BORDERS COLLEGE

Working Together

Access and Inclusion Strategy

2016-2020

December 2016

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Access and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020

1.0 Vision

1.1 The College is an institution free from bias, providing equality of access and opportunity to succeed for all its students.
Wherever there is disadvantage creating barriers to learning the College will make adjustments and provide services to ensure that equality of access and opportunity is preserved.

2.0 Introduction and Context

2.1 In its *Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020*, the College has set five Strategic Goals to: -

- Respond to the needs of our region
- Deliver successful outcomes for all learners
- Provide a high quality college experience
- Grow our business
- Build sustainability

Each Strategic Goal has a number of ambitions with specific outcomes which the College aims to achieve.

2.2 To support these goals and ambitions, the College has agreed a set of ten strategies relating to: -

- Learning and Teaching
- Learner Engagement
- HR and Organisational Development
- Information Systems and Learning Technology
- Employer Engagement
- Access and Inclusion
- Estates
- Marketing and Communications
- Finance
- Procurement

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2.3 The College is committed to its obligations under equality legislation and as such will ensure that its approach to access and inclusion underpins these obligations throughout the work of the organisation.

2.4 The Access and Inclusion Strategy has strong links to the College's Vision statement, ***"To be a college in which all learners succeed and which inspires growth, creates opportunities, raises aspirations and enhances lives"*.**

2.5 Achieving the College's strategic goals of **1. Respond to the needs of our region, 2. Deliver successful outcomes for all learners** and **3. Provide a high quality college experience** will all be supported through implementing this strategy.

2.6 Access and Inclusion is at the heart of what we do. It is linked to our commitment to national policies of Opportunities for All, Widening Access and Developing the Young Workforce. It is also linked to our ongoing support to a local Borders Guarantee that every young person will be offered a positive destination on leaving school.

2.7 We recognise that everyone does not come to college at the same starting point and will continue to develop our services so they help students meet the challenges they face to make a success of their studies.

2.8 We will use the data we collect to understand the correlations between individual characteristics and learner success and adjust our services accordingly.

2.9 We have agreed measures and set targets both in our Strategic Plan and our Regional Outcome Agreement that will allow us to judge the impact our Access and Inclusion strategy is having on learner success and other associated outcomes.

2.10 To achieve the aims of our strategy we will work with key stakeholders, including the local community planning partnership, local employers, staff, learners and schools. In particular, we will look to implement our strategy in partnership with our Students' Association.

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3.0 Strategy Themes and Objectives

In supporting the Strategic Themes and Outcomes, the College has identified ten themes within this strategy. They are:

3.1 Learning Support

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Provide appropriate, targeted support to learners from all backgrounds and experiences to ensure that opportunities for success are available to all.**

With regard to **Learning Support**, the College will: -

3.1.1 Provide a learning support service that recognises the needs of individuals within the context of their difficulties or disabilities, chosen subject and level.

3.1.2 Provide appropriate assessment of need at the point of identification or request and make interventions that support the individual to gain independence in learning.

3.1.3 Agree learning support plans where necessary with the individual learners and teaching staff, setting out the goals and techniques to be used to support and promote their independence in learning.

3.1.4. Review individual learning support plans with the learners and teaching staff ensuring that progress is being made and interventions are optimised to promote independence in learning.

3.1.5 Agree with the supported learner to the sharing of relevant information with other training or educational organisations and awarding bodies involved with their studies.

3.1.6 Conduct assessment of need, and data and information gathering to judge the requirements of the individual for assessment arrangements and to make application to the awarding body where this is necessary.

3.1.7 Adapt assessment conditions to comply with any assessment arrangements put in place to ensure that learners have fair access to assessment.

3.1.8 Comply with the requirements of regulators and awarding bodies ensuring the continuing integrity of qualifications while meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

3.1.9 Maximise the use of technology to promote independence in

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learning for learners with a learning disability or difficulty. Ensure all learners entitled to access learning support funding for either non-medical support or equipment through bursaries or DSA are actively supported and advised to do so.

3.1.10 Participate proactively in the transitions process with the local authority education and social work services for all students with a recognised learning support need.

3.1.11 Create and implement data sharing protocols with the local authority education and social work services for all students with a recognised learning support need.

3.1.12 Ensure that services for students with sensory impairment meet their needs and comply with the requirements of the British Sign language (Scotland) Act 2015.

3.2 Support for Learning, Achievement and Progression

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Deliver efficient and successful learner journeys through a modern, relevant and coherent curriculum which provides appropriate pathways to positive destinations.**

With regard to **Support for learning, achievement and progression**, the College will: -

3.2.1 Provide a wide curriculum with programmes from SCQF Level 1 to 9 allowing learners to study at a level commensurate with the current level of knowledge and skill and to progress through well planned and structured stages.

3.2.2 Provide a wide range of introductory and access level programmes ensuring that learners can commence study in a vocational area with no prior knowledge

3.2.3 Ensure that assessment of learning will be well planned and learners will be well prepared prior to summative assessment.

3.2.4 Ensure that all substantive full and part time programmes will have a course tutor who will provide guidance and support for learners related to their studies.

3.2.5 Provide all full time learners with a dedicated time to meet with their tutor on an individual basis at least once per College block.

3.2.6 Hold *Progression Boards* to prioritise opportunities for

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learners to progress to more advanced levels of study ensuring places are available and that learners clearly understand progression requirements.

3.2.7 Negotiate and expand opportunities for entry to university with advanced standing from the College's Higher National portfolio of programmes.

3.2.8 Monitor the progression into further study of our learners and use the data to inform future programme and portfolio planning.

3.2.9 Ensure that provision for learners with profound and complex needs is designed around their needs and reviewed regularly.

3.3 Student Recruitment and Admissions

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Support our communities to build capacity, increase opportunities and reduce inequality.**

With regard to **Student Recruitment and Admissions**, the College will: -

3.3.1 Maintain and publish a policy and procedure on student recruitment and selection that is fair, consistently applied, meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and is based on HR best practice.

3.3.2 Contextualise the admissions process where there is a need to prevent applicants experiencing disadvantage because of a protected characteristic.

3.3.3 Monitor applications and enrolments by protected characteristic to ensure that the College is meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

3.3.4 Advertise our programmes in a way that is free from gender bias and promotes our programmes to all sectors of our community.

3.3.5 Provide an appeals process independent of the faculties to adjudicate in cases where applicants have not received a place on their chosen programme.

3.4 Student Support Services

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Support our communities to build capacity, increase opportunities and**

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reduce inequality.

With regard to **Student Support Services**, the College will: -

3.4.1 Provide an advice service for all students that is easily accessible and covers a wide range of welfare issues.
3.4.2 Support the functioning of an effective Students' Association to act as advocate for individual students and as the collective voice of students with regard to the quality of services provided.
3.4.3 Work in partnership with our Students' Association to ensure that the range of support services provided to students by the College and the Association collaborate and complement one another.
3.4.4 Facilitate access to a wide range of third party welfare services in collaboration with the Students' Association.
3.4.5 Develop a whole-college approach to mental wellbeing.
3.4.6 Provide mental health first aid where necessary and take action to direct the learner to appropriate ongoing support
3.4.7 Provide a C-Card service for sexual health in conjunction with NHS Borders and the Students' Association
3.4.8 Provide ongoing support and advice with financial (including benefits), transport and wellbeing issues.
3.4.9 Advise on applications for bursaries, EMAs, SAAS and DSA.
3.4.10 Provide support for application to university or other higher education providers through UCAS.
3.4.11 Provide help and advice on transport related issues in conjunction with Scottish Borders Council.
3.4.12 Administer bursaries, EMAs and transport services in line with national policies.
3.4.13 Procure transport services where no public service exists or where students are unable to use these services for reasons of disability.

Our **Students' Association** will work collaboratively with our student support services and will:

3.4.14 Act as advocate for individual students and as the collective voice of students with regard to the quality of services provided.

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3.4.15 Work in partnership with the college to ensure the range of support services meet the needs of all students
3.4.16 Work in partnership with Student Support Services to ensure students have access to a wide range of external support agencies
3.4.17 Provide an access point for the c-card sexual health service
3.4.18 Provide support for the college's Faculty Council system, including training and ongoing support for Class Representatives and Faculty Council Chairs. In particular it will provide adapted training and support to the Access Faculty Council.
3.4.19 Work alongside the college to achieve and uphold the LGBT Charter of rights
3.4.20 Provide a safe space for LGBT+ students
3.4.21 Provide mental health first aid if necessary and direct students to the appropriate support service(s)
3.4.22 Provide events and activities that promote inclusiveness and engagement with the opportunities available to all students.
3.4.23 Promoting a sense of belonging for all students by developing appropriate support groups and raising awareness for relevant student issues.
3.4.24 Ensure students have access to support and advice at all times by committing to an open door policy.
3.4.25 Upholding the core values of the Students' Association which are representation, respect, acceptance, friendship and fun.

3.5 Equality and Diversity

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Develop and deliver provision to meet national and local priorities, particularly through initiatives to Develop the Young Workforce, widen access to education and reduce inequality.**

With regard to **Equality and Diversity**, the College will: -

3.5.1 Set equality outcomes relating to access and inclusion and take action to achieve these outcomes as required by the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010.
3.5.2 Through a gender equality action plan reduce gender segregation by vocational area.
3.5.3 Monitor recruitment, retention and achievement by protected characteristic and take action to address discrepancies

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highlighted through the data.

3.5.4 Promote and provide opportunities for learning to the most deprived areas within our region and recruit a greater proportion of our learners from SIMD 10 – 40 than would be expected from population distribution alone.

3.5.5 Retain its LGBT Charter Mark and actively support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to work and study at the College free from discrimination.

3.6 Care Aware

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Develop and deliver provision to meet national and local priorities, particularly through initiatives to Develop the Young Workforce, widen access to education and reduce inequality.**

With regard to **Care Aware**, the College will: -

3.6.1 Undertake its responsibilities as a corporate parent as required by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

3.6.2 Provide a dedicated advisor to support young carers, looked after children and care leavers studying at the College.

3.6.3 Work collaboratively with other local organisations with responsibilities as corporate parents to ensure that services and support to the young people are well coordinated and informed.

3.6.4 Promote and provide opportunities for learning to looked after children and care leavers and recruit a greater proportion of our learners from these care experienced young people than would be expected from population distribution alone.

3.6.5 Work with looked after children, care leavers and young carers to carefully plan and review their learning and pastoral needs, progress and achievements.

3.6.6 Work with national agencies such as Who Cares? Scotland to improve staff understanding of the issues faced by looked after children helping to improve retention and achievement by these learners.

3.6.7 Provide contextualised admissions, student funding, accommodation and transport services for looked after children, care leavers and young carers to improve their chances of securing and maintaining a place at college.

3.6.8 Support looked after children and young carers in the final

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year of school through our Borders Young Talent mentoring programme.

3.6.9 Increase the number of looked after children, care leavers and young carers who progress on to higher education programmes and from the College to university.

3.7 Employability

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Support our communities to build capacity, increase opportunities and reduce inequality.**

With regard to **Employability**, the College will: -

3.7.1 Work with Community Planning Partners to tackle economic deprivation and unemployment through providing access to its wide range of programmes and where necessary creating bespoke programmes to tackle an identified need.

3.7.2 Provide a range of employability programmes designed to support people who are not yet work-ready.

3.7.3 Respond to large-scale redundancy situations within our region in collaboration with SDS, the local authority and other relevant agencies through the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE).

3.7.4 To develop programmes for specific sectors or employers where there is a need for specific skills and knowledge.

3.7.5 Ensure that our programmes develop employability skills through work experience and collaboration with employers.

3.7.6 To be an important contributor to Developing the Young Workforce by collaborating with and support both schools and employers in delivering on this national strategy.

3.8 English for Speakers of Other Languages

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Support our communities to build capacity, increase opportunities and reduce inequality.**

With regard to **English for Speakers of Other Languages**, the

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College will: -

3.8.1 Work in partnership with the local authority to provide ESOL programmes within local communities.
3.8.2 Provide assessment arrangements where necessary and permissible for learners whose second language is English.

3.9 Estates and ICT

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Develop and operate modern, fit-for-purpose, efficient estates** and **Deliver an ambitious ICT renewal programme to ensure future-proofed, accessible and highly functioning ICT systems to support learning and teaching, and business support services.**

With regard to **Estates and ICT**, the College will: -

3.9.1 Provide well equipped learning and study facilities that allow access to both physical and digital resources.
3.9.2 Provide an easily accessible estate for those with learning disability, physical disability or sensory impairment.
3.9.3 Provide adaptive learning technology that promotes independence in learning for learners with sensory impairment, learning difficulties and disabilities.
3.9.4 To periodically reassess our estate to ensure that it continues to comply with the requirements of equality legislation.

3.10 Developing our Staff

This theme links directly to our Strategic Plan ambition to: **Create a well-supported, highly valued and confident workforce.**

With regard to **Developing our Staff**, the College will: -

3.10.1 Provide an annual programme of CPD that develops staff understanding of factors that create barriers to learning or learners' engagement in learning and to promote staff skills to support people to overcome these barriers.
3.10.2 Ensure that all staff undertake an induction programme inclusive of corporate parenting, safeguarding, equality & diversity.
3.10.3 Ensure that annual CPD programmes address issues of equality, access and inclusion.

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4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Management is responsible for setting and monitoring the strategy.

4.2 The Vice Principal: Quality and Innovation is responsible for ensuring the achievement of the outcomes associated with this strategy.

4.3 The College Management Team is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the strategy.

4.4 The Learning & Teaching Development Director is responsible for the development of a cohesive Learning Support service to meet the objectives and targets of this strategy in line with our Learning Support Strategic Plan ambition.

4.5 All College teams are responsible for supporting the delivery of the objectives and targets of this strategy.

4.6 The HR department is responsible for the planning and delivery of the College-wide CPD programme

5.0 Monitoring and Review

5.1 The Regional Board and College Management Team will receive monitoring reports in accordance with its meeting cycle.

5.2 The Senior Management Team will monitor and review progress through self-evaluation reports and will make recommendations for adjustment to the Vice Principal: Quality & Innovation where appropriate.

5.3 The Strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the authors.

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6.0 Related Documents

(Available on the College Website at: www.borderscollege.ac.uk)

6.1 Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020

6.2 Regional Outcome Agreements

6.3 HR and Workforce Development Strategy

6.4 Learner Engagement Strategy

6.5 Marketing and Communications Strategy

6.6 ISLT Strategy

6.7 Learning & Teaching Strategy

6.8 Data Protection Policy

6.9 Assessment Arrangements Policy & Procedure

6.10 Customer Services Policy

6.11 Equality Outcomes and Action Plan

6.12 Corporate Parenting Plan

6.13 Borders College-SBC Data Sharing Protocol

6.14 Well-being Support Plans

6.15 Assessment Policy and Procedure

6.16 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

6.17 Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Harm

6.18 Student Admission and Interview Policy and Procedure

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6.19 Student Enrolment and Induction Procedure

6.20 Student Guidance Policy and Course Tutor Guidelines

6.21 Gender-Based Abuse Guidelines (Students)

6.22 Guide to Providing Documents in Alternative Formats

6.23 A Guide to Inclusiveness at Borders College,

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