

Annual Equalities Report December 2024

Executive Summary

This report reviews the progress made during the 2023-24 academic year against the institution's Equality Objectives (EOs) and highlights areas for further action. While progress has been achieved across various objectives, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring equal outcomes for all student and staff groups.

Why We Have Equality Objectives

The college's Equality Objectives are part of its legal obligations under the **Public Sector Equality Duty**, introduced by the **Equality Act 2010**. This Duty requires public institutions to ensure fairness by:

- **Eliminating discrimination** (preventing unfair treatment).
- **Advancing equality of opportunity** (giving everyone the same chances to succeed).
- **Fostering good relations** (promoting understanding between different groups). These objectives guide the college's efforts to create an inclusive environment where everyone—students and staff alike—can thrive, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

Key Highlights

Students

- **Ethnicity:** Retention and achievement gaps have narrowed for many ethnic groups. Significant progress includes White and Black Caribbean students achieving 2.7 percentage points (pp) above their peers and Gypsy/Irish Traveller students achieving 11.3pp above. However, emerging gaps were identified for specific groups, such as "White Other" and adult learners from African and Pakistani backgrounds.
- **Disabilities:** Achievement gaps for students with dyslexia and Autism have been reduced or eliminated. However, adult learners with mental health conditions face persistent challenges, with an 11.2pp achievement gap.
- **Disadvantaged Groups:** Retention and achievement rates for Looked After Children and Young Adult Carers remain below average, though improvements were observed in specific areas.

Staff

- **Workforce Representation:** Efforts to diversify staff have yielded mixed results. While applications from minority ethnic groups increased, appointment rates remain lower than for White applicants. Disclosure of protected characteristics has improved slightly but remains inconsistent.

- **Satisfaction:**
While minority groups (e.g., disabled and ethnic minority staff) report higher satisfaction, male and LGBTQ+ staff continue to express dissatisfaction, particularly regarding communication and resource allocation.

Progress Against Equality Objectives

- Several objectives for both students and staff have been partially or fully met, including reducing achievement gaps for specific ethnic and disability groups.
- Persistent challenges include:
 - Increasing disclosure rates for protected characteristics among staff.
 - Improving job satisfaction among male and LGBTQ+ staff.
 - Addressing significant achievement gaps for specific adult learner groups.

Conclusion

This report underscores the importance of sustained and consistent efforts to address equality challenges. While notable progress has been achieved, particularly among younger students, adult learners and specific staff groups require additional focus. Future actions should prioritize reducing appointment disparities, improving retention for disadvantaged students, and fostering an inclusive environment for all staff and students.