

Single Equality Scheme - 2025-2026

Introduction

At City of Bristol College, we believe that; *Though educational excellence we will underpin the economic growth and productivity of Bristol and the wider west of England region.* Our eight strategic aims form the foundation of our organisational vision and strategy - [College Strategy](#). Strategic aim 2 places Equality and Inclusion at the heart of our identity and actions; *We will deliver an inclusive and equitable educational and work environment at City of Bristol College that actively addresses and eliminates barrier hindering access to work and learning opportunities.*

We strive to ensure that the College is a welcoming environment for students, colleagues, partners and the wider communities we work with. Having worked to ensure that Equity and Inclusion underpins everything we do, we recognise that this is an ongoing journey and continue to strive towards creating and promoting a people-first culture for both students and employees.

Purpose

This Single Equality Scheme provides a strategic overview of City of Bristol College's performance and key actions in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) legislation since the last published report and sets out our ambitions for 2025/26 and beyond.

We actively work to advance Equity and Inclusion and eliminate any form of discrimination in line with college policies and procedures and in compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and all relevant legal requirements.

As part of our requirement to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty, we have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance quality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This report forms part of our published record to show how we:

- Demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty and;
- Share our equality objectives

Since the College's Last Report

Since the last report, the College has developed and published its Strategic Plan for 2024 – 2029. The plan sets out the College's mission, vision, values and strategic aims. Whilst the College has interwoven its commitment to promoting Equality Diversity and Inclusion throughout all aspects of the plan, aim 2 specifically concerns Equity and Inclusion and states:

"We will deliver an inclusive and equitable educational and work environment at City of Bristol College that actively addresses and eliminates barriers hindering access to work and learning opportunities."

The aim focuses on the College creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment by removing barriers to education and employment through access to resources and tailored support. This involves fostering ambition for all individuals, regardless of background, and collaborating with employers, community organisations, and stakeholders to address societal challenges and create opportunities for previously underrepresented groups.

As part of structural enhancements, three new roles have been introduced from September 2024. Each campus now benefits from a dedicated Community Campus Lead, responsible for fostering strong local engagement and collaboration. In addition to their core responsibilities, these Leads also serve as Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Champions—ensuring that inclusive practices are embedded across campus life and that the College's commitment to equity is actively upheld in every location.

The department of Human Resources (or HR) many years ago used to be called Personnel and moved towards HR some time ago. Now, there is a big emphasis on the work undertaken by the department in terms of the focus on a people-first approach linked to policies, reward, recognition, professional development, employer brand, benefits and so much more as evidenced above. People Services doesn't just represent a name change, but a shift in the way we think about focussing on people within the college.

The use of 'people' in the name of the department, signifies a shift towards a more inclusive term to describe the work we do (away from the arguably dehumanising term of employees as a 'resource') and acknowledges the individuality of employees to help create a more collaborative relationship.

All of this work has been completed in line with the [College Strategy](#) and specifically Aim 3 'People – Our Workforce' with the overarching commitment that "we will deliver a people-first, high performance culture within a valued, diverse community of colleagues."

Demographics:

Our Students

The City of Bristol College educates and trains over 15,000 students and apprentices aged 14 and above. Programmes are delivered primarily across 5 main centres located throughout the city, alongside two residential training centres to support independent living. Approximately 60% of enrolments are aged 19+,

34% are aged 16-18s, and 8% are apprentices. There is an approximately equal gender split between male and female students*.

Since the pandemic, and due to factors, such as changes GCSE grading, demographic shifts, increasing mental health challenges, a rise in learning or other difficulties, a growing population of migrants and asylum seekers, the college has seen an increase in the number of students beginning their studies at lower-levels. Around a quarter of 16-18 students resitting GCSE English and maths. The highest proportion of enrolments are at Entry/Level 1 (55%) followed by Level 2 (35%).

Our students represent a richly diverse community, speaking over 60 different languages. The City of Bristol College is the largest provider of SEND and ESOL education in the city, supporting students with a wide range of learning needs. We provide support for those furthest from the workplace including through one of our subsidiary companies Partners in Bristol.

**Our reporting to funding agencies requires us to input sex assigned at birth. This does not reflect our understanding of gender identity and does not differentiate between individuals who identify differently.*

Over 400 students are care experienced (in care, care leavers). Around 550 are in receipt of High Needs Funding, with just over 500 having Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

Any other ethnic group	3.2%
Asian or Asian British	11.9%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	12.9%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	6.1%
Not declared	3.1%
White	62.8%

Age Groups:

14 - 15	0.3%
16 - 18	47.6%
19 - 23	14.9%
24+	37.2%

College wide survey 24/25 data

Question - *overall I am happy with how I am taught* – College Avg 95%, HNs 95%, Global Majority 96%

Complaints 24/25 data

Less than 4% complaints relate to EDI or protected characteristics.

Our Employees

Gender:

	City of Bristol College (April 2025)	Further Education Workforce (Academic Year 2022-23)	Difference
Female	64.5%	65.2%	0.7%
Male	35.0%	33.4%	1.6%
Identifies in another way	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%
Prefer not to say	Not available	1.3%	1.3%

Ethnicity:

	City of Bristol College (April 2025)	Further Education Workforce (Academic Year 2022-23)	Difference
White	72.1%	86.1%	14.0%
Asian or Asian British	3.9%	6.0%	2.1%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	3.9%	3.7%	0.2%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	3.3%	2.7%	0.6%
Any other ethnic group	1.1%	1.5%	0.4%
Prefer not to say	4.0%	Not available	4.0%
Not declared	11.7%	Not available	11.7%

Age:

	City of Bristol College (April 2025)	Further Education Workforce (Academic Year 2022-23)	Difference
Under 25	3.3%	5.4%	2.1%
25 – 29	8.4%	8.7%	0.3%
30 – 39	20.9%	21.3%	0.4%
40 – 49	28.2%	23.8%	4.4%
50 – 59	23.1%	26.3%	3.2%
60 +	16.1%	14.6%	1.5%

Disability:

	City of Bristol College (April 2025)	Further Education Workforce (Academic Year 2022-23)	Difference
Yes	10.3%	7.3%	3.0%
No	56.7%	92.7%	36.0%
Prefer not to say	1.7%	Not available	1.7%
Not declared	31.3%	Not available	31.3%

Data has been taken from:

[Further education workforce, Academic year 2022/23 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Our workforce is generally in line with gender norms for the sector (64% female). We have seen an increase in the number of female managers and our gender pay gap has reduced from a mean of 12.8% in 2021 to a mean of 4.92% in 2024 – a significant improvement. This remains well below the latest published comparison data for averages for the Education Sector.

Whilst 10% of our employees have declared a disability, and we are a Disability Confident Employer, a significant portion of our employees have 'not declared.(31%)'. We continue to encourage colleagues to update their sensitive information in our employee self-service (ESS) system across all protected characteristics to provide us with benchmark data, to analyse gaps and to measure the impact of our activities.

89% of staff say that equality of opportunity is embedded into the community of the college in a recent employee survey, up from 79% two years prior.

Having undertaken a review with the National Centre for Diversity (NCD) within the last 12 months, the results allowed us to be recognised as within the Top 100 Employers in the UK for EDI. Headlines from the review were that:

1. *Your organisation is effective in advancing FREDIE*
2. *Your culture makes people of any background feel safe, valued, and included*
3. *FREDIE is core to your organisation's strategy or business plan*
4. *Good mental health and well-being are regarded as important in your organisation*
5. *Effective operational and line management of FREDIE*
6. *You are able to demonstrate that your selection and recruitment practices are fair and seek to address under-representation of people with different protected characteristics in your workforce at all levels. Retention, reward and progression processes are fair and where required, you are working towards eliminating any unfair pay gaps*
7. *You are using your performance management systems to improve inclusion, engagement and productivity*

Work is also underway to develop improved HR metrics to better understand our starting point, and report on the progress, of new recruits and internal promotions with a range of protected characteristics. Linked to this, this year, although not a legal requirement, we will also start reporting our ethnicity and disability pay gaps to ensure, if needed, positive action can be taken to address any differences.

Adhering to the Public Sector Equality Duty

We recognise that to make significant positive ED&I changes we need to work in partnership in the City, the region and beyond. Since the publication of our last Single Equality Scheme we have continued to work with a wide range of partners including:

- Bristol Women’s Commission
- Bristol Women in Business
- A range of Bristol City Council partnerships including race equality in education
- Bristol Future Talent
- Bristol Pride

The College is also a disability confident organisation, a real living wage employer, and a Member of the West of England Good Employment Charter. We are a College of Sanctuary and take an active role in Bristol as part of City of Sanctuary. We are also signed up to the Association of Colleges (AoC) EDI Charter.

To deliver our shared strategic ED&Q objectives we will:

- Identify and eliminate barriers to education and employment by providing access to resources, support services, and environments that respond to diverse needs.
- Create and communicate ambition for all students and colleagues regardless of postcode, ethnicity, age, disability or other defining factors.
- Collaborate with employers, local organisations, community groups, and stakeholders to develop a culture of shared commitment and responsibility that strengthens engagement, addresses societal challenges and create opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- To be a recognised trauma informed college

We will monitor our ED&I impact by:

- Regular oversight meetings with the corporation nominated ED&I Link Governor
- ED&I Executive Champion
- Annual ED&I report for approval by the Corporation Statistics on application, shortlisting and recruitment by gender, age, disability and race
- Statistics associated with diversity of staff and staff turnover
- Statistics on staff progression by gender, age, disability and race
- Statistics associated with complaints, grievances, disciplinary action by gender, age, disability & race
- Gender pay gap reporting
- Data collection and analysis for students includes: Statistics associated with recruitment, retention, achievement and success by gender, age, disability, ethnicity and disadvantage
- Statistics associated with Learner Voice activity by gender, age, disability, ethnicity and disadvantage Statistics associated with disciplinary action and complaints and grievance by gender, age, disability, ethnicity and disadvantage”

Strategic objective	Update since the last report
<i>Identify and eliminate barriers to education and employment by providing access to resources, support services, and environments that</i>	Progression route maps for each curriculum area are now in place in the large majority of areas. The Community Campus Leads have been working with a range of external partners to identifying and eliminate barriers for identified groups e.g. the College Green Community Campus Lead has been working closely with Bristol’s home education network to identify barriers to education and support rapid, inclusive

<p><i>respond to diverse needs</i></p>	<p>pathways into qualification-based education and to increase a sense of belonging for that community.</p> <p>MIS are have developed more nuanced reporting so that users throughout the organisation can better utilise data to recognise where inequalities exist and are enabled to act to mitigate them e.g. progress measures for students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) are now available in-year etc. Experience tells us that where we can identify an issue we can take positive action to mitigate it!</p> <p>Work is ongoing to ensure we can identify and reduce all significant barriers for students through work such as the introduction of quiet Open Day times, increased bespoke transition experiences, quiet Careers Event times etc, to ensure greater access for those who would benefit from a quieter experience.</p> <p>To develop a culture of embedded inclusivity a range of changes have taken place e.g. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) / Head of Department (HODs) / Programme Manager (PM) regular meetings now have a standing agenda item related to FREDIE / EDI to ensure leaders and managers throughout the organisation are creating regular intentional spaces to orientate our thinking towards this underpinning area. The college In-House Fundamentals programme now includes training on inclusive leadership. Dignifi training was available to all colleagues in the October CPD day.</p> <p>Work has been completed within the recruitment system for employee applications to the College to ensure that terminology and accessibility has been improved to help eliminate barriers to application as well as a new landing page.</p> <p>The College are also now a signatory of the Social Recruitment Covenant with People Plus. Being a signatory of the charter highlights our commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce and underlines our dedication to socially responsible recruitment practices, aiming to remove employment barriers and create equitable opportunities. By demonstrating what we do, we were accepted to be part of the covenant with other organisations showcasing and sharing best employment practices.</p> <p>Work is also underway to develop improved People Services metrics to better understand our starting point, and report on the progress, of new recruits and internal promotions with a range of protected characteristics; People Services aim for this to be in place in the coming months. The great thing about our People Services system, in which we hold this employee data, is it is 'date driven' so People Services and others will be able to look back and see many years of data too. Trend analysis is a powerful tool in helping teams identify where to take action and then review its impact.</p> <p>Furthermore, the People Services team can report that our mean gender pay gap has decreased again from 6.47% in 2023 to 4.92% in 2024, representing a decrease of 2.97%.</p> <p>It is of note that our gender pay gap has reduced significantly in just three years having stood at 12.81% in March 2021. Our current pay gap of 4.92% is a</p>
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	<p>significant improvement from previous years and it is encouraging to see that the overall gender pay gap has reduced again.</p> <p>People Services are currently undertaking proactive and innovative work in this space, and are keen to do more. Creating a truly inclusive workplace in relation to all protected characteristics is a key focus for the College, and specifically the HR and senior leadership team, which is why there is a full and clear commitment to continuing to work on this at pace.</p> <p>Linked to this, this year, although not a legal requirement, People Services will also start reporting our ethnicity and disability pay gaps to ensure, if needed, positive action can be taken to address any differences.</p>
<p><i>Create and communicate ambition for all students and colleagues regardless of postcode, ethnicity, age, disability or other defining factors.</i></p> <p><i>Everyone is able to define their ambitions and make progress towards their goals.</i></p>	<p>The marketing, school's liaison, careers team, Sector Forum Leads, our Community Campus Leads and others, have been developing the ways in which the College engages with schools / parents /carers to raise awareness of our offer and pathways to employment. Currently an event for school careers advisors is in development.</p> <p>A significant amount of work has been achieved through our dedicated HN Sector Forum to offer training, workshops and initiatives that raise awareness about equity, inclusion, diversity and cultural differences e.g. a number of well attended SEND employer breakfasts offering free training on the benefits of a neurodivergent workforce; the development of co-created initiatives with employers (Co-Op, NHS, UNITE Students, Emmaus Bristol etc) to more rapidly pathway diverse students into their workforce; two SEND careers fairs; involvement in a brilliant Disability Activism collaboration with Local Learning & UWE; a wide range of cultural awareness / breaking barriers events on each campus etc.</p> <p>The rapid and responsive development of additional in-year start pathways for those at risk of becoming NEET supported a reduced NEET population in Bristol compared to last year.</p> <p>Across all our amazing sites a wide variety of inclusive initiatives have been launched this year ... so far! e.g. Breakfast available for students experiencing food poverty, Safer Streets, Warmly Wheelers access to bikes for SEND students, Bristol Bears working with SEND students, cycle club, celebration of Black History month, targeted Babassa workshops, a wide range of visits to community venues, sustainability clothes swap shop, LGBTQ+ clubs and celebratory activities, 15+ lunchtime clubs available to all students, ESOL targeted sporting opportunities, intergeneration projects with residents for Redcliffe flats, Eid and Ramadan student-led celebrations, a wide range of campus pop ups And it really does just go on! A phenomenal range of amazing and impactful activities.</p>
<p><i>Collaborate with employers, local organisations, community groups, and stakeholders to</i></p>	<p>Our amazing Community Campus Leads (who are also campus EDI leads) have been working towards establishing effective campus community forums inclusive of a wide representation of both internal and external voices.</p> <p>Over 50% of in scope students have undertaken work / employability experiences so far this year with the rest planned for term 3. Colleagues throughout the</p>

<p><i>develop a culture of shared commitment and responsibility that strengthens engagement, addresses societal challenges and create opportunities for underrepresented groups.</i></p> <p><i>We are an active driver and serve the community and its people</i></p>	<p>organisation have high aspirations for and expectations for all our learners, as a result engagement for students with High Needs (HN) and EHCPs is in line with their peers.</p> <p>The Student Experience team have strengthened our careers pathway work by ensuring students have access to a variety of careers events and employer engagement opportunities.</p> <p>Partnership working has facilitated meaningful encounters with the world of work and introduction of more career’s fairs for direct employer exposure. This approach has supported students in making informed choices about their futures.</p> <p>Increasing Student representation at open events and wider college activities has been a key focus, as has ensuring learners receive unbiased information about their next steps while developing their confidence and communication skills. So far this year 3 careers fairs have been delivered including an HE careers fair, a Green job focus and also a SEND careers fair dedicated to supporting our SEND students to engage with employer encounters.</p> <p>The Student Experience team are evolving a bespoke workshop offer approach to students getting Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) and advice in relevant stages of their academic journey with us. The continued work with NCS is proving popular with our adult provision and outreach for CIAG has enabled us to conduct international support for those who opt to distance learn with us. Careers have been involved in wider college activity including work during national apprenticeship week and national careers week.</p> <p>In March 2025 Ofsted visited us to learn about the work we are doing to support our care experienced young people, while the inspector did not provide us with any formal feedback the visit was VERY positively received and she noted that every student she met was ambitious for themselves and had clear pathways.</p>
<p><i>To be a recognised trauma informed college</i></p> <p><i>All practices, policies and actions that impact upon individuals in our college and wider community utilise a trauma informed approach.</i></p>	<p>So far, all policies have been benchmarked against trauma informed practice and the Safeguarding team have completed the trauma informed self – assessment review to establish our position against the framework, as an outcome the team are now developing a plan to progress us towards accreditation status.</p> <p>There have been a number of key examples highlighted to me so far this year where amazing colleagues have effectively resolved high tension situations though the effective utilisation of a trauma informed approach.</p>

Looking Forward

At the time of writing this report our new Strategic Plan for 2024- 2027 has been in place since September 2024. Our ED&I ambitions will be kept under review and updated as part of a [College Strategy](#) continuous cycle. Equality and Inclusion is a core objective in our Strategic Plan as outlined above

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Lead Officer:	Deputy Principal
Senior Manager responsible:	Principal & CEO