

# **Equality and Diversity Objectives (2020-24)**

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### **1. Introduction**

Wigan and Leigh College is committed to creating an environment where learners, staff, governors, visitors and other stakeholders actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination and narrow the achievement gap. The college wants to ensure learners have excellent experiences that ensure they are well equipped for the next stage of their education, training and/or employment.

The College is committed to:

- Upholding its values
- Focusing on learning which encourages high aspirations and success
- Applying excellence and integrity in all we do
- Respecting all learners and staff
- Ensuring staff are appropriately trained, supported and valued
- Maintaining financial stability for the benefit of learners
- Being responsive to individuals, employers, the community and the Government

The College seeks to provide a safe, supportive environment for all its staff and students in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The College welcomes individuals and groups from local, regional and international communities. The promotion of equality and diversity enables learners to reach their potential. The College will value difference and diversity and will strive to create positive working relationships so that everyone can work and study to the best of their abilities, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff employed by the College (including those working for the College in a voluntary capacity), will seek to eliminate prejudice of any kind, and to promote equality and diversity. This includes general activities such as challenging the use of discriminatory language or behaviour by staff and by students, and challenging any College policies or procedures which they believe may be discriminatory, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Employees and students are expected to work with the College towards these aims. In certain circumstances, an employee or learner can be personally liable for discrimination against a fellow employee, learner or a job applicant. All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of the College's equality and diversity scheme, which extends to the treatment of job applicants, employees (including former employees), customers clients, students and visitors.

## 2. Our Vision & Values

### Vision:

To be a centre of educational excellence which transforms the lives of the individuals and the communities we serve

### Values:

1. **We are learner centred** – our learners, their learning experience and their safety is our first priority
2. **We are ambitious** – we strive for excellence through creativity and innovation and believe we can always improve
3. **We are partners in the success of the organisation** – supporting each other to develop and to always be individually and collectively responsible for our results
4. **We believe in honest and open communication** - we treat each other with respect, trust and consideration. We listen to learners and colleagues and celebrate their success
5. **We are collaborative and inclusive** – we work in partnership so we can positively contribute to local, regional and national economic development and we value equality and celebrate the diversity of our community

## 3. The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty, known as the general duty, which came into force in April 2011.

### The General Equality Duty:

This duty replaced previous public sector equality duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. It means that providers must have due regard of the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic\* and those who do not
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

\*Protected Characteristics under the Law:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage / Civil Partnership

- Pregnancy / Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Two specific duties came into force in September 2011:

Specific Equality Duties:

- To publish equality information by 31 January 2012 and then annually
- To publish equality objectives by 6 April 2012, and then every four years.

**4. Equality and Diversity Objectives 2016-2020**

In 2016, the College set four key Equality and Diversity objectives as part of the Equality duty.

1. Create equality of opportunity for all learners by maintaining a positive College community
2. Provide a supportive ethos and high levels of mutual respect where discrimination is not tolerated and barriers to learning are removed.
3. Reinforce the importance of disclosing personal information such as specific learning difficulties/disabilities, sexual orientation, and ethnicity by promoting how this information is used to drive equality forward and foster good relations.
4. Actively promote non-stereotypical recruitment and support attainment

In 2017/18, the College decided to add two additional equality and diversity objectives for this period (2016-20):

5. To further enhance learner voice pathways and support mechanisms for minority groups of learners
6. To raise aspirations and narrow achievement gaps for learners from Widening Participation postcodes and disadvantaged backgrounds

The progress made in relation to each of these objectives has been included in the Annual Equality and Diversity report. The College is now in a position to publish new Equality Objectives for the next four year period. Progress for each objective will be

included in the Annual Equality and Diversity report which will be uploaded to the College's website each January.

## **5. Equality and Diversity Objectives 2020-2024**

1. To reduce participation gaps in H.E by 75% for full-time disabled entrants, part-time mature entrants, and full-time and part-time most deprived entrants (as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Quintile 1 and 2);
2. To improve H.E data collection, reporting and analysis in relation to access, continuation and progression by September 2020, evaluating the data in relation to POLAR4, IMD, disability, BAME and care leavers, and to take action if any gaps arise by 2024;
3. Improve satisfaction rating for how confident teaching staff feel in relation to advancing equality and diversity and inclusion into their teaching practice (in excess of 90% in 2022 and over 95% in 2024);
4. Increase female enrolments in Construction and Engineering at Pagefield to at least 10%;
5. Decrease the volume of staff who have not specified whether they have a disability to less than 10%;
6. To increase the proportion of males accessing College Support Services to support their Mental Health by 5% on a yearly basis.

The progress made in relation to these objectives will be reported on in the College's Annual Equality and Diversity Report which is published in January each year.

These Equality Objectives will remain in place until April 2024.