to the College attaining the RNIB Visibly Better Employer standard. The Equality Administrator met with GetGot and RNIB on several occasions. GetGot have completed the recommendations made by RNIB on their website, and a

further review by RNIB is due to take place. It is hoped that the College will receive the standard. However, if not successful, it is important to stress that as a result of the College requesting that GetGot update their website, accessibility will have improved for people who are blind or partially sighted for those organisations throughout Northern Ireland who use GetGot's services.

- In addition, the Recruitment Team worked closely with the Administrator – Equality and RNIB to develop document templates for job descriptions, personnel specifications, and competency frameworks that are compliant with RNIB Visibility Better standards. The templates are available to be issued to any applicants who request documents in an alternative format.
- The Recruitment Team have expanded advertising College job vacancies into other equality areas. In addition to advertising in local protestant community groups, the College now advertise with local disability groups (since October 2022) and local LGBTQIA+ groups (since May 2023).
- The College, as well as the other five FE Colleges, agreed to renew its membership with AccessAble. The DAC for AccessAble has now been completed for a further 5 years (with a potential review in 3 years to ensure no other provider is available).
- The AccessAble data recently received show that the usage numbers from May 2022 to May 2023 are 628 Users and 775 Page views. These figures have decreased despite the introduction of leaflets in 2022. As a result, the College met with AccessAble and agreed to increase website links within promotional material and information to students to encourage more usage.
- The Equality Administrator continued to advise staff of policy review dates and the necessity to equality screen. Over the past year over 40 policies have been screened upon their review.
- Staff in the College were offered opportunities to attend information sessions provided by Pink Ladies across all campuses over a period of 3 months from March to May 2023.
- The College has signed up to the Race at Work Charter which is associated with Business in the Community. Although the College's catchment area at the moment does not include many individuals from ethnic minorities, by signing up to the Charter means the College can take practical steps to ensure barriers are tackled to increase staff and students from ethnic minority communities.
- The Equality Administrator and HR Services have met with NI Union of Supported Employment with a view to encourage more people with a disability to apply to job vacancies. This was to seek guidance and suggestions to increase the number of applications from people with disabilities to apply to work at the College. As mentioned previously, they attended a meeting with the Sector Equality Group to discuss ways to increase applications from people with disabilities.

- The Equality Administrator met with representatives from NOW with a view to support students and past students in order to support them into employment.
- The College has initiated a partnership with the North West Migrants' Forum and as a result have agreed to support them in a range of awareness raising initiatives over the next few months/year for their racism research and training project. In addition, in September 2022 the College hosted a career information event in partnership with North West Migrant Forum to offer support to 50+ individuals applying to enrol on ESOL/Essential Skills courses.
- The College has agreed to work towards being accredited as a College of Sanctuary. A College of Sanctuary is a college that has undergone improvements in practices to support refugees and people seeking asylum and help raise awareness among students, staff and the wider community. As a result a number of key staff have begun Refugee UK training. As part of the accreditation, the College is encouraged to undertake an audit of current practices to determine what additional actions are needed to progress. This will be reported in next year's Progress Report.
- The Learning Link continued to provide support to students with a range of additional needs such as specific learning difficulties, eg, dyslexia, physical disabilities, medical conditions, sensory impairments, general learning difficulties and mental health conditions. During the reporting period, there was an increase of 53 students who registered with them for support. The team provided critical support to students over this period. Students were also provided with additional borrowing time of library books.
- The Learning Link team has provided both internal and external assessments to over 30 clients, the only FE College to provide assessments to external students. The team have also developed a student-led neurodiversity group. The team also continued to provide support with examinations with over 500 students availing of this support, adhering to strict JCQ compliance.
- The College continued 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 more information.
- The Business Support Centre (BSC) has collaborated with curriculum teams for fully online courses to enable access for individuals with a disability and those who have caring responsibilities. Also, there has been an increased number of referrals of students who have needed extra support such as mental health issues and autism.

The Labour Market Partnership (LMP) courses are delivered by the College and are funded by the Derry City and Strabane and Causeway Coast and Glens Councils via funding from the Department of the Communities. These were targeted at economically inactive/unemployed clients over 16 years.

In addition, the BSC delivered a Women Returners Programme aimed towards women who have been out of the labour market for 6 months or more. To facilitate potential school runs, the start and finish times have removed that barrier to education. The programme also provided childcare and travel costs to eliminate barriers to attendance, with parking available to those with disabilities.

- The College’s Governing Body and Leadership and Management Team continue to be 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 continued to provide training opportunities to a wide range of community groups within the Derry~Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane areas. A total of 59 various courses were held during the reporting period.
- As a result of developmental work of the College’s self-service portal, staff are now able to view the Equality Details and Extended Equality Details held by the College. Staff were invited to voluntarily update this data to ensure the most up to date equality data held will inform the College’s policy action and decision making processes.
- The College continued to support Business in the Community’s domains of wellbeing:
 1. Better physical and psychological health (promotes healthy behaviours) - examples include positive mental health awareness webinars, personal resilience workshops, Health checks carried out by Action Cancer Big bus and a full range of physical activities offered to staff.
 2. Better work (happy and engaging work environment) – examples include introduction of the Hybrid Working Policy, continued partnerships with Inspire, ParentingNI (Keeping Children Safe Online and Parenting Children’s Challenging Behaviour training sessions), ONUS, Benenden and Wesleyan, with the delivery of a Health and Wellbeing brochure over the year.
 3. Better relationships (effective communications / social relationships) – examples include the continued delivery of the Queens Leadership Programme, in-house Curriculum Manager Workshop delivered and the “Good for me, good for FE” involvement.
 4. Better specialist support (early intervention) – examples include Inspire webinars (Women and Men’s Mental Health, Work Life Balance integration and Grief and Loss), as well as occupational health support.
- The College continued to work towards the Equality Commission’s Mental Health Charter. For example, the aim to challenge mental ill health stigma in the workplace has involved collaboration with Inspire to develop mental ill health factsheets and toolkits that are available to staff through the College Health and Wellbeing Brochure. In addition, 10 members of staff have been trained in mental health first aid. These staff

members will be points of contact and support for colleagues who want to talk to someone about their mental health or require signposting to support services.

- College Line Managers have also attended training through Inspire on supporting employees with mental ill health. The College has continued to offer an interview to applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria. Also, the College has arranged webinars on Mental Health Awareness to include coping with fatigue, managing stress, building resilience, and providing employees with a work life balance. An employee wellbeing toolkit has been developed to support employees with Mental Health and Wellbeing. The College is currently collaborating with Aware NI to identify further resources and training for managers and staff in relation to looking after their own mental health and supporting colleagues.
- The College has continued to welcome and support international students through the College's engagement programmes. Over the past year, there has been 122 Asylum Seeker applications / enrolments from countries such as Afghanistan and Yemen. Also there have been 37 Ukrainian and Syrian refugees, with up to 40 on waiting lists.
- The College's Turing Scheme and Erasmus+ projects created life-changing opportunities for students, providing them with the chance to develop new skills, gain vital international experience and boost their employability. Students developed a wide range of soft skills, language skills and a better understanding of other cultures.
- The College's Turing Scheme and Erasmus+ projects also offered equal access to the overseas training opportunities for all eligible students. The College actively promoted opportunities to disadvantaged learners, learners from under-represented groups in international Mobility and learners with additional educational needs.
- In 2022/23 academic year the College enhanced the student information forms to make them more inclusive. Students provided information on their ethnicity, their preferred pronouns, and detailed any special education needs they may have.
- As well as working on international opportunities for local students, the College provided support and made adaptations to visiting students with special education needs. Visiting students received a full welcome induction and were introduced to Student Services so they could avail of additional support during their training.
- The College's International department dealt with all international student enquiries including people seeking international protection (Asylum seekers) and those granted international protection (refugees). The College welcomes all enquiries and applications and treats each applicant or potential student fairly, without any racial discrimination. Adjustments have been made to the application process for students wishing to register on our English Language for Speakers of Other Languages courses (ESOL) and for people seeking international protection to make it easier for them and to remove any unnecessary barriers.

PART A

- The College has partnered with North West Migrants' Forum so that 'international' students requiring additional support and services can be signposted to other organisations for support. A sub-group met recently to collate ideas presented at one of the recent training sessions to look at how we can improve the induction processes for people seeking international protection (Asylum seekers) and those granted international protection (refugees).
- A tender application has been submitted to Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) in the hope of securing additional funds to carry out a comprehensive needs analysis and help support and integrate this cohort of students.

There has been a range of outstanding activities arranged throughout the year between both curriculum and support teams and further initiatives arranged for 2023/2024 have already commenced work.

PART A

- 2 Please provide examples of outcomes and/or the impact of equality action plans/ measures in 2022-23 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Equality Improvement Plan attached

3 Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2022-23 reporting period? (tick one box only)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

- The College now places advertisements with groups and organisations who work with clients who are disabled, such as Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) and NI Union of Supported Employers (NIUSE). This was as a result of working towards RNIB's Visibly Better Employer (VBE) Standard.
- In addition, the work for the RNIB VBE has improved the accessibility of Get Got website used by the College for recruitment.
- The commitment to raise awareness of the Section 75 equality categories on an annual basis has facilitated the College's achievement of Employers for Disability NI's Disability Positive AAA accreditation.
- The College has signed up to the Race at Work Charter which is associated with Business in the Community. Although the College's catchment area at the moment does not include many individuals from ethnic minorities, actions the College intends to address includes a commit at Board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying.
- The College has furthered its links with the Rainbow Project as a result of Stonewall actions to ensure appropriate training is provided to staff in relation to the LGBTQIA+ community.

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, ie, the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

- Due to the College placing advertisements in groups and organisations representing the disability community, this should increase the numbers of potential students and staff enrolling and working with the College.

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- As a result of improving the College’s recruitment section controlled by GetGot, not only will the College’s website be more accessible for people who are blind or partially sighted but will also improve all organisations sector wide who use the GetGot facilities.
- By achieving the EFDNI’s Disability Positive accreditation, there should be an increase in applications to study and work at the College by people who are disabled.
- As a result of signing up to the Race at Work Charter highlights that the College plans to take practical steps to ensure barriers are tackled to increase staff and students from ethnic minority communities.
- Further discussions with the Rainbow Project will inevitably ensure that the College is a safe environment for students and staff from the LGBTQIA+ community when studying or in employment at the College.

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

- As a result of the organisation’s screening of a policy (please give details):
- 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 the College’s 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 2022-23 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

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

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2022-23 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:

- Continued commitment to the full implementation for the Widening Access and Participation Plan continued to be a fundamental aspect of work within the College.

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- Continued identification of Equality training as mandatory and to be undertaken every 3 years. This ensures equality training features in all staff development plans.
- The College continued 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 through its Development Plan.

In the 2022-23 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 2022-23 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Please see Paragraph 5 above

Equality action plans / measures

7 Within the 2022-23 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	15	Actions ongoing:	25	Actions to commence:	1
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Please provide any details and examples *(in addition to question 2)*:

PART A

Not applicable

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2022-23 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 2022-23 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

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

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2022-23 reporting period, on matters relevant (eg, 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

- external organisations and staff in the review of policies through its consultation list

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- ✓ students, for example, through use of the So Far so Good (Learner Services) Survey, Induction Survey, Quality of Teaching and Learning Survey and the Student Voice through Student Services
- ✓ staff through exit questionnaires to ensure there were no issues in relation to equality of opportunity for staff
- ✓ 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 2022-23 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 Teams/Zoom)
- 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:

Not applicable

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2022-23 reporting period? (tick one box only)

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Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Not applicable

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2022-23 reporting period? (tick one box only)

Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

44

16 Please provide the number of assessments that were consulted upon during 2022-23:

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

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

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

*Please note that due to the decision to relocate the Strabane Campus being put on hold, the EQIA is incomplete. Once the decision to move forward with the relocation, the EQIA will be finalised.

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

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

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

Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Not applicable

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

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Not applicable

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

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No, already taken place

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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 2022-23 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:

- The monitoring of College policies on an annual basis following their equality screening continued during the reporting period. Over 35 policies were monitored.
- A number of student surveys continued to be carried out to identify any areas of concern that students may have experienced during their educational journey at the College.
- The College continued to monitor staff's experience of the College as an equal opportunities employer via exit interviews, as well as an annual Customer Satisfaction survey of recruitment processes and the Equal Opportunities Employer for new staff survey. In addition the Fair Employment Monitoring Return is annually completed and reported to the College's Governing Body.
- Safeguarding and SENDO reports are also provided to the Governing Body outlining the support provided to all students as necessary. This informs planning for the resources

PART A

needed each year as part of Governing Body commitments to provide the necessary resources to implement the College’s Equality Scheme actions.

- The College continued to monitor its Complaints and Compliments Policy to ensure fair participation and the promotion of equality of opportunity for individuals accessing the College’s service provision.
- Success rates and retention figures continued to be monitored to address concerns and improve service provision as necessary.

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 2022-23, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Each year the College offers a range of equality-related staff development sessions for staff to attend. Below is an outline of the training attended by members of staff and where applicable, an indication how each staff member evaluated the overall training.

Course	No of Staff who attended /participated	Evaluation	Comments
Learning and Teaching Conference – Hope Matters	100	Excellent – 62% Very Good – 29% Good – 10%	Excellent event. Thoroughly engaging and memorable in every way. A really enjoyable and informative workshop. Really a valuable training experience, so empowering and enjoyable.
Neurodiversity	15	Excellent – 75% Very Good – 25%	I really enjoyed the training and it was worthwhile attending. Fantastic training presented with such a deep understanding and in a very sensitive way.
NSPCC Online Safety	13	Excellent – 88% Very Good – 12%	Excellent session. The presenter was enthusiastic and informative.
UNICEF	72	Excellent – 27% Very Good – 27% Good – 46%	Trainer was skilled and very supportive in our learning.
Sexual Orientation and Gender Awareness	41	Excellent – 44% Very Good – 50%	Excellent opportunity to engage in a very difficult topic area.

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Course	No of Staff who attended /participated	Evaluation	Comments
		Good – 6%	Really enjoyed this training. It was thought provoking and challenging but in a comfortable way.
NSPCC Young People’s Mental Health	12	Excellent – 78% Very Good – 22%	Excellent presentation by a very knowledgeable presenter. What I learned here will help me to more ably support my students in their learning.

Furthermore, the percentage breakdown of staff (not part-time lecturers) who have completed mandatory equality and diversity training is 93%.

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

Other staff development attendances

Course	No of Staff who attended /participated
Adolescent Neglect NSPCC	4
Autism Training	3
BSL Introduction Session	19
Recruitment and Selection	7
RNIB	11
Dyslexia	18
Dyscalculia	6

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

26 Please list any examples of where monitoring during 2022-23, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to access to information and services:

- As a result of monitoring the Equality Scheme and to endeavour to achieve an equality related accreditation, recommendations highlighted by RNIB to GetGot’s recruitment pages has improved access to information and services for people who are blind or partially sighted on the College’s recruitment pages, as well as sector wide. This was carried out in January 2023.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2022-23?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

- Not applicable

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Scheme was reviewed in 2022 will be reviewed again in 2026

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 (2023-24) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions

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| 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.

No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
DAP1	The College will endeavour to influence the Department for the Economy to ensure participation of disabled people on the Governing Body of the Colleges. [DAP]	When vacancies exist and on an ongoing 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 GB member is an executive Director with Age NI Enterprises
DAP2	Continue to encourage the participation of disabled people on committees, student representatives on the Governing Body and groups across the Colleges. [DAP]	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 continued to attend internal committee meetings and have continued to contribute to the College decision making processes.
DAP3	Encourage students with a disability to participate more fully in College life. [DAP]	Annually as part of induction and ongoing throughout the year.	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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 35% of Student Reps and Student Union Members had a disability in 22/23. 53% of the students that took part in mobility activities are from lower socio-economic backgrounds and 27% have additional education needs: Williamsport, PA, USA trip, Florida, USA – and Malaga, Spain – included students with SEN or medical conditions

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
					<p>4. A student with a disability was successful in her application for Washington Ireland Stepping programme.</p> <p>5. Students who have disabilities take part in focus groups, student surveys and surveys relating to disability services within NWRC, to ensure that their voices and recommendations are heard.</p>
DAP4	Increase awareness of specific barriers faced by people with a disability with National Awareness days or weeks. [DAP]	Ongoing	Compliance and Admissions Manager	Increased awareness and understanding of barriers faced by people with a disability	<p>There were a number of awareness days specific to disability proposed for 2022-2023, ie</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. World Autism Awareness Day 2. World Health Day 3. National Epilepsy week 4. World Suicide Prevention Day 5. World Mental Health Day 6. World Sight Day 7. International Day of Persons with a disability 8. Time to Talk Day 9. Disabled Access Day 10. Neurodiversity Week 11. Stress Awareness Month 12. World Voice Day 13. Deaf Awareness Week 14. Mental Health Awareness Week <p>Those that are highlighted in bold above occurred during the reporting period.</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
DAP5	Promote the use of AccessAble website to encourage participation of prospective students. [DAP]	Annually and ongoing Year 1 – Year 5	Director of Finance Compliance and Admissions Manager	Benchmark usage of AccessAble webpage.	<p>The College, along with the other 5 FE Colleges renewed the contract with AccessAble for another 5 years, with a review of this after 3 years to ensure no other organisation can provide the same service.</p> <p>In addition, AccessAble provided leaflets for distribution at the Colleges' front facing receptions.</p> <p>The usage numbers from May 2022 - May 2023 are 628 Users and 775 Page views. These figures have decreased despite the introduction of leaflets in 2022. The College met with AccessAble and agreed to increase website links within promotional material and information to students.</p>
DAP6	Create an open an inclusive workplace culture which displays respect for those with mental ill health. [DAP]	Ongoing	HR Manager	Positive engagement, increasing provision of information and monitoring.	<p>The College continued to support Business in the Community's domains of wellbeing:</p> <p>Better physical and psychological health (promotes healthy behaviours) - examples include positive mental health awareness webinars, personal resilience workshops, Health checks carried out by Action Cancer Big bus and a full range of physical activities offered to staff.</p> <p>Better work (happy and engaging work environment) – examples include introduction of the Hybrid Working Policy, continued</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
					<p>partnerships with Inspire, ParentingNI (Keeping Children Safe Online and Parenting Children’s Challenging Behaviour training sessions), ONUS, Benenden and Wesleyan, with the delivery of a Health and Wellbeing brochure over the year.</p> <p>Better relationships (effective communications / social relationships) – examples include the continued delivery of the Queens Leadership Programme, in-house Curriculum Manager Workshop delivered and the “Good for me, good for FE” involvement. For example, the distribution of winter warmer packs and hygiene packs to students.</p> <p>Better specialist support (early intervention) – examples include Inspire webinars (Women and Men’s Mental Health, Work Life Balance integration and Grief and Loss), as well as occupational health support.</p> <p>In addition, the Learning and Development Team’s annual learning and teaching conference focused on ‘<i>Hope Matters: The Science and Power of Hope</i>’. Research has revealed the importance of hope for predicting academic success and wellbeing in schools and colleges.</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
DAP7	Explore the scope of offering meaningful placements and work shadowing and volunteering for people with a disability. [DAP]	Ongoing	Compliance and Admissions Manager	Develop capacity of people with a disability to find employment	<p>One Department agreed a placement in mid-September 2022 with CEDAR. CEDAR were delighted that the College had approached them as usually it is they who approach other organisations.</p> <p>The work placement commenced in the College’s DIAL Centre and has made substantial progress within that department. The client was transferred and has fulfilled a really invaluable function by staffing the main departmental office.</p> <p>Appropriate training was also provided to relevant staff.</p>
DAP8	Introduce training for front line staff on disability etiquette and relevant legislation dealing with disability and the provision of goods, facilities and services. [DAP]	Ongoing	HR Manager	Increased use of services and facilities of those people with a disability.	<p>The Staff Development Programme continued to include training opportunities for staff to undertake a Disability Awareness session through RNID. This was held after the reporting period but will be reported within the next Progress Report for 2023/2023.</p> <p>Staff provided with the BSL e-Learning Modules from Signature continued to work through these at their own pace.</p> <p>Training from EFDNI on Neurodiversity has been provided on two occasions to staff during the reporting period. Evaluations were very positive with a Neurodiversity Learning Object created by the Learning and Teaching</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
					<p>Team. This provides an understanding of the impact of common neurodiverse conditions and strategies to use to support students to create an inclusive environment. All new full-time and associate lecturers have completed this training.</p> <p>RNIB has also provided awareness training in the College’s DIAL centre for interested staff as a result of collaboration with the College and a former student.</p>
DAP9	Consider development of a (Sectoral) Disability Advisory Group that could involve staff and students. [DAP]	Three meetings per year	Equality Co-ordinators Forum	Contribute to the development of communications, consultation, screening of relevant policies, monitoring etc.	<p>The Sectoral Disability group agreed to have a standing item in its agenda to share best practice and initiatives in relation to Disability. This continued during this reporting period.</p> <p>NI Union of Supported Employment attended the first meeting of the sector group to discuss how Colleges could improve their recruitment processes to encourage applicants with a disability to apply.</p> <p>Colleges shared good practice in relation to JAM Cards, autism awareness training and progress of the RNIB’s Visibly Better Employer Standard.</p> <p>As a member of Employers for Disability NI, the College has undertaken their Disability Positive Accreditation. The audit focuses on</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
					employment-related disability good practice. The College achieved AAA status in June 2023.
DAP10	Through Widening Participation scheme increase number of students with a disability entering the College. [DAP]	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-time education allowing them to rethink their educational pathway.</p>
DAP11	Monitor and review the progress of the Disability Action Plan. [DAP]	Annually August Year 1 – Year 5	Administrator – Equality	Provision of update contained within Progress Report	Ongoing, however the College has commenced work in relation to updating its Action Plan in 2024.

Appendix 1 – Equality Improvement Plan

No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
EIP1	Assess effectiveness of communication with students regarding equality [EIP]	Annually	Head of Client Services	Address any concerns identified	<p>The Student Services Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites for students continued to increase the College’s Social Media presence allowing students to access equality information/resources, specifically those with poor mental health.</p> <p>Students take part in focus groups, student surveys and surveys relating to disability services within the College to ensure that their voices are heard.</p> <p>A student voice survey was carried out in June 2023 with suggestions provided by students to improve their experience at the College, with 51% of participants stating the Students’ Union top priority should be providing advice.</p>
EIP2	Continue to ensure that equality is embedded into the College curriculum [EIP]	To be assessed annually in June	Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards	To be approved by Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards	<p>Completed and ongoing. On an annual basis, the College reviews curriculum areas to determine how effective equality is embedded into the curriculum. A few examples</p> <p>The course module in one course conveys to students the understanding on how autistic spectrum conditions can impact on individuals differently according to factors</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
					<p>such as their gender, ethnicity, and social, cultural, and religious environment. Also, how stereotyped views, discrimination and a lack of understanding of autistic spectrum conditions can compound the difficulties already experienced by individuals and their families.</p> <p>One course coordinator fully utilised of the College’s support services to support students to maximise their potential for their future. Liaison with a care setting and engagement in the Easter activity led by the student group to enhance wellbeing of older people from a range of cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Finally in one department course module includes content about health care workers’ responsibilities regarding anti-discriminatory practice, the needs of specific client groups and how services could be adapted for those with physical and sensory disabilities, learning disabilities or mental ill health, older people and young children, people who do not speak English as a first language, refugees and members of the Travelling community.</p>
EIP3	Provision of Equality awareness training to all staff and students [EIP] + [ES]	Annually	Principal and Chief Executive HR Manager	Range of training provided and evaluations received	Ongoing – there continued to be several equality-related training opportunities on the staff development programme available

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
			Head of Client Services	Increase in awareness of equality and diversity	<p>throughout the academic year. Please see Section 24 of the Progress Report.</p> <p>During the reporting period, the College along with the other FE Colleges commenced work on the provision of a Student Induction Module that would capture equality related awareness. This remains a work in progress.</p> <p>Other training provided to staff via Equality was Sexual Orientation and Gender Awareness facilitated by the Rainbow Project.</p>
EIP4	Provision of specific training to those with key roles [EIP]	Annually	HR Manager	Outcome of evaluations	As roles vary within the College, certain opportunities are made available to staff, specific to these roles.
EIP5	Continue to review student surveys to ensure equality is adequately covered [EIP]	Annually	Head of Quality Enhancement	Action Plans	<p>The College’s Quality of Teaching and Learning Surveys have again captured how students have experienced their time at the College.</p> <p>The two Sector agreed equality questions and the additional question added previously remained.</p> <p>(1) “The College treats me fairly and with respect” (2) “I believe the College is committed to promoting an inclusive learning environment” and (3) “I believe that the College is inclusive and welcoming and</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
					<p>that staff and students have a mutual respect.”</p> <p>The responses were 1 – No 47 / Yes 2,327 – (No - 1.98%) 2 – No 27 / Yes 2,347 – (No - 1.14%) 3 – No 36 / Yes 2,338 – (No - 1.52%) (No complaints were received by the College)</p> <p>In addition, an internal student survey as part of the initial Black FE Leaders Group partnership across the Sector. The College held this pilot survey to gauge how students felt in relation to racial awareness.</p> <p>As a result of BFELG discussions, the EC Forum Group considered a rotation of a single Section 75 question survey. This has been put on hold.</p>
EIP6	Develop a programme of awareness raising for the year – Calendar of Events to address all categories of equality over the year [EIP] + [ES]	September to August	Compliance and Admissions Manager Equality Working Group	Evaluation of Each Event Increased Awareness of Equality Categories	<p>A number of awareness days were raised during the reporting period as follows</p> <p>World Autism Day, Breastfeeding Week, Deafblind Awareness Week, World Suicide Prevention Day, International Day of Peace, Good Relations Week, Black History Month, International Day of Older Persons, World Mental Health Day, World Sight Day, World Menopause Day, International Stand up to Bullying Day, International Day for the</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
					Elimination of Violence against Women, Movember, International Day for Persons with a Disability, International Day of Education, Chinese New Year, LGBT+ History Month, Time to Talk Day, World Radio Day, International Women’s Day, Disabled Access Day, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Stress Awareness Month, Deaf Awareness Week, Carers Week and World Music Day
EIP7	Continue to work with RNID and achieve their new Employment programme [EIP]	Academic year 2022/2023	LMT Members	Achievement of Employment Programme	During the reporting period, the Equality Administrator routinely linked in with RNID regarding any initiatives they had, including their proposed Employment Programme progress. At the time of reporting, their Employment programme has not yet commenced however, this will be kept as an action to finalise.
EIP8	Continue the provision of support for people with a disability to improve employability [EIP]	March 2023	Student Services Manager	Delivery of WAPP Number of students attending Inspire Programme Number of students enrolled through College’s Connect Programme	The College has promoted Inspire’s Student Hub with features such as iHelpr Chatbot, Mood Tracker and Resource Library. There is also a LiveChat feature which allows students to chat to the team for support and signposts. Students within The Prince’s Trust Programme volunteered for a number of projects such as Foyle Down Syndrome Trust, Creggan Country Park as well as with Glens Community Association where they

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
				Number of students enrolled on Princes Trust Programme	<p>built picnic benches for vulnerable people in the community.</p> <p>In addition, nine students received an award from The Prince’s Trust having launched a week long “Walk and Talk” initiative that supported the Limavady Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide (LIPS). There were successful in winning the Dell Technologies Community Impact Award.</p>
EIP9	Review the Mental Health Charter (Equality Commission) to assess actions necessary to promote and raise awareness [EIP]	Academic year 2022/2023	HR Manager Learning and Teaching Manager	<p>Awareness of College as Trauma informed College</p> <p>Number of staff attending Resilience Conference</p>	<p>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Training continued at the College during the reporting period. As previously reported, research in relation to 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 events linked to this research on ACEs continued. These have been designed to cultivate a trauma-sensitive learning environment at the College.</p> <p>The College continued to work towards the Equality Commission’s Mental Health Charter. For example, the aim to challenge mental ill health stigma in the workplace has involved collaboration with Inspire to</p>

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No	Action	Timescale	Responsible Person(s)	Outcome/Measure	Updates
					<p>develop mental ill health factsheets and toolkits that are available to staff through the College Health and Wellbeing Brochure. In addition, 10 members of staff have been trained in mental health first aid. These staff members will be points of contact and support for colleagues who want to talk to someone about their mental health or require signposting to support services.</p> <p>College Line Managers have also attended training through Inspire on supporting employees with mental ill health. The College has continued to offer an interview to applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria. Also, the College has arranged webinars on Mental Health Awareness to include coping with fatigue, managing stress, building resilience, and providing employees with a work life balance. An employee wellbeing toolkit has been developed to support employees with Mental Health and Wellbeing. The College is currently collaborating with Aware NI to identify further resources and training for managers and staff in relation to looking after their own mental health and supporting colleagues.</p>
EIP10	Further develop student support mechanisms to reduce barriers to	Academic year 2022/2023	Head of Client Services	Increase in student numbers	The College continued to liaise with a number of mental health organisations in relation to employment, however the

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	education and learning, to include people with mental ill health [EIP] + [ES]		Director of Curriculum and Academic Standards	Barriers identified and an increase in applications from individuals with a mental health illness	Safeguarding/Student Services team continued to closely work alongside a range of mental health groups and organisations. Please see below.
EIP11	Health and Wellbeing Programme to continue to address concerns regarding poor mental health among staff and students [EIP]	Annually	HR Manager Head of Client Services	Programme of events and evaluations	Please see DAP6 above
EIP12	Continue partnership working with Innovation and Recovery project to maximise benefits to staff and students [EIP]	Academic year 2022/2023	Head of Client Services	Raised Awareness	The College has continued their working partnership with Elemental Social Prescribing and supported cross border Recovery College projects to integrate and develop workshops for staff and students during the academic year with the aim of helping staff and students tap into the facilitators' personal resilience and resourcefulness; become experts in their own self-care and improve work towards achieving their goals and ambitions.
EIP13	Student Services to continue to strengthen the development of effective mechanisms to support students with poor mental health [EIP]	Annually	Head of Client Services	Increased participation on social media Increased number of students attending College with mental health issues	The Student Services Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites for students continued 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.

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EIP14	Continue the work on the <i>Good for Me, Good for FE'</i> Campaign [EIP]	June 2023	Administrator – Equality	Raised Awareness Support Provided	<p>The College, along with the other five FE Colleges, continued to support the 'Good for Me, Good for FE' Campaign. The College continued to support the Food Bank Friday initiative with collection points located at each of the five campuses.</p> <p>The collected (non-perishable) items were distributed to local food banks and students in need.</p> <p>The College had 1,700 volunteer hours from staff and students, equating to £28,800 in social value.</p> <p>The College's Cost of Living Campaign received additional funding from DfE to tackle the effects of the cost of living crisis. The College held Cost of Living workshops and provided complimentary refreshments. Lunch vouchers were also made available with over 7,500 vouchers obtained.</p> <p>In February 2023, Student Services team provided students with almost 900 winter warmer and hygiene packs.</p> <p>The Prince's Trust Team 17 project over the months of November and December collected over 80 items of clothing (coats, scarves and hats). The coats and accessories were displayed at Tower foyer and students</p>

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					and members of the public alike were able to collect coats at their convenience.
EIP15	Become a trauma informed College [EIP]	June 2023	Learning and Teaching Manager	Raised Awareness	<p>A number of training events linked to research on ACEs continued at the College through the work of the Learning and Teaching Development Team. These have been designed to cultivate a trauma-sensitive learning environment at the College, which helps to improve outcomes for students.</p> <p>Building a trauma-informed environment across the College is one of the key priorities for the Learning and Teaching Development team. To this aim, ACE training continues to be offered. Please see above at Part A, Section 1.</p>
EIP16	Encourage all departments to promote equality throughout the year and report in Progress Report in 2022/2023 [EIP]	Academic year 2022/2023	Administrator – Equality	Awareness raising and number of activities	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.
EIP17	Continue to increase participation of relevant staff in the screening / monitoring of policies relevant to their respective areas [EIP]	Academic year 2022/2023	Administrator – Equality	Increased awareness of the importance of screening / monitoring by each department thereby influencing policy decisions	The Equality Administrator continued to advise staff of policy review dates and the necessity to equality screen. Over the past year over 40 policies from a range of departments have been screened upon their review.


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					Also, guidance on monitoring policies has been developed to ensure the College adheres to its Equality Scheme commitments.
EIP18	Consider staff network groups for staff with cancer or are carers [EIP]	Academic Year 2022/2023	Administrator – Equality	Increased support and awareness	At the time of reporting, the College has not established a staff group in relation to those with caring responsibilities or supporting those staff with cancer. However, liaison is ongoing with the Rainbow Project to establish a support group for LGBT+ staff. This will assist with the establishment of other groups therefore this action will be reported on in the next report in 2024.
EIP19	Endeavour to increase female applicants on Apprenticeship programmes [EIP]	Academic Year 2022/2023	Administrator – Equality	Promotion of College as committed to increase female participation in courses	Following previous attempts to engage with local female secondary schools to encourage an increase in female apprenticeships, there has been a slight increase in the Greystone campus.
EIP20	Continue to provide support mechanisms for staff who have experienced a miscarriage [EIP]	Academic Year 2022/2023	HR Services Manager Compliance and Admissions Manager	Support provided to staff and increased awareness	Following the development of a Miscarriage Policy, the College has signed up to the Miscarriage Association’s Pregnancy Loss Pledge to support staff who are experiencing loss and to ensure they receive the support necessary during their grief. In addition, potential training from Miscarriage Association is scheduled to be part of the Staff Development Programme for 2023/2024


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EIP21	Continue the work involved for the College to become a Diversity Champion recognised organisation through Stonewall [EIP]	Academic Year 2022/2023	Head of Client Services Compliance and Admissions Manager Administrator – Equality	Increase in numbers of applicants from the LGBTQ+ communities	<p>The College continued its progress with Stonewall’s Diversity Champion. As a result the College has agreed to strengthen its collaboration with the Rainbow Project who have provided Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to staff on three occasions. Links are being extended to other groups to facilitate actions identified such as the development of a staff network, potential allyship training and links to help with policy development and review.</p> <p>In addition, as part of the work of the Equality Working Group, guidance has been drawn up to have available for staff on a range of topics. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When to be an active bystander; 2. How to be a trans ally; 3. Trans Staff Policy; and 4. What are pronouns.
EIP22	Completion of the nomination process to select a number of College charities [EIP]	Academic Year 2022/2023	Administrator – Equality	Increased awareness of various charities	<p>The College has agreed to increase the number of charities that could benefit from monies raised by staff and students and as a result, other themes were suggested. These related to those assisting with homelessness, men and women’s issues, environmental issues, as well as carers/volunteers and those representing ethnic communities. Following a staff survey, the charities chosen were the Foyle Food Bank for Derry ~</p>

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					<p>Londonderry for homelessness, Limavady Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide for Limavady for Men’s issues and Strabane Ethnic Community Association for Ethnic Minorities in Strabane.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Place</th> <th>Derry</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Foyle Food Bank</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Men’s Action Network</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>NW Migrant Forum</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Place</th> <th>Limavady</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Limavady Initiative for Prevention of Suicide</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Kinship NI</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Foyle Search and Rescue</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Place</th> <th>Strabane</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Strabane Ethnic Community Association</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Foyle Women’s Aid</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Foyle Food Bank</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Place	Derry	1	Foyle Food Bank	2	Men’s Action Network	3	NW Migrant Forum	Place	Limavady	1	Limavady Initiative for Prevention of Suicide	3	Kinship NI	3	Foyle Search and Rescue	Place	Strabane	1	Strabane Ethnic Community Association	2	Foyle Women’s Aid	3	Foyle Food Bank
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EIP23	In addition to a calendar of events for equality related themes, College to organise 2 to 3 high level equality awareness campaigns [EIP]	Academic Year 2022/2023	Administrator – Equality Equality Working Group	Increased awareness and support for various equality themes	 <p>The College raised awareness of Movember in 2022. During November each year, Movember is responsible for raising awareness for prostate and testicular cancer, and mental health. A number of staff took part in the Movember Challenge and provided a photo of themselves before and after with the chance to win the “Mo Tro” trophy. There was also a quiz to guess the staff members amongst other examples as</p>																								

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					<p>well as Pink Panthers visiting all 5 campuses to provide health information for men.</p>  <p>February 2023 was LGBT+ History Month and a range of activities took place and resources made available for staff to use. For example, use of a rainbow-coloured college logo and emojis on college emails and rainbow-coloured slushes provided by Slush Patrol on various days in February. In addition, the College's LGBT Student Group held a "Design a T-Shirt" completion to raise awareness on how best to promote LGBT+ History Month. <u>Student Services</u> also organised activities over the month of February. These included a Student campaign about LGBT+ history and the development of guidance on Pronouns from a student perspective.</p>
EIP24	Commencement of work to obtain Race at Work Charter [EIP]	Academic Year 2022/2023	Administrator – Equality	Increase in number of applications from ethnic minority groups for both employment and courses	<p>The College signed up to the Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter in July 2022. The actions required to be addressed are as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint an Executive Sponsor for race • Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress • Commit at Board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it clear that supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility of all leaders and managers • Take action that supports ethnic minority career progression • Support race inclusion allies in the workplace • Include Black, Asian, Mixed Race and other ethnically diverse-led enterprise owners in supply chains <p>In September, the College held a careers event in association with North West Migrants Forum with over 50 potential students in attendance to access ESOL and other courses, dependent upon assessments. Staff from Mears Housing also attended to provide support.</p> <p>In relation to staff equality data, please see action EIP25 below</p> <p>During the reporting period, Administration staff were provided with OU training in Ukrainian culture as well as the addition to the Equality Hub of equality related training for staff from OU.</p> <p>The College met with representatives from Business in the Community to discuss the potential to acquire their race training, as well as health and wellbeing and</p>

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					<p>sustainability options. Unfortunately this was put on hold due to budget implications.</p> <p>The College is working with North West Migrants Forum as part of their racism research and training project with support from students from the Art and Media section of the College. Further meetings are being arranged to progress this.</p>
EIP25	Monitor, Review and utilise annual workforce and student data to inform policy development and marketing [ES]	Annually in June	HR Manager Head of Client Services Administrator - Equality	Improved equality data used for screening College policies and decisions made by the College Improved equality data to inform marketing objectives	The College has reviewed how staff equality data has been captured and as a result, the ability to amend staff equality has encouraged accurate data reporting when policies and /or other decisions by the College are being monitored. Student data continued to be monitored based on the current EBS data capturing facilities.
EIP26	Recruit a Diverse student population [ES]	Annually	Head of Client Services	Annually	Student Services / Equality continued to promote a range of awareness days. See EIP6 above for the awareness dates. Also the College has liaised with a number of organisations and groups to promote how diverse the college is. Elemental, Young Carers, Autism NI, LGBTQIA+ organisations, Ethnic minority groups, etc, to encourage further enrolments.

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EIP27	Grow and enhance relations with local community [ES]	Annually	Head of Client Services Compliance and Admissions Manager	Increased participation by community groups to inform college decisions Identification of new initiatives undertaken by college to promote equality Increase in numbers attending community education courses Increase in community education provision	Please see EIP21 and EIP24 above In addition, the College continued to provide training opportunities to a wide range of community groups within the Derry~Londonderry, Limavady and Strabane areas. A total of 59 various courses were held during the reporting period. On an annual basis the Equality Working Group reviews the College's Consultee list with a view to increasing participation among the Section 75 equality categories.
EIP28	Renew AccessAble contract [ES]	January 2023	Principal and Chief Executive Head of Client Services	Benchmark usage of AccessAble webpage	As Chair of the Sector Equality Group, the College worked with DfE to finalise the Direct Award Contract for AccessAble. As a result DfE have confirmed that the partnership with AccessAble will continue for five years, with a review after three years to ensure no other organisation has become available to carry out the same support as AccessAble.
EIP29	Review Student Induction to ensure Equality and Diversity is promoted widely [ES]	Academic Year	Head of Client Services Administrator – Equality	Increased awareness of Equality categories	The FE Sector Equality Group are working with the Sector Learning and Development Group to develop some online training, one being a student induction training session to be rolled out during a classroom setting at the beginning of their course. This training is planned to capture awareness of all

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					<p>Section 75 equality categories. This is a work in progress.</p> <p>In addition, as part of increased awareness of LGBTQIA+, the College is seeking to add further awareness to the students' handbook.</p>
EIP30	Monitor, evaluate and review the Equality Improvement Plan [ES]	April each year to inform annual Progress Report	Head of Client Services Compliance and Admissions Manager Administrator – Equality	Completion of actions identified and reported in annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission	The College's Equality Improvement Plan is routinely reviewed. This is ongoing.
EIP31	Develop and provide welcoming activities for international students	Annually	Head of Client Services European and International Projects Officer Administrator – Equality	Increased awareness and support for students	New Action added
EIP32	Increase Marketing communications and engagement content to reflect the diversity of staff / students and ensure accessibility of content	Annually	Head of Client Services Marketing and PR Manager Administrator – Equality	Increase in enrolments from all Section 75 equality categories Increase in job applications from all Section 75 equality categories	New Action added
EIP33	Provide specialist advice and guidance to staff		Head of Client Services	Increased awareness	New Action added

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	supporting students with disabilities		Learning Support Officer Administrator - Equality		