

Annual Equality and Diversity Statement 2025/2026

1. Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination legislation with a single act. It aims to simplify the law, remove inconsistencies, and make it easier to understand and comply with. It also aims to strengthen the law and to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), a key measure of the Equality Act, came into force across Great Britain in April 2011 and was developed in order to harmonise the equality duties and to extend it across the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The PSED requires public bodies, which includes colleges, to consider how existing and proposed policies and practices impact on equality. This includes how employees are treated, the design and delivery of services, and how financial decisions are made. The duty requires those public bodies in the execution of their day-to-day duties to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

To assist in the performance of this duty the college will comply with the requirement to:

- Publish equality objectives at least every 4 years.
- Publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the PSED.

The college meets the above requirements by updating and publishing this annual statement, and demonstrates continued good practice in relation to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion by embedding a culture that aims to remove or minimise disadvantage experienced by people, whether on account of their protected characteristics or their life experiences / life chances. Regular and detailed analysis of student/apprentice and staff data influence equality objectives set across the organisation, progress of which is reported to the College Corporation and the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee.

2. EDI Commitments

The college is signed up to the Association of Colleges EDI Charter and commits to the following pledge:

The College identifies one of its' core values 'to be an inclusive college'; creating an environment where everyone is welcomed, valued and celebrated for who they are; within their 3-year Strategic Plan (2024-2027).

Strategic priorities outlined within the plan include reference to promoting an inclusive learning community, where every individual is treated with kindness and respect.

The College strives to embed inclusive practice as a golden thread across the whole organisation to create a culture of equity, underpinned by a commitment to the following:

- A well-established EDI Committee which meets termly and includes senior managers, governors, staff and student representatives. The committee holds themselves accountable to a Terms of Reference which aims to drive forwards a vision for the College to exceed minimum requirements and excel in all areas of EDI practice.
- A focus on improving experiences and minimising barriers for marginalised groups such as the LGBTQ+ community, and those with English as a second language including refugees and those seeking sanctuary.
- Development of a 'Be Well Ambassador' peer support scheme with a focus on mental health and fitness.
- Piloting an Inclusion Quality Framework within the college to enable ongoing self-assessment, as published as a key objective within the College annual Equality and Diversity Annual Statement.
- Creation of a new Personal Development Curriculum for all students and apprentices, with inclusivity as a key topic.
- Well established and continued growth of a College Equality and Diversity Policy family, providing a formal framework in which to operate.

3. 3-year objectives (2025-2028)

The college is committed to achieving the following objectives over the next 3 years and will provide an update relating to progress against the objectives via the annual statement, which will be published on the college website:

- Create a strategic framework which puts staff and student wellbeing at the heart of college operations in order to create a welcoming and inclusive environment in which individuals can thrive and flourish.
- Establish a meaningful EDI workforce development package where learning can be contextualised and applied practically across all aspects of the business.
- Embed the Inclusion strand of the new Personal Development curriculum, equipping students and apprentices to operate as respectful citizens, understand their employment rights in relation to protected characteristics, and to embrace diversity as a driver for achieving success in their lives and work.

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