Single Equality Scheme – 2026-27

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 barriers 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 underpin 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 the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- 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 made progress towards meeting its strategic objectives as outlined in 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 were 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 establishment of the Community Campus Lead (CCL) roles has significantly contributed to reducing on campus incidents (60% decrease in their first year) by setting a positive cultural tone and empowering colleagues and students.

We have had another incredibly successful year in our Management Academy. Thirteen managers completed the main Management Academy in 25/26, and our Aspiring Leaders course was well subscribed resulting in us running two cohorts totalling 44 colleagues.

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 circa 13,000 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 54% of enrolments are aged 19+, 38% 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 to 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. Almost 45% of 16-18 students needed to re-sit GCSE English and/or maths. The highest proportion of enrolments are at Entry/Level 1 (44%) followed by Level 2 (35%). In the academic year 25/26 61% of maths GCSE resit students and 68% of English GCSE resist students were supported with exam access arrangements.

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 external funding and statutory returns require us to record biological sex as recorded at birth.*

Over 300 students are care experienced (in care, care leavers). Around 600 are in receipt of High Needs Funding, with just over 500 having Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

Any other ethnic group	2.9%
Asian or Asian British	13.5%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	16.9%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	2.4%
Not declared	2.9%
White	61.4%

Age Groups:

14 - 15	0.5%
16 - 18	42.7%
19 - 23	15.8%
24+	41.1%

<u>College wide survey 25/26 data</u>

Question - *overall I am happy with how I am taught* – College Avg 92%, HNs 92%, Global Majority 95%

<u>Complaints 25/26 data</u>

Less than 5% of complaints relate to EDI or protected characteristics.

Our Employees

Gender:

	City of Bristol College (April 2026)	Further Education Workforce (Academic Year 2022-23)	Difference
Female	66.0%	65.2%	0.8%
Male	33.6%	33.4%	0.2%
Identifies in another way	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%
Prefer not to say	Not available	1.3%	-

Ethnicity:

	City of Bristol College (April 2026)	Further Education Workforce (Academic Year 2022-23)	Difference
White	71.2%	86.1%	-14.9%
Asian or Asian British	3.9%	6.0%	-2.1%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	3.8%	3.7%	0.1%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	4.2%	2.7%	1.5%
Any other ethnic group	1.5%	1.5%	0%
Prefer not to say	3.9%	Not available	-
Not declared	11.6%	Not available	-

Age:

	City of Bristol College (April 2026)	Further Education Workforce (Academic Year 2022-23)	Difference
Under 25	2.9%	5.4%	-2.5%
25 – 29	8.3%	8.7%	-0.4%
30 – 39	21.5%	21.3%	0.2%
40 – 49	27.6%	23.8%	3.8%
50 – 59	22.5%	26.3%	-3.8%
60 +	17.2%	14.6%	2.6%

Disability:

	City of Bristol College (April 2026)	Further Education Workforce (Academic Year 2022-23)	Difference
Yes	13.3%	7.3%	6.0%
No	55.4%	92.7%	-37.3%
Prefer not to say	1.8%	Not available	-
Not declared	29.5%	Not available	-

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 4.4% in 2025 (4.9% in 2024) – a significant improvement. This remains well below the latest published comparison data for averages for the Education Sector.

Whilst 13% of our employees have declared a disability, and we are a Disability Confident Employer, a significant portion of our employees in 2025 have 'not declared (29.5%)'. While this is a reduction from last year, 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.

83% of staff believe people of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued at City of Bristol College.

Having undertaken a review with the National Centre for Diversity (NCD) within the last 24 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 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. 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 E&I objectives we will:

- Identify and work to 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
- Campus specific ED&I Champions
- 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
Identify and eliminate barriers to education and employment by providing access to resources, support services, and environments that respond to diverse needs	The Learner Support Fund (LSF) team has undertaken a targeted review of access to free college meals (FCM) to ensure the scheme is effectively supporting eligible learners. They have undertaken a detailed review of quantitative data and student feedback on uptake and satisfaction and analysed patterns in utilisation across centres. They have exploring potential barriers such as canteen access, queue times, location, and opening hours. Early insights suggest that operational factors may be limiting access for some learners. Findings will inform improvements to the accessibility, visibility and effectiveness of the offer, ensuring it better supports student wellbeing and engagement. Attendance remains a key priority for the College. Overall attendance has shown sustained improvement over the past three years. Where challenges arise, detailed and targeted approaches enable timely intervention. For example, at Ashley Down, a focus group has been established to address lower attendance within some adult cohorts, exploring factors such as Ramadan to inform more inclusive planning for next year. At College Green, emerging concerns indicate that recent changes to taxi travel arrangements may be impacting attendance for some students; this is currently under review. Our ability to respond in a targeted way has been strengthened by increasingly nuanced data and reporting. A strong programme of Staff Development activity is strengthening inclusive practice and student experience: • Rollout of bespoke sexual harassment training (January and April CPD), alongside community conversations focused on respect and inclusion • Launch of Viva Engage to capture colleague voice across campuses, complemented by half-termly face-to-face community conversations • Delivery of frontline cultural awareness and de-escalation training

	• College-wide CPD keynote from Diversity Trust focused on inclusive language and approaches • Continued engagement in external initiatives including College of Sanctuary, Proud to be Campaign, and No Place for Hate • Expanded CEIAG training for learner-facing teams (Learning Services, Personal Development Tutors, School Liaison, Contact Centre). A range of targeted interventions are addressing the needs of specific learner groups and learners with specific support needs: • Adjustments to SEND open event quiet sessions to better match attendee needs • Transition work with 1625 Independent People to support ESOL learners progressing into college • ESOL-focused initiatives including a jobs fair and adult volunteering fair • Development of partnership work to pilot free gym membership and wellbeing support • Ongoing Art Beyond Barriers programme promoting inclusion through creative engagement • Library-based mental health displays and guidance improving visibility of support MIS are continuing to develop increasing 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 EHCPs are now available in-year etc. Experience tells us that where we can identify an issue we can take positive action to mitigate it! 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 People Services and senior leadership team, which is why there is a full and clear commitment to continuing to work on this at pace. Linked to this, in academic year 26/27, 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.

Create and communicate ambition for all students and colleagues regardless of postcode, ethnicity, age, disability or other defining factors. *Everyone is able to define their ambitions and make progress towards their goals.*	Over the past year, a range of targeted initiatives have been implemented to raise aspirations, widen access, and strengthen progression pathways for all learners. 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. The Head of SEND & Foundation and Community Learning delivered an event to promote our Early College offer to schools; careers leads and the Local authority, with a view to identifying young people at risk of NEET and engaging them in year 10/11 to improve engagement and to support ambition. Currently an event for school careers advisors is in development. A significant amount of work has been achieved through our dedicated HN / SEND Sector Forum to offer training, workshops and initiatives that raise awareness about equity, inclusion, diversity and cultural differences. The SEND team have created a video for employers to promote the significant benefits of a Neurodiverse workforce. SEND careers fairs; involvement in a Disability Activism collaboration with UWE Architecture students, Local Learning consulting on the redesign of Hotwells Baths as a youth hub and leading on an Art Beyond Barriers exhibition to be displayed at our Ashley Down Campus. The ESOL team are in the process of creating a video for employers to promote our ESOL talent pool and the benefits of a diverse workforce. Weekly delivery hours at Entry Level 3 and Level 1 have been increased to include employability sessions to support our adult ESOL students to develop the knowledge skills and behaviours for work alongside language acquisition. Two ESOL careers fairs and a volunteer's fair have been implemented. The ESOL students have engaged in digital skills workshops to develop the essential digital skills required for entry level employment. The Head of ESOL is developing an employer advisory board and is leading a South West ESOL network. Our student engagement team have undertaken training to run conversation clubs and our students engaged in social action projects, for example a litter pick and charity fundraising events. Significant progress has been made in developing provision for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). A new NEET offer in Northwest Bristol has been launched in partnership with SGS, with further discussions underway to expand provision at Lawrence Weston Farm. Work

	is also progressing with Bristol City Council (BCC) and SGS to establish aligned entry and exit points for 2026/27, creating clearer and more flexible progression routes for learners. In addition, a tender for increased subcontracted provision is planned for 2026/27, with a strong focus on reducing NEET numbers across the city. To further strengthen support and improve retention, plans are in place to recruit a dedicated NEET student mentor who will provide a single, consistent point of contact and work closely with BCC careers coaches to ensure a more joined-up approach. Careers support has been expanded to ensure all learners are able to identify and pursue ambitious goals. This includes increased Bristol City Council (BCC) Careers Coach capacity, enabling greater in-course support and smoother transitions between provision. Partnerships with additional Southwest colleges are also being developed to widen opportunities and progression routes for learners. Alongside this, the College continues to deliver supported internships with key employers, including two ASDA sites, NHS Blood, and Nando's, with an emerging partnership with We The Curious. These programmes support both EHCP and non-EHCP learners to access meaningful employment pathways and sustain progression into work. Recognising the critical role of families and communities in raising ambition, the College is strengthening its approach to engagement. This includes exploring the development of a parent and guardian support network based at South Bristol Skills Academy. A range of new initiatives is also being developed to enhance communication and involvement, including parent and carer newsletters, coffee mornings at our Ashley Down cafe, enhanced induction evenings with online as well as onsite options, open classroom events, and more informal opportunities such as community-based activities including bingo and pizza evenings. In parallel, links with local community organisations have been strengthened, including partnerships with Youth Zone 224, alongside initiatives such as campus tours for local schools to build earlier awareness and aspiration. Collectively, these actions are strengthening the College's ability to create and sustain ambition for all learners. Through expanded partnerships, targeted provision, and enhanced careers and community engagement, more students are being supported to define clear goals and make meaningful progress toward education and employment outcomes, regardless of their starting point.
Collaborate with employers, local organisations, community groups, and stakeholders to develop a	Progress towards this strategic aim has been securely underpinned by a clear emphasis on deepening collaboration across employers, community organisations and local stakeholders to strengthen engagement and create meaningful opportunities for underrepresented groups. The College has continued to position itself as an active driver within the community by establishing and expanding external community forums

culture of shared commitment and responsibility that strengthens engagement, addresses societal challenges and create opportunities for underrepresented groups. *We are an active driver and serve the community and its people*	across all campuses. These forums are designed to bring together schools, local partners and key stakeholders to address shared priorities and challenges. At Parkway, a well-established community support group is already in place, involving local schools, SGS College and the police, with a particular focus on community safety and joint problem-solving. Building on this, similar forums are planned for the summer term at South Bristol Skills Academy (SBSA), College Green and Ashley Down, ensuring a consistent and coordinated approach to community engagement across the organisation. Alongside external engagement, there has been a strong focus on strengthening internal community voice and collaboration. Regular campus-based communication via Viva Engage and half-termly newsletters has supported cross departmental initiatives such as inclusive in the Bristol half marathon. These forums generally theme-driven, allowing colleagues to engage in meaningful discussions about the student experience and local priorities. Parkway/AEC launched its themed forums in November 2025, with continuation planned into 2026 and beyond, while SBSA, College Green and Ashley Down are now hosting structured face-to-face sessions every six weeks. Recent discussions have included themes such as "Our Spaces," with forthcoming sessions focused on capturing colleague aspirations and priorities through "Wish List" conversations. This approach is helping to create a shared sense of ownership and collective responsibility across staff. All long-course adult students have now been provided with opportunities to engage in social action, reinforcing the College's role in developing active citizens who contribute positively to their communities. At the end of term 2 over 75% of in scope students have undertaken work related /employability experiences so far this year with the rest planned for term 3. This is a 25pp increase from the end of term 2 in 24/25. There are no notable EDI variables. Colleagues throughout the organisation have high aspirations for and expectations for all our learners, as a result engagement for students with HN and EHCPs is in line with their peers. Employer engagement has been strengthened through the work of the Foundation Skills and SEND Sector Forum, which is proactively building relationships with employers to promote inclusive workforce practices. This includes targeted awareness-raising and CPD activity to highlight the value of diversity, particularly in relation to neurodivergent and SEND learners. Collaboration with Project Search and a major retail employer (ASDA) has already delivered tangible impact, resulting in the creation of new supported internship opportunities. These include EHCP-supported internship programmes and non-EHCP ESOL-focused supported internships which started in November 2025, demonstrating an inclusive approach to employment pathways.

	Further engagement activity led by the Sector Forums has expanded employer understanding of the benefits of a diverse workforce, with direct engagement with eight employers to promote supported internships and neurodiversity in the workplace. This was reinforced through awareness raising activities such as a podcast on the benefits of employing neurodivergent individuals and an ESOL myth-busting and talent pool presentation for Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) careers coaches. These initiatives served to challenge misconceptions, broaden employer perspectives, and increase opportunities for underrepresented groups. The Student Experience team have evolved a series of workshops that offer CIAG and advice at relevant stages of the students' academic journey with us, for example, how to gain work experience, Interview like a Pro and 18+ Pathways and Beyond workshops. During Adult Stop the Tracks week 1 the focus was careers workshops delivered by our internal team and the National Careers Service, these included confidence in the workplace, Reset, rethink, refocus workshops and Where Next with a HE focus. The Careers team have offered Self-employment and Self-Employment & Entrepreneurship workshops, and adult students were able to attend the four-week World of Work workshops. 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.
To be a recognised trauma informed college *All practices, policies and actions that impact upon individuals in our college and wider community utilise a trauma informed approach.*	So far, all policies have been benchmarked against trauma informed practice and the Safeguarding team have completed the BNSSG trauma informed self– assessment review to establish our position against the framework, in addition the team have now developed, and are leading the implementation of the action plan as signatories of the framework. A key development has been the College's engagement with the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board trauma-informed framework. Through this partnership, the College has identified and committed to a set of priority actions linked specifically to curriculum and quality, ensuring that trauma-informed principles are not only embedded in support services but are reflected consistently within teaching, learning and assessment. Work is now underway to translate these principles into practice, focusing on how curriculum delivery, classroom environments and assessment approaches can better recognise and respond to the lived experiences of students. This includes strengthening staff awareness, adapting pedagogical approaches, and ensuring that learning environments feel safe, inclusive and predictable for

	all learners. As part of this system-wide commitment, the College has also adopted a Care Covenant, reinforcing its role as a partner in promoting wellbeing, early intervention and relational approaches across education and health settings. Work is progressing to ensure that communication with students reflects trauma-informed principles. A "Language Matters" campaign Is currently underway including a systematic review of key communications such as attendance letters, behaviour correspondence and bursary information, ensuring that language is clear, supportive and non-triggering. This will help reduce anxiety and build trust, particularly for learners who may have had negative prior experiences with education or other institutions. Creating safe, inclusive spaces for students remains a central focus. A wide range of safe space forums and student-led groups are now established, particularly for marginalised cohorts. LGBTQ+ groups are well-attended across South Bristol Skills Academy, College Green and Ashley Down, and these forums are increasingly being used as mechanisms for co-design, enabling students to shape support services and influence decision-making alongside student representatives. This is helping to ensure that provision is responsive and grounded in lived experience. In addition, core student processes are being redesigned to better reflect trauma-informed thinking. The EHCP consultation process is currently being reviewed to incorporate a trauma-informed screening approach, taking into account socio-economic context, prior negative experiences with institutions, and wider safeguarding or social, emotional and mental health needs. This work is at planning stage, with wider stakeholder consultation scheduled for Term 3 and implementation planned for the 2026/27 academic year. Collectively, these developments mark a significant shift towards a more systemic and embedded model of trauma-informed practice. By aligning with regional frameworks, strengthening internal leadership, adapting communication, and embedding inclusive approaches within curriculum and core processes, the College is continuing to build an environment where all individuals feel understood, supported and able to succeed.

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.

Approved by:	Main Corporation Board
Date of approval:	July 2026
Date for Review:	July 2027
Lead Officer:	Deputy Principal and Director of People Services
Senior Manager responsible:	Principal and CEO