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REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

Subject: Equality Mainstreaming Report 2021	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☒ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☐
Prepared by: H Anderson	**Date:** 23 February 2021

Purpose:

The Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report provides an update on progress made against the equality outcomes we set for 2017 – 2021. The production of this report is a Public Sector Equality Duty and it will be published on the college website following approval by the Regional Board.

Linked to Strategic Ambition: Take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland

Executive Summary:

As a listed public authority we must exercise due regard to the three needs of the general equality duty. These are;

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

The General Equality Duty is underpinned by a set of specific duties (Scotland) which are fulfilled through the reporting within this paper. The specific duties require us to publish the following;

- **Progress towards mainstreaming the general equality duty**
  This is an overview of how we embed equality across all processes and functions. This work is detailed within the report by department area.

- **Annual employee information**
  Included is a breakdown of our staff profile by protected characteristic. We have also included information on occupational segregation.

- **Board member information**
  We are legally required to publish the gender split of our Board, which currently sits at 64%.

- **Gender pay gap**
  In 2020 the College's gender pay gap was 9.2%, compared to the national pay gap of 15.5%. We also included disability pay gap (-8%)

and race pay gap (-18%). Publication of disability and race pay gaps are not a legal requirement but are considered good practice.

- **Equal pay statement**
  This states our commitment to equal pay and ensuring the procedures in place to determine pay and conditions of employment do not discriminate unlawfully and are free from bias.

- **Equality outcomes progress report**
  An overview of where we were, where we are now, what we still need to do in relation to the equality outcomes that were set in 2017.

The mainstreaming report must be published in an accessible location on our website no later than 30 April 2021.

This paper has had previous approvals at the Equality and Inclusion Committee and Curriculum and Quality Committee.

The College must publish a mainstreaming update report no later than 30 April 2023.

Recommendation:

To accept the recommendation of the CQC to approve the Equality Mainstreaming Report 2021

Previous Committee Approvals: Equalities & Inclusion, CQC

For publication ☒	**For publication with redactions** ☐	**Not for publication** ☐

BORDERS COLLEGE

Working Together

Equality Mainstreaming Report

Mainstreaming the General Duty
Employee Information
Gender Pay Gap
Statement on Equal Pay
Progress towards Equality Outcomes

April 2021

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1. Introduction

Borders College is a listed authority in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. This means that it is covered by the specific duties that help authorities meet the general duty.

The general equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This report fulfils five of the specific duties, which are to;

- report progress on mainstreaming the general equality duty
- gather, use and publish employee information
- produce a progress report for the College's Equality Outcomes
- publish gender pay gap information and an equal pay statement
- publish Regional Board diversity information

2. Mainstreaming Report

2.1 Leadership

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team provide a clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion being at the heart of Borders College's mission, purpose and strategic plan. A strong lead is given to staff and to students that equality of opportunity and respect for others matter to the organisation. This has led to the Equality Duty being integral to all aspects of the College's governance, management, human resources function and service provision.

The Principal, in their presentations and meetings with students and staff provides clear leadership on equality matters, demonstrating their respect for the people that work and study at the College and focusing on the importance of success for all the College's learners and the need for creating and maintaining a respectful community. The Assistant Principal Quality and Development has senior management responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion within their remit and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010. They have a leading role for ensuring that the equality duty is embedded fully in the governance, work and life of the College and in meeting the specific duties detailed in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016.

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2.2 Planning

2.2.1 Strategic Planning

The College's Strategic Ambition 2020-25 sets out the College's Strategic Purpose, Vision, Values and Behaviours.
Our strategy can be found here: Strategic Ambition 2020-25

Our Strategic Ambition puts equality at the highest level of our function. We have committed to taking a leading role in an inclusive Scotland, which means we recognise that we must promote equality and celebrate diversity. We have adopted inclusion as one of our core values which demonstrates our understanding that some people face greater barriers than others, and we must adapt our services, practices and behaviours so everyone has an opportunity to succeed and to feel part of the Borders College community. In order to achieve this outcome, equality must be at the heart of everything we do.

Our Strategic Ambition reflects the guidance from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council to strengthen our approach to equality and diversity, and helps focus our efforts on advancing equality for everyone who is part of our College community.

The Strategic Plan was equality impact assessed at the time of planning, drafting and approval.

2.2.2 Regional Outcome Agreement

It is a requirement of college funding that each College Region agrees an Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council. This is negotiated each year, setting out the levels of activity and the specific outcomes the College will work towards in return for the funding it receives. The progress is measured by a series of outputs from the college activity[1].

The Outcome Agreement links well with the College's Equality Outcomes and gives a high profile to addressing equality and diversity issues.

2.2.3 Development Planning

Each department and portfolio area within the College is required to create an annual enhancement plan that is based on the findings from their self-evaluation. This details how their work will contribute towards meeting the College's equality outcomes among other things. In evaluating their practice they must consider data

[1] Borders College Regional Outcome Agreement 2019-20, Borders College, http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/downloads/borders_roa_2019-20.pdf, accessed 03/02/21

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from the College's equality monitoring system which is made available to them through the College's management information system.

The College monitors application, enrolment and success for all protected characteristics and also for care experienced, young carers and SIMD. This gives us access to a wide range of data to inform evaluation and action planning. This has led to the College setting specific measures and targets within its Strategic Ambition and Regional Outcome Agreement to address equality issues. The College is aware that age, deprivation, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, care experience and caring responsibilities all impact negatively on a students' chances of success and has taken action to address these issues. We also know from the data that gender has a significant impact on the vocational choices made by young people and is taking action to help address gender bias and stereotyping.

Individual department and portfolio area plans are used to inform the overall annual college Enhancement Plan where college-wide action to address equality issues will feature.

2.2.4 Self-evaluation

Each year Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) work collaboratively to develop arrangements for assuring and improving the quality of provision delivered in Scotland's colleges. During 2020 -2022, Education Scotland will work flexibly and responsively to emerging support needs of colleges as they recover from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Education Scotland and SFC will work alongside the sector to assist colleges to plan and manage adjustments and support improvement. They have provided a framework for recovery based on the following themes:

- Curriculum, learning and teaching, and assessment
- Services to support learning
- Transitions
- Evaluation to facilitate improvement

Each department and portfolio area is required to evaluate their performance against the Education Scotland Recovery from COVID 19. These standards have been created to also address the needs of the Equality Duty. In particular, through the application of this framework, the College considers how well it meets its statutory duties and how well it meets the needs of learners from all backgrounds and circumstances. The self-evaluation process prompts the portfolio area and department staff to consider how well they meet the needs within the Equality Duty and to plan to address needs that require further consideration. Borders College is working closely with Borders College Students' Association (BCSA) to ensure students have regular opportunity to feedback on our recovery from COVID 19.

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2.3 Management and Governance

2.3.1 Regional Board

The Regional Board for the Borders College Region was established under the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013, with the Chair appointed and Board Members approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Education & Training.

Under its public sector equality duties, a Regional College Board is required to assess and review the equality impact of policies and practices on Board appointments. This might involve identifying relevant evidence such as the population represented by the college or its potential catchment, the composition of the board, any gaps in representation and appropriate steps to address any gaps.[2]

On 1 January 2020 there were 10 female and 7 male Board members. Female representation on the Board was 59% at that time. By 31 December 2020 there were 9 female and 5 male Board members increasing female representation to 64% for that period.

The Board Nominations Committee has responsibility for Board appointments and it met in August 2020 to consider the next Board member recruitment campaign. The Committee remains committed to attracting a diverse membership of the Board.

Equality and diversity is a standing item on the agenda of the Board. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Student Services and Assistant Principal Quality and Development are required to report to the Board and relevant Committees on equality matters. An equalities sub-group of the Board was established in 2019 to discuss the Board's approach to equalities. The sub-group played a key role in raising the Board's consciousness in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and in encouraging the Board to reach out to groups not previously contacted during periods of Board recruitment.

Borders College Students' Association has been recognised by Board members as keeping equalities high on the Board's agenda through their reporting on student experience.

The Board approves this Mainstreaming Report and the Equality Outcomes.

[2] (Scottish Government, 2014)

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2.4 Equality, Committees and Policies

2.4.1 College Committees and Meetings

All College committees and meetings have equality and diversity as a standing item on their agendas. The College has an Equality and Inclusion Committee that oversees the equality, diversity and inclusion work of the College, including equality impact assessment. It has membership from a wide range of staff, staff representative organisations, and the Students' Association.

In 2019, the College appointed a part-time Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer to support the College in meeting its statutory duties and promoting inclusive practices in all areas of operation. Through the creation of this post, the College has increased its capacity to improve its equality impact assessment processes, the level of advocacy for individuals with protected characteristic groups, and is enjoying a renewed focus on awareness raising and the celebration diversity through the promotion of national awareness campaigns.

2.4.2 Policies and procedures

All policies and procedures that relate to work with people are equality impact assessed. The results of the impact assessment are published on the College website[3].

The College has a wide range of policies that support and protect the rights of employees, service users and the community we serve. They are particularly important in helping ensure that the College is meeting the requirements of the general duty[4].

2.5 Service Provision

2.5.1 Admissions

The College's admissions process is reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the needs of the general equality duty. The College has continued to consider how it can improve its admissions policy and procedure so that it is fair, transparent and equitable. The key features of the policy are:

- The early identification of any additional support needs to make reasonable adjustments to the admissions process
- Positive action in supporting under-represented groups to achieve a place at college.

[3] Borders College EIA
[4] Borders College Policy Documents

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Due to COVID-19, the college created online admissions processes for recruitment to Academic Year 2020-21. A specific Equality Impact Assessment was carried out to ensure that the process continued to consider those with protected characteristics.

2.5.2 Curriculum

The College curriculum was built following Curriculum for Excellence guidelines and provides a wide range of courses that meet a variety of vocational needs and abilities. The College has a significant role to play in reducing the number of school leavers from the Borders going to negative destinations. We provide opportunities for retraining and upskilling but have identified a potential increase in demand for this, particularly in the wake of Covid-19 where redundancy is a threat for many people, and opportunities for career changes and entrepreneurship are developing. The opportunity is also arising to use more funding to target the older population as school rolls dip in the region in the near term.

The College works to make sure its curriculum is right for students' needs and the region, and this work, in combination with a fair admissions policy, is a significant contributory factor in ensuring opportunities are available at the right level and in the right vocational areas to allow people to succeed and achieve positive destinations.

A key challenge for both curriculum and admissions policy is gender segregation. The College has embedded the approach to inclusion within it's marketing and promotion of courses in order to address the gender imbalance that exists across our courses. Well entrenched views by parents and employers within the region has limited the effectiveness of this approach. Construction and engineering programmes continue to attract applications from males, with painting and decorating being the most likely to have female applicants. Hairdressing, beauty therapy and childcare attract mainly females with beauty therapy being the least likely to have a male applicant. In total, only 27% of our 2020-21 full time programmes have more than 25% of males and females enrolled and over a quarter of our full time programmes have enrolments from only one gender.

We are committed addressing our gender imbalance in certain curricular areas and recognise this is a contributory factor to the gender pay gap within Scotland as a whole. We also appreciate that there are broader societal issues that we need to join with other agencies to challenge in order to influence this change over time. More detail on specific curriculum area activities to address gender imbalance is shown within the section "Equality in the Curriculum: Portofolio 1 and 2".

Each student on a mainstream programme is supported in developing their essential skills for life and work alongside learning the vocational skills necessary for their chosen field of work. The College has in place an Essential Skills Policy and extensive work experience opportunities to support this work. Embedded within the curriculum is an onus on addressing equality issues as they relate to employment and life. The work that is undertaken to address these issues is recorded and discussed during block team meetings.

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The College encourages students to disclose whether they have a disability that may impact on their learning. The disclosure rate has improved from 21% in 2017-18 to 24% in 2019-20 for full time, compared to 30% of the Scottish Borders population (2011 Census, Scotland)[5]. This suggests that more students are comfortable with sharing information about a learning difficulty or disability with the College.

The College offers a learning support service to all students who experience difficulties, and mental health counselling support for students who require mental health support. Both services provide an assessment of need and make the necessary reasonable adjustment to educational service and wellbeing support respectively.

Equalities in the Curriculum: Portfolio 1 (Rural Skills, Creative Industries, Sport and Outdoor Activities & Business Events and Tourism)

This section serves to highlight some of the mainstreaming work that has taken place within Rural Skills, Creative Industries, Sport and Outdoor Activities, and Business, Events and Heritage Tourism.

In the Rural Skills area, particular focus has been given to encouraging females into male-dominated vocations. Through a combination of targeted marketing and the delivery of farm training as part of the Introduction to Animal Care course, Rural Skills has seen a total of 50% female enrolments in NC Agriculture and approximately 20% female enrolments across all agriculture courses in 2020-21.

The college ensures that female role models in traditionally male-dominated fields are celebrated. For example, in 2020 a female Borders College student won the Overall Winner Award at Lantra Scotland's ALBAS (Awards for Land-based and Aquaculture Skills), won the Game and Wildlife industry category, and was one of four CARAS (Council for Awards of Agricultural Societies) winners (Winners of Lantra Scotland's prestigious ALBAS announced (borderscollege.ac.uk).

In order to inspire children to consider careers in the rural skills industry, the college has run Rural Skills taster days. These events welcome pupils from across the Scottish Borders to learn about what it's like to be a student in the rural sector (https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/news-and-events/archive/pupils-enjoy-rural-skills-taster-day-adventure/).

Horticulture students recently enjoyed an opportunity to make an online visit to Holland where students were able to experience first-hand the commercial production of flowering plants. This allowed student the opportunity to realise the potential of utilising transferable skills learnt on the college's Horticulture course that

[5] National Records of Scotland, 2011, *Scotland's Census*, National Records of Scotland, Welcome to Scotland's Census | Scotland's Census. Accessed 24/11/2020

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could be applied abroad. This activity supports the college's wider strategic objective of ensuring our students are globally engaged (https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/news-and-events/archive/horticulturists-get-a-taste-of-plant-growing-dutch-style/).

In the Sports department students get opportunities to take part in equality discussions focusing on issues relating to mental health, eating disorders and homophobia in sport. In 2019, LGBT Youth Scotland ran a workshop addressing hate crime and transphobia which was delivered to a group of Preparation for Army students. In terms of embedding diversity within the curriculum, Horse Care students have supported the local Riding for the Disabled initiative for a number of years where students assist in delivering lessons to disabled primary and secondary children and adults.

Throughout the Covid pandemic, sports lecturers have been encouraging students to get active through the sharing of quick exercises on social media in a bid to boost student mental health and wellbeing (https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/news-and-events/archive/popular-keep-fit-series-helps-keep-the-community-motivated/). The sports department also celebrated the European Day of Languages by showcasing one of our international BASE mountain biking students (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHlrdP_mi48).

In Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy, staff and students have offered successful make up and skin care beauty session for the transgender community, and students have offered guidance on skincare products and make up techniques for men. Both these initiatives were successful and students gained excellent feedback from their clients. For Hairdressing and Beauty students who identify as transgender and gender-diverse, appropriate uniforms are made available along with access to gender neutral toilets.

Often a number of clients visiting the college's beauty salon are elderly or have health issues. In order to make the experience accessible to everyone adaptations have been made to equipment, such as purchasing new massage chairs for those with mobility issues.

In 2018, Borders College hosted a celebration of diversity as part of a larger week-long Diversity event hosted in partnership with NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council. The event highlighted examples of diversity within the Scottish Borders. Borders College played a key role with hairdressing and beauty students offering appointments for transgender people, computing lecturers offering 'coding for girls' sessions, and supported students taking charge of running the coffee morning.

As it is envisaged that Covid-19 restrictions will continue into a third academic year, the team have redesigned the curriculum offer to support the development of meta skills. As part of this development students will participate in innovative 'challenge projects'. Equalities has been embedded within these challenges to reflect the diversity of potential client-base. For example, students will create YouTube videos on male skin care and make-up techniques.

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The college runs a range of initiatives to support our ESOL students. For example, the Syrian refugee repatriation scheme which is funded through the home office, provides bespoke classes for Syrian learners. This is fully accessible with opportunities available regardless of educational background or level of written or spoken English. In 2018, Borders College was shortlisted in the Best Community Project category of The Herald and GenAnalytics Diversity Awards for this project (https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/news-and-events/archive/community-project-shortlisted-at-national-diversity-awards/).

Full time students who have English as a second language are given the opportunity to access ESOL evening classes if appropriate. This enables students to improve their English, in turn providing further support to enable them to achieve within their full time course. All ESOL classes include discussion and activities focusing on equalities, tolerance, and acceptance of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. These are designed to foster a sense of inclusion and understanding.

Equality in the Curriculum: Portfolio 2 (STEM, Sustainable Construction, Health & Social Care, Early Education and Supported Programmes)

The college runs a range of outreach initiatives to inspire young people, and those in the gender minority, to take up careers in STEM and Sustainable Construction. For example, college staff and students have made visits to local primary schools to discuss career pathways into construction and STEM where apprentices share their journey into employment. In other examples STEM staff have visited primary schools to deliver robotics sessions. One particular Primary School is keen to develop this relationship further once Covid-19 restrictions ease. Lecturers have also worked to inspire school pupils of all backgrounds to consider careers in engineering by offering tours of local electronics firm Plexus, which included a presentation on the various pathways into careers in engineering.

Over the last few years the construction area has run successful ‘Women in Construction’ sessions in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), local employers and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). The aim of these events is to offer guidance on career pathways for women.

In order to encourage increased applications from females to construction and STEM courses, female role models studying these courses at Borders College are regularly highlighted through our marketing and promotion (https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/news-and-events/archive/niesha-adds-to-growing-female-construction-trend/).

As we progress our work to address gender segregation the college continues to look for new opportunities to develop our offer for those in the gender minority. We are currently working in partnership with DYW to bid for a project to develop collaborative routeways to recruit, prepare and progress women aged 16-24 into STEM careers, including progression into Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships.

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For Health and Social Care courses, understanding of equality legislation is embedded within the curriculum. Where the majority of health and social care students gain formal work experience in the health and social care sector, those on lower level courses benefit from volunteering opportunities. This approach was developed to support students who require opportunities to build more confidence in work setting before taking part in formal work experience.

The College offers a wide range of programmes at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) Levels 1 to 3 and works with a range of other service providers to provide training and skills development for people with learning disabilities. In particular, the College has developed its own wide range of vocational and life skills programmes specifically for people with a learning disability. The range of the programmes has expanded with demand from external organisations. Good examples include the Project Search programme run with NHS Borders to prepare people with learning disabilities for work; Sports programmes for young people at high risk of disengaging from education at school; and the Tenancy programme for people with disabilities to help them become successful tenants. Where necessary the College has credit rated these programmes on the SCQF thus enhancing their value to the learner and to employers. Around 30% of credits in 2019/20 were delivered for students who had disclosed a learning difficulty or disability.

Students enrolled on Supported Programmes have the opportunity to gain work experience through community cafes and the college's restaurant. All courses take part in fundraising activities, volunteering and other community-based activities. In 2019, the college established a Memory Café. Run by students on Supported Programmes, the Memory Café serves as a safe social space for people living with dementia and their friends and families. In preparation for launching this initiative, members of college staff took part in a 'Dementia Friends Session' raising awareness of what it's like to live with dementia and how to support those affected (https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/news-and-events/archive/college-memory-caf-helping-in-fight-against-dementia/).

In the Early Education and Childcare area, a partnership with Scottish Borders Council provides free training for Childcare students to increase health and wellbeing for parents and practitioners. Students also have opportunities to meet with a range of external speakers, including 'Safe Sleep', which provided demonstrations on approaches to prevent cot death.

'Choose to Care' was a set up to give school pupils the opportunity to develop skills related to working in the childcare sector (Pupils get a chance to care at College (borderscollege.ac.uk)). Pupils from local primary schools got involved in various childcare activities, learned about qualifications and experienced what it was like to be a College student. Pupils also got the chance to complete work experience at a local nursery. During the final week of the course pupils were invited along with their parents to celebrate their graduation.

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2.5.3 Students' Association

Borders College Students' Association (BCSA) consists of a Sabbatical Student President, a member of support staff and a team of voluntary Student Officers. BCSA's key purposes are to create a sense of community and belonging for students, and to empower them to influence the work and life of the College. BCSAs main mechanism for feedback is through the Student Experience Committee (SEC) whose membership includes student representatives and senior managers of the College. Meetings are chaired by the Student President.

Although the College works in close partnership with BCSA to ensure students are well represented and that their feedback generates meaningful change, BCSA has full responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the student representative system. This ensures the system is entirely student-led and autonomous.

The President and Vice President of BCSA both have places on the Regional Board and its sub-committees. The Student President and BCSA staff member also attend the Equality and Inclusion Committee.

In 2020, BCSA introduced a series of voluntary liberation posts. These Officers represent the views of students who are likely to face the most significant barriers to learning. BCSA Officers support BCSA to run events and activities for our students, and also take part in working groups and focus groups at college and nationally, providing important input across a range of equality issues.

Each year, BCSA celebrate diversity through their focus on national campaigns including LGBT History Month, Black History Month, and Mental Health Awareness Month. The team works closely with the College's Equality Officer and the Student Services Team to coordinate this activity.

BCSA continuously keep feedback processes under review to ensure they are accessible for all and collecting feedback that is representative of the student experience. Other feedback mechanisms include focus groups with the College Principal, online graffiti walls and a weekly 'Feedback Friday' initiative. Responses are regularly shared with, and discussed by the Senior Leadership Team where actions are identified to address issues raised.

'Equality and Diversity' is included as an agenda point at all SEC meetings. In addition to this, Student Officers work closely with BCSA to make recommendations to their Executive team on the direction and priorities of BCSA on a variety of matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. BCSA have their own operational and strategic plans which provide continuity and focus on equality issues, both within and across years as new Sabbatical Officers are welcomed.

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2.5.4 Student Services

The Student Services Department provides person-centred advice, guidance and support for all students. This support is also available to anyone who requires assistance through the Student Admission and Interview process and ensures that the appropriate support is in place for students throughout their learning journey

Student Services staff liaise closely with the Student Funding Team. Where individuals have specific needs, for example help with childcare costs or special transport arrangements, the individual's needs are assessed and support and/or services are provided following the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council guidance on the use of student support funds. Student support funding is also used to provide equipment and/or resources to individuals who require reasonable adjustments to enable them to access education or support their learning.

First aid mental health support is provided through the Student Services Department where individuals can get advice and guidance regarding various mental health issues and/or be referred to the College based student counselling services or signposted to dedicated mental health services within the community. The department works closely with BCSA to provide additional opportunities and access to various health and wellbeing initiatives. It has also established close community partnership with many local and national agencies.

The Student Advice Centre is a remote reporting centre from where issues relating to hate crime and other criminal matters can be referred on to the police for further investigation. It is useful in providing a sense of security for vulnerable students who may experience abuse and has been used to report gender based violence. Student Welfare Advisors have been trained specifically to provide support and guidance and help students who wish to use the remote reporting facility.

The Student Advice Centre provides wider health and welfare support and provides access to free sanitary products and C-Card services for young students, promoting sexual health awareness and information including the issue of condoms.

The Learning Support team provide support, guidance and advice to students with a wide range of learning needs. The aim is to promote independence, overcome barriers to learning and ensure the best college experience for all learners. Services include assessment to identify support needs, individual and group support in class including additional support outside of timetabled classes to assist in the development of study skills and exam strategies. Provision of specialist equipment and assistive technology and alternative assessment arrangements where required.

The Student Union offers a wide variety of foods with many options for vegan and vegetarian diets. There is a varied choice daily including foods from around the world such as Vietnamese, South African, Jamaican, Mexican, Indian and North African. The selection of foods provided by the chef ensures that a wide variety of religious beliefs are catered, with halal meat sourced for many dishes.

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The iLearn Room provides an accessible study space for all students. An iLearn facilitator is able to offer study support on a 1-1 or group basis.

The Scottish Borders Campus also has a multi-faith prayer room with associated washing facilities.

2.6 Monitoring

The College monitors application, enrolment and success outputs for all protected characteristics. In addition, it also monitors for care experienced, young carers and SIMD. This provides a wide range of data to inform evaluation and action planning. In terms of admissions, the student population has a higher proportion of young people, females, people with disabilities, and people from other European countries than you would expect if compared with the general population of the region.

In terms of achievement, the College notes that there are lower rates with some protected characteristics and other characteristics that can confer a disadvantage. This has led to the College setting specific measures and targets within its Strategic Plan and Regional Outcome Agreement to address these outcome equality issues. The College is well aware that young age, deprivation, mental health issues, dyslexia, autism, care experience and caring responsibilities all impact negatively on the learners' chances of success and has taken actions to address these issues which are included within its equality action plan.

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3. Student Profile

3.1 Gender

The overall gender balance has shifted slightly from 52% of enrolments being female to 50% at the same time male enrolments have increased from 48% to 49%. Those students declaring their gender is in another way has increased slightly from 0.2% in 2017/18 to 0.3% in 2019/20.

3.2 Sexual Orientation

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The number of full time students identifying as LGBT has been rising as a number and percentage over the last three years, as have the numbers of students preferring not to disclose their sexual orientation. For part-time students the number that declare they are LGBT is lower (in 2019-20 it was 3% compared with 8% of full time students) but the number preferring not to say is much higher.

3.3 Disability

The percentage of full time students stating they have a disability has decreased in 2019-20 to 24% the same as it was in 2017-18 whereas part time students declaring they have a disability has decreased from 20% in 2017-18 to 16% in 2019-20.

3.4 Race

Borders College has a higher percentage than the local average percentage of 1% declaring they are from a BME group. The full time percentage has remained at 2% for the last three years and thepart time percentage has increased from 2% in 2018-19 to 5% in 2019-20.

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3. Employment

Where the data within this section has been detailed as percentages this is due to the low numbers in some of the protected characteristics potentially enabling individuals to be identified.

3.1 Recruitment

The HR Department is responsible for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers to the organisation. In line with the Employee Resourcing Policy and Procedures, the HR Department oversees the process to ensure a fair and consistent approach to recruitment. All applicants are required to use the College's application form, which contains monitoring information on all protected characteristics. Short-listing of applicants is carried out by a Senior Leadership Team member and is done without knowledge of any personal information, including name, address, criminal convictions and sensitive data.

Recruitment procedures have been developed to be transparent and measurable, ensuring a fair and consistent approach is followed in each recruitment campaign. During session 2019/20, as part of the AdvanceHE project *Supporting workforce diversity: progressing staff equality in college,* recruitment processes were reviewed and enhancements to the process around recruitment have been implemented to further support equality and inclusion.

The returned monitoring forms are analysed to ensure that applicants who share a relevant protected characteristic are not being disadvantaged. We monitor all protected characteristics for employees and all protected characteristics other than pregnancy/maternity for applicants.

The College has maintained recognition as a Disability Confident Employer and commits to the values and commitments of holding this award.

The following information for annual year 2020 which the HR Department collects and monitors is detailed below.

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Recruitment Statistics for 2020 (January to December)

APPLICATIONS

Total Posts	% of total male	% of total female	% of total disability	% of total ethnicity	% of total age	% of total married/civil partner	% of total religion	% of total sexual orientation
30	41%	59%	4.7%	White 94% (Asian, Black and Mixed race) 1% Undisclosed 5%	<35 37% 36-50 37% 51-60 23% 61+ 3% Undisclosed 0%	Single 32% Married 47% Divorced 6% Cohabit 12% Widow 1% Undisclosed 2 %	None 52% Christian 29% (RC, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist Pakistani , C of S) 44% Undisclosed 16%	Heterosexual 83% Bisexual 2% Gay 2% Undisclosed 13%

APPOINTMENTS

Total Posts	% of total male	% of total female	% of total disability	% of total ethnicity	% of total age	% of total married/civil partner	% of total religion	% of total sexual orientation
25	32%	68%	8%	White 96% Undisclosed 4%	<35 48 % 36-50 36% 51-60 16% 61+ 0%	Single 20% Married 48% Co Habit 16% Divorced 8% Undisclosed 8%	Christian 28% Unknown 12% RC4% None 56%	Heterosexual 88% Undisclosed 12%

No applicants identified as transgender or pregnant or on maternity leave.

The level of applications from these groups is largely representative of the demographics of the area but we would like to focus on encouraging individuals with disabilities or from ethnic minorities to apply to the College from a wider area/population. We ensure that all adverts are available on our web site as well as within Universal Jobmatch, and Indeed.com and are highlighted to the Disability Advisors who work with Job Centre Plus.

3.2 Induction

All new staff are required as part of their probationary period to undertake the College's online induction programme (Engage) as well as the face-to-face induction they receive from their line manager.

Engage provides all new staff with an overview of the College, with introductions from the Principal. Staff are required to undertake online compliance modules including Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity as well as undertaking a training needs analysis. This process is monitored and certificated and staff are unable to successfully complete their probationary period until all modules within Engage have been completed.

3.3 Retention

Voluntary staff turnover for 2020 was 7%. Data on the reason for leaving and the protected characteristics pertaining to those individuals is collected and analysed in order to ensure that individuals with potected characteristics are not being disadvantaged compared to all other employees.

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Statistics relating to this are detailed below.

Retention/Leaver Data 2018

% of total male	% of total female	% of total with disability	% of total ethnicity	% of total age	% of gender reassignment	% of total married/civil partnership	% of total pregnancy/ maternity	% of total religion	% of total sexual orientation
33%	67%	10%	White 100%	<35 29% 36-50 19% 51-60 24% 61+ 28%	0%	Single 29% Married 67% Divorced 4%	0%	None 57% Not disclosed 14% Christian 19% Roman Catholic %5% Quaker 5%	Heterosexual 81% Not disclosed 10% Lesbian 9%

This data shows that more women than men left the College in 2020, which is in line with the balance of women to men in the College.

The HR Department has a process of carrying out exit interviews with staff members who are leaving. This can either be through an online survey or a face-to-face meeting/interview with a member of the HR team. This information is collated and any salient points are fed back to the management team for action.

During session 2020, the majority of staff who completed the survey indicated that they would recommend the College as a good place to work.

3.4 Continuing Professional Development

The College has an HR Strategy and Training and Development Policy and Procedure which support the continuing professional development of all staff regardless of any protected characteristic.

This is an overview and breakdown of the majority of the development activity undertaken. The data relating to the protected characteristics other than gender are so small that they have not been included in this table.

CPD January –December 2018

Date	Training Opportunity	Target	Male:Female Ratio
22nd January 2020	Midas Refresher	Staff required to drive a minbus	3:2
28th January 2020	Data Protection - Dealing with Subject Access Requests	Anyone involved in Subject Access requests (ISLT, HR, Managers)	3:7
28th January 2020	Data Protection - Data Protection, Impact Assessment	Anyone leading a new project/SLT	3:8
28th January 2020	Data Protection - Champions	Data Protection Champions	5:5
18th February 2020	Digital Skills and Evidence Based Teaching Network Follow up	Representation from each team	12:18
18th February 2020	Digital Skills and Evidence Based Teaching Network Follow up	All Teaching Staff	27:41
18th February 2020	Assistive Technology	All Teaching Staff	10:6

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18th February 2020	Student Support – Working Together to Support our Students	All Teaching Staff	5:11
18th February 2020	Twitter	All Teaching Staff	7:15
18th February 2020	Formative assessments with Forms	All Teaching Staff	10:13
18th February 2020	Introduction to H5P	All Teaching Staff	1:5
18th February 2020	More Ways to Share Content on Moodle	All Teaching Staff	3:11
18th February 2020	Clickview	All Teaching Staff	15:16
18th February 2020	Using Moodle Assignment and Turnitin	All Teaching Staff	4:12
18th February 2020	Quizzes using moodle	All Teaching Staff	1:6
24th February 2020	Corporate Parenting	All Managers and Board Members	10:19
26th February 2020	Recruitment	All Managers	6:10
26th February 2020	Investigations	All Managers	1:10
2nd March 2020	Being Well at Work	All Staff	4:7
3rd March 2020	Performance Management	All Managers	9:21
25th June	Office 365	All Support Staff	26:69
24th June	Taking your Teaching online	All Teaching Staff	43:79
26th August	Taking your Teaching online	All Teaching Staff	33:53
15th September 2020	PASMA	Staff required to erect scaffolding	5:0
25th November	Make Time to Save Time	All Teaching Staff	1:8
30th November	Moodle and Teams	All Teaching Staff	12:23
30th November	Staff Guide to Moodle	All Teaching Staff	12:7
30th November	Exploring Teams	All Teaching Staff	5:20
30th November	Sharing Digital Technology	All Teaching Staff	2;3
8-9th December 2020	First Aid at work to include forestry & ATV	Identified staff	2:0

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In addition to the specific development opportunities which were available to all staff during 2020, the College arranged a number of staff training days which were planned and designed to share good practice, pass on knowledge and enhance learning. These sessions were run predominantly for teaching staff although they were open to all staff. The types of subjects which were covered were Assistive Technology Office 365 applications and digital learning and teaching training.

It is the aim of the College to enable each staff member to achieve the standards within the “Promoting Excellence: The Scottish Government’s response to the Review of Scotland’s Colleges 2007” and also the Staff Governance Standards (January 2011). These standards ensure that all staff complete a minimum of 6 days CPD per annum (pro rata for part time staff).

This standard is monitored as part of the College’s Staff Performance and Development Review process and individual staff members are responsible for maintaining records recording both formal and informal CPD. The College enables this to be met through the Staff Development Day programmes. There are four dedicated staff development days during the year in August, November, February and June. These days provide a mix of training on various areas including equalities and sharing good practice and wellbeing initiatives.

The Equality and Inclusion Committee receive reports on the equality training undertaken by staff. Attendance rates at training events and in particular equality training is monitored and reported to both the Equality and Inclusion Committee and the Senior Leadership Team. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions and our period of remote working the on-campus training sessions which had been planned for 2020 were unable to be fulfilled.

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3.5 Staff Performance and Development Review

Each and every member of staff employed by the College has the right to an annual Staff Performance and Development Review (SPDR). There are a number of rights and responsibilities around SPDR that are covered within the policy.

This procedure allows staff at least once per year the opportunity to sit down with their line manager, uninterrupted, to discuss their performance, key strengths, areas for development, training needs and objectives for the coming year. During 2019-20 an additional 6 month interim review was introduced.

This process has been developed in recent years to enable conversations around additional support that may be required by staff with a protected characteristic and to provide a safe environment in which staff members can raise concern or issues around these protected characteristics.

Staff review processes are tightly controlled by the HR Department, which ensures that all staff, regardless of protected characteristic, have the opportunity to engage in SPDR. All documentation is retained electronically, which ensures careful monitoring and enables any actions regarding protected characteristics to be implemented.

The HR Department monitor staff involvement in the process, whether they are permanent, temporary, full or part time. This ensures regular and documented conversations raising any issues to be addressed.

3.6 Employee Profile

The College collects and monitors information on all protected characteristics. Currently the rate of disclosure with regards to age, race, sex, marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity is 100%. With regard to gender reassignment, religion or belief, disability and sexual orientation, disclosure rates are around 85%. By monitoring this data and interrogating the statistics, the College is able to ensure that it meets its obligations under the general duty.

The profile of the College is predominantly female, white, heterosexual, no religion and in the 36-50 age range.

Through our recruitment advertising we have been able to take action to raise our profile as an equal opportunities employer in an attempt to attract individuals with protected characteristics. This has been done through advertising in different media, and by being a Disability Confident Employer. In addition, we hold the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award, the Mentally Healthy Workplace Commendation Award and the LGBT Silver Award.

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We recognise that both LGBT+ and disability groups are under-represented from our staff disclosure information therefore we have been able to target events at under-represented groups and ensure that individuals are not discriminated against, harassed or victimised. These events raise awareness of particular protected characteristics and advance equality of opportunity for all.

Knowing the individuals who share a protected characteristic provides us with opportunities to foster good relations and enhance understanding of the wider staff group.

Information on the current staff profile is detailed below.

Employee Profile

(Shown as a percentage of total staff on payroll as at January 2021.)

Male	Female	Race	Disability	Sexual Orientation
32%	68%	White 96% Other Ethnic, mixed and unknown 4%	8%	Heterosexual 80% Lesbian/Gay 1% Prefer not to say/Unknown 19%

Religion or Belief	Marriage/Civil Partner	Age
Agnostic <1% Christian 34% Church of Scotland 2% Other2% No religion 39% Roman Catholic 1% Prefer not to say 17% Unknown 4%	Married 67% Single 25% Civil Partner <1% Separated 3% Divorced 2% Widow <1% Unknown 2%	<35 12% 36-50 36% 51-60 35% 61+17% Average age of our staff is 49 years old
Pregnancy, Maternity and Paternity		
There is currently 1 member of staff on maternity leave. There are currently 2 members of staff who are pregnant. One member of staff in a same sex relationship is about to commence paternity leave.		
Gender Re-Assignment		
There are currently no individuals who have disclosed gender reassignment at this time.		

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3.7 Occupational Segregation

The College is aware that women and men can tend to work within gender-segregated occupations and the jobs that are most likely to be carried out by women tend to be those associated with low pay. These occupations are often referred to as the ‘5 Cs’ (cleaning, clerical, cashiering, catering and caring). Borders College employs staff in the occupations of cleaning, clerical, catering and caring (student support) which are, as with most other organisations, predominantly filled by female staff. Indeed 68% of staff at Borders College are female. This is an increase of 3% from 2019. Actions to address gendered occupational segregation can include an analysis of the recruitment practices, training opportunities and workplace practices.

Occupational segregation can also result in the existence of a ‘glass ceiling’ where management roles within an institution are predominantly filled by male employees. Within Borders College this is not the case as our Executive Management Team is 100% female. In addition, our Senior Leadership Team is 60% female and 40% male, therefore females are more represented at higher levels within the College.

The College also carries out analysis, through the SFC Annual Staffing Return, on occupational segregation in terms of race and disability. The number of staff holding these protected characteristics within the College is very low, which compromises the analysis of the data. However, figures indicate that more disabled individuals and all of the ethnic minority groups are in part time employment with the College. From this data, the College has taken positive action to target advertising campaigns and encourage applications from these groups. This has had a positive impact with the increase from 6% of staff indicating a disability in 2017 to 8% in 2020 and more disabled staff occupying full time posts

Data on occupational segregation within the College is detailed below and is reported in an alternative format to SFC on an annual basis. As individuals would be able to be identified from this information it is not available on an individual college basis but is available on the SFC website as an aggregated figure for FE in Scotland.

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Occupational Segregation: Vertical segregation (% of total staff)

Occupation	% of total staff Male	% of total staff Female	% of total staff Disabled		% of total staff minority ethnic group	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Cleaning/Catering	1%	5%				
Caring	1%	6%		1%		
Facilities	0%	2%	<1%			
Administration	2%	9%	<1%	1%		
Assessors	3%	10%				
Coordinators/advisors	1%	6%		<1%		
Supervisors		<1%				
Lecturers	14%	21%	1%	2%	1%	
Curriculum Learning Managers	1%	2%	<1%			
Line Manager/ICT	6%	6%	<1%	1%		
Senior Leadership Team	1%	2%	,1%			
Executive Management Team		1%		<1%		

Horizontal segregation (% of staff holding those occupations for each category)

Occupations	Male	Female
Cleaning/Catering	21%	79%
Caring	11%	89%
Facilities		100%
Administration	17%	83%
Assessors	24%	76%
Coordinators/advisors	15%	85%
Supervisors	0%	100%
Lecturers	39%	61%
Curriculum Learning Managers	38%	62%
Line Manager/ICT	53%	47%
Senior Leadership Team	40%	60%
Executive Management Team		100%

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3.8 Human Resource Policies and Procedures

Human Resources have a number of policies and procedures concerned with the rights of employees to fair treatment regardless of any protected characteristic. All of the HR policies, procedures, guides and handbooks are available on the College website.[6]

4. Gender Pay Gap Information

4.1 Equal Pay Statement and Policy

Borders College supports the principles of Equal Pay and is committed to ensuring that there are procedures in place to determine pay and conditions of employment do not discriminate unlawfully and are free from bias.

It is in the College's interest and best practice to operate a pay system that is transparent and is based on objective criteria. The College is committed to taking action to ensure that equal pay is in place for like work, work rated as equivalent and work of equal value. To this end, the College is part of a national job evaluation project involving all support staff. As part of the procurement of the national system, which is provided by FEDRA, the exercise ensured that it had been tested for equalities and would not discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation.

The statistics regarding staff with a disability and from a minority ethnic background within the Borders College are low. The College continues to monitor staff with these protected characteristics in order to ensure that individuals belonging to these groups are not unfairly treated in regard to pay and grading. The College believes that in eliminating bias from pay systems it is promoting positive relations amongst staff, students and the wider community.

This Equal Pay Statement and Policy document provides information in relation to the action already taken by Borders College in furtherance of its commitment to Equal Pay.

Scope

The principle of Equal Pay applies to all employees of the Regional Board of Borders College regardless of full or part-time status, supply, fixed term or permanent contractual status or length of service or any protected characteristic.

[6] http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/college-documents/policy-procedural-documents/

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Objective

The objective of this document is to demonstrate the College's commitment to Equal Pay by detailing the steps taken to date. A further objective is to identify future actions to support good practice to eliminate bias from pay systems and to eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay. This will be achieved in consultation with staff and union representatives.

The objective of this policy and statement is to ensure fair and equal pay and treatment of all staff regardless of any protected characteristic and to work towards the removal of occupational segregation.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Statement and in line with relevant legislation, pay is defined as:

"The ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or kind, which the worker receives directly or indirectly, in respect of his/her employment from his/her employer."

Pay therefore includes pensions and sick pay as well as other benefits of monetary value.

"Like work" is defined as work which is the same or broadly similar. This can be determined by a general consideration of the types of work involved and the skill and knowledge required to do them. Different job titles, job descriptions or contractual obligations do not necessarily rule out a like work claim.

"Work of equal value" is defined as work which is of broadly equal value when compared under headings such as effort, skill and decision making.

"Work rated as equivalent" is defined as work which has achieved the same or a similar number of points under a job evaluation scheme.

Responsibilities

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Regional Board to ensure that employees are treated equitably. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the actions to implement the Equal Pay Statement and Objective are carried out and resourced.

Specific responsibilities for the development and correct implementation of procedures that determine pay lie with the Head of Human Resources.

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that they apply procedures relating to

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recruitment and selection, flexible working, time off and salary placement consistently and appropriately. These procedures are subject to regular review and are available to all staff on the College intranet. Line Managers are supported by the HR department in the operation of these procedures.

Line Managers are also responsible for ensuring that job descriptions accurately reflect the duties undertaken by the post-holder to enable an accurate evaluation of roles.

The Head of HR and Development is responsible for ensuring that this Statement is revised and maintained.

References

- Scotland's Colleges, Close the Gap – Equal Pay Reviews and Job Evaluation, Guidance for Scotland's Colleges
- Equal Opportunities Commission – Code of Practice on Equal Pay
- Close the Gap – Guidance for meeting the specific duty on Equal Pay
- Borders College Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

4.2 Gender Pay Gap

An equal pay audit was carried out in January 2021 and indicates that the College currently has a 9.2% pay gap between men and women. This was calculated using the mean. Nationally the gender pay gap sits at 15.5% therefore the College is much better than average. This pay gap has increased since the last reported figure of 6.9% which is due to more men being appointed to higher graded posts and a number of higher graded female postholders leaving the employment of the College and not being replaced. There remains a disproportionate number of women in lower paid cleaning and administrative roles compared with the overall College gender profile. There are also a disproportionate number of men in higher paid roles such as lecturing and ICT. However, our Senior Leadership Team is 60% women and 40% men, and our Executive Management Team is 100% women, therefore women are more represented at this high paid level within the College.

The pay gap calculated using the median is 30.1%. However, following guidance issued by Close the Gap the pay gap is being reported using the mean.

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Gender Pay Gap by Occupational Group

Occupations	Gender Pay Gap between men and Women by Occupation
Cleaning/Catering	0%
Caring	-16%
Facilities	No women in this category
Administration	-2.19%
Assessors	8.5%
Coordinators/advisors	1.9%
Supervisors	No men in this category
Lecturers	5.2%
Curriculum Learning Managers	0%
Line Manager/ICT	-7.7%
Senior Leadership Team	1%
Executive Management Team	No men in this category

The race pay gap is -18% which tells us that on average, BME staff are paid 18% more than White staff. This is because all BME staff at the college are lecturers.

The disability pay gap is -8% which is lower than the national disability pay gaps which was calculated at 20% in 2020. This tells us that on average, disabled staff are paid 8% more than non-disabled staff. This can be accounted for due to the number of disabled people occupying high-grade positions. It should be noted that there are however an extremely low number of BME and disabled staff on our workforce. There are also no BME staff currently occupying positions in management at any level.

4.3 National Bargaining

Borders College has signed up to National Bargaining within the Scottish FE sector and, as such, has limited ability at present to address gender pay gap issues as a number of the initiatives that could be used to close the gap are now managed nationally. It is hoped that, through National Bargaining the gender pay gap within FE in Scotland will be addressed and reduced.

4.4 Living Wage

The College is currently paying the Living Wage as a minimum to its staff, including apprentices and is an accredited Living Wage employer. It is hoped that this too will help to address the gender pay gap.

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5. Equality Outcomes Progress Report 2017-2021

Borders College Equality Mainstreaming Report (2013-2017) contained 6 equality outcomes. A report on what we have achieved under each of the 6 outcomes is provided below.

Going forward, it is recommended that to improve the efficiency and accuracy of our mainstreaming and equality outcome reporting, and to embed equalities further within the organisation, it would be beneficial to include reporting on activity to address the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty within department self-evaluation processes.

5.1 Equality Outcome 1: Learners from all backgrounds achieve high levels of success

What we said in April 2017

We extended our monitoring of learner recruitment, retention and success so that it covered all protected characteristics as well as young carers, care experienced and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

All departments contributed to meeting equality outcomes and embedded the self-evaluation of progress and actions to meet our outcomes with their self-evaluations and enhancement plans.

Within our management information systems we provided reports that allow departments to analyse recruitment, enrolment and learner success against protected characteristics.

Students with mental health problems, dyslexia and autism have lower achievement rates. For these reasons our equality outcomes action plan concentrated on improving outcomes for these groups. The College has in place an Access and Inclusion Strategy and a Corporate Parenting Plan designed to support this equality outcome.

Three quarters of our full time courses are dominated by one gender of student. We will take action to address this and will put in place a gender action plan associated with the equality outcomes.

Where we are now

The following equality plans and strategies are in place and ensure the college continues to focus on supporting students who face the most persistent inequalities in education;

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- Corporate Parenting Plan
- Equality Outcomes Action Plan
- Access and Inclusion Plan
- British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan
- Mental Health Strategy
- Student Mental Health Agreement

We have achieved the following awards and charters which demonstrates our commitment to supporting our most vulnerable staff and students;

- LGBT Silver Charter
- Going Further for Student Carers Award
- Disability Confidence Employer
- Living Wage Employer
- Carer Positive Employer
- See Me Charter
- Who Cares? Scotland Pledge
- Care Leavers Covenant

Gender segregation continues to exist on courses that are traditionally dominated by one gender. In 2017/18 the proportion of full-time programmes where one gender made up more than 75% of the enrolments was 80% against the target of 73% set in the college's strategic plan for gender balance on courses. In 2019/20, 73% of our full time programmes saw over 75% of enrolments from one gender. In the same year, 25% of all programmes were single sex.

We have used CPD sessions for gender action planning; staff have developed their understanding of the impact of gender bias and segregation on their vocational area to ensure they are equipped to challenge this issue when required. However, our efforts have seemed to reap limited rewards. We continue to work with our staff, students and external partners to improve our gender balance and will continue to encourage all who can influence the choices young people make to challenge the gender stereotyping that reinforces these decisions. For example, we run a number of taster programmes to promote potential careers in vocational areas are traditionally dominated by one gender. This includes women into construction and men into childcare programmes. We also take the opportunity to challenge gender stereotypes in our promotional literature.

Analysis of our retention and success data tells us that on average, LGBT+ and disabled students are more likely to leave college before the end of their course, and less likely to successfully complete their course. Of all disabilities, mental health has the biggest impact on retention and success.

Applicants now provide us with equality monitoring information against all protected characteristics, student carer responsibilities, whether they have been care experienced and SIMD. Given these are characteristics that correlate with lower achievement outcomes, this information helps us identify whether our interventions are

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having an impact on retention and achievement.

The College recognizes the value of the equality data we have to enable us to better identify the challenges that staff and students face, and the impact of our interventions. In 2020 we developed a set of equality reports that allow managers to track retention and achievement across all protected characteristics. This has been populated from 2017 onwards and will help us better identify trends and impact going forward. This work is overseen by the Equality and Inclusion Committee and supported by the Management Information Systems team.

We are working to ensure all of our processes and information are accessible for all. We have established an accessibility group which oversees the work Borders College is doing in order to meet the new accessibility regulations. This includes the development of staff accessibility guidance and CPD and ensuring the appropriate measures are taken to meet current accessibility guidelines. The group includes membership from across support services and curriculum, e.g. learning support, equalities, student services, BCSA, learning and teaching and ISLT. The College is also represented on CDNs Access and Inclusion Network steering group with members of our Learning Support team currently involved in a national review of support for disabled students.

Over the lifespan of this report, Borders College has developed a number of accessible resources. For example, we produced easy read monitoring forms and a short video explaining equality monitoring with the help and support of the College Development Network. The learning support team provide accessibility training for staff and 1-1 support for students, including how to access the assistive technology features available through Office 365. In 2020 the enrolment process was moved online which created a more accessible system for students. This has led to a 2% increase in student enrolled prior to the start of their course.

In order to improve the dedicated pastoral support for students we created posts for 6 Achievement Coaches. These staff members provide 1-1 support for students across all portfolio areas. Achievement Coaches work specifically with students at risk of withdrawing or not achieving. The impact of the Achievement Coach role has been reflected both in student engagement rates and the feedback we receive from students;

“Amazing support offered by my Achievement Coach. I had to change class groups as the other timetable didn’t fit with my caring role for a family member. E-mailed the Achievement Coach and within an hour I’d been swapped over to the other tutor group.” – Borders College student

During the last quarter of 2020, student engagement was sitting at an average of 92% which is likely to be a consequence of the strengthened wrap-around support for students who have been identified as less likely to engage with their learning.

Our Learning Support team ensures all students with a diagnosed disability are provided with the support required. On disclosure of disability, students are contacted by the team to ascertain any learning need, adaptations, additional support in order

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to have this in place for the start of their programme. The Learning Support Team provide opportunities for 1-1 and small group study activities. Advice on a range of assistive technologies is also available.

We regularly monitor our Corporate Parenting Action Plan, reporting to the Regional Board annually. We have continued to develop our Care Aware initiative with a focus on earlier intervention and support. Included in this initiative is our Borders Young Talent Programme (BYT). Funded by the Robertson Trust, the programme aims to widen participation in further and higher education, regardless of background or economic circumstances. BYT provides mentors for student carers, care experienced young people, and students from SIMD areas, to build their confidence and aspiration to progress onto college or university. An external evaluation process of the programme showed that the programme had been effective in engaging with young people in the target groups, had successfully supported young people to sustain their involvement in the Schools Academy Programme, and had enabled students to develop pathways into further education, training and employment. We report on the number of enrolments and have set targets for learner success for care experienced young people in our Regional Outcome Agreement.

"It was the encouragement I got from my mentor that helped me to keep going". *"I've got goals. I know what I want to do. Just now I'm deciding whether to stay on at college for an HNC/HND or whether to go out into the workplace."* – BYT student

We work with a range of external organisations including Who Cares? Scotland, to improve our capacity to support care experienced young people, including the availability of face-to-face training and eLearning modules for staff.

Overall learner success rates for students declaring a mental health problems has declined. In 2018-18 57% full time students declaring mental health problems were successful. This reduced to 44% in 2018-19 and dropped again in 2019-20 to 40%. For students declaring mental health issues alongside other disabilities, success dropped from 63% in 2017-18 to 41% in 2019-20. Between 2017-2020, mental health has been ranked as one of the top 3 reasons for withdrawal across all age groups.

We have therefore increased the number of staff trained in mental health first aid with all front line support staff now trained and we have extended this training to our Achievement Coaches and curricular staff. BCSA offered this training to class representatives in 2018 and 2019 with approx. 45 students trained. It was not possible to run this training in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

In addition, the college has employed a Mental Health Development Officer who started in February 2020 and has introducted an in-house mental health service and mental health counsellors has improved access to mental health support for our students. Given the barriers to accessibility for rural mental health services the Borders College service has created opportunities for students to access support where previously options were limited. The support provided is based on the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE) assessment. This is used as a session-by-session monitoring tool covering anxiety, depression, trauma, physical problems, functioning and risk to self.

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BCSA have been very active in supporting a culture of wellbeing within the college. Each year, they develop a Mental Health Agreement in partnership with the College leading to improved information availability to students on our website on mental health support. BCSA also run a number of events with a wellbeing focus, including the Smash the Stigma campaign and Tiny Changes – an event which raised money for a new local mental health charity.

The Student Services team continue to evaluate their service and make adaptions based on the feedback they receive. The service is conscious that they receive fewer referrals from male students. The wellbeing team is all female which may account for this, however given the prevalence of male suicide and the fact that men are less likely to access support services, the crux of the issue is likely to be far more complex than staff demographics. There also appeared to be less clarity around referral processes in some departments that have a predominantly male cohort, which may also create a barrier to male students accessing the support required.

The national EMA/bursary policy is in place to ensure those students, who are entitled, receive the maximum funding from available sources to ensure that financial difficulty is not an impediment to their studies. In 2020 an additional hardship fund was created to provide support for students who were unable to access funds through EMA and bursary.

We have been a significant resource in helping to support refugees who have come to live in our region and we will continue to play a role both in helping them to learn the language skills and to train or retrain for employment. We provide a variety of ESOL classes across the Borders Region, successfully engaging with Syrian families in the area.

The College achieved the LGBT+ Silver Chartermark for the College in 2017 which is due for renewal in 2021. However, outcomes for LGBT students suggest more work is required to address the inequalities faced by this group. Success rates for LGBT+ students has tracked below the rest of the student population over the past 3 years. In 2017-18 63% LGBT students were successful, compared with 69% heterosexual students and in 2018-19, 55% LGBT students were successful compared with 68% heterosexual students.

Our Response to Covid-19

Throughout COVID-19 Borders College has adapted its support services to ensure a more flexible approach while students are studying remotely. Integral to this process was the creation of a range of Equality Impact Assessments for our response to COVID-19.[7]

Over the course of the pandemic we developed information for students regarding the levels of support available and utilised a number of strategies to communicate key messages in an accessible way, e.g. e-mail, text, social media, via course tutors.

[7] http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/college-documents/equality-impact-assessments/

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We disseminated over 500 laptops and provided data packages and dongles to those students who did not have access to this equipment to ensure that they were enabled to access their studies and engage fully with online and blended learning.

At the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year we developed an online induction module which helped students learn more about the college while they were at home. The module covered the 3 key areas; My Campus, My Learning and My Support. On average student rates the usefulness of the module at 4/5.[8]

BCSA were fully involved in the design of the induction content and coordination of the Welcome Week – an entirely online Freshers Fair including online sessions with key support teams at college and within the community. Over the course of 10 days, BCSA led 65 online sessions with over 650 students. By the end of induction, 95% of students felt welcomed and included at Borders College[9].

What we still need to do

There is still more to do to reduce gender segregation in the choice of vocational path. We will continue to promote traditionally male roles to females and vice versa. We remain concerned that success and retention rates for students with mental health difficulties are consistently lower than overall college success rates. We will continue to focus on how we support people facing mental health difficulties to continue with their studies and achieve their potential. In particular it is important that we focus on intersectionality with gender (males are more at risk of suicide), and age (younger people are more at risk of developing mental health conditions and the impact of Covid-19 on older age groups is likely to create additional pressures leading to periods of poor mental health).

Poorer retention and success rates for LGBT+ and disabled students suggests renewed efforts to address the inequalities faced by these groups is required.

[8] http://www.tartanmonkey.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Big-Student-Survey-Results-Oct-2020.pdf
[9] http://www.tartanmonkey.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Big-Student-Survey-Results-Oct-2020.pdf

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5.2 Equality Outcome 2: Learners are treated with dignity and respect and their views help shape and improve our services

What we said in April 2017

Our approach has been to strengthen the Students' Association and help it grow in independence and confidence.

All full time classes have two class representatives who provide regular feedback to the college on issues relating to learning and teaching.

BCSA takes an active role in promoting equality issues. The class representative and faculty council system provide a useful forum for students to influence the work and life of the College.

BCSA are supported by a full time staff member. Building capacity within BCSA has led to better representation of students. This has helped influence decisions about estate and curriculum.

In the survey of student attitudes, beliefs and characteristics the largest percentage of students said they felt very safe and happy at the College; however harassment because of sexual orientation or disability were the most common forms of bullying reported by the College's students.

Where we are now

BCSA continue to provide a good level of representation at College Board and Committee level and engage well with the National Union of Students (NUS) to influence change at a national level.

The College support BCSA to employ two members of staff; 1 Full Time Student President and 1 Part Time Support Officer.

BCSA has recruited a number of liberation officers who provide representation for some of our most vulnerable groups of students. We currently have in post two LGBT+ Officers, one Women's Officer and three Disability Officers. These posts are voluntary which BCSA has recognised is a challenge in terms of accountability and sustained engagement.

The Students' Associations Support Officer has assumed a dual role as the colleges part-time Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer, which has further embedded equality into the work of the Students' Association. For example, BCSA lead on the development of an annual equalities calendar with monthly equality themes celebrated. This activity is supported across the college by Student Services, HR and

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e-learning teams. Equality activities include the launch of a Gender-Based Violence eLearning module during 16 Days of Action, surveys capturing feedback on men's mental health during Movember, and opportunities for students and staff to engage in discussion around race equality during Black History Month.

During a recent review of the student representative system, BCSA recognised that the Class Representative system. The team moved to a process of direct democracy; rather than asking one representative per class to feedback on the student experience they now survey every single student, three times a year. The survey captures diversity data which helps Student Officers identify opportunities to improve the student experience for protected characteristic groups. The survey helps to highlight any barriers that exists for a number of student groups,. Identifying these issues has enabled the College to mitigate impacts[10].

BCSA develop a Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) which outlines 3-4 key themes the college and BCSA will work on together in order to improve the student experience. The SPA for 2020-21 was approved by the Regional Board at the end of 2020[11]. BCSA also provides monthly updates and an overview of their work each year to the Regional Board[12].

The College audit teaching packs on a sample basis annually. Included within this is a check on whether the material meets acceptable standards of access and equality, and uses appropriate language, images and case studies.

Welfare advisors within student services continue to support, advise and guide students experiencing difficulties and act as advocates or refer to external organisations should this be required. The BCSA team also provide a point of contact for anyone experiencing any behaviour which causes concern or distress.

Our Response to Covid19

Throughout the pandemic BCSA have played a valuable role in advocating for students locally, and nationally through its work with the National Union of Students. Collaborating with the College through the pandemic has helped secure the following for students across Scotland;

- A guarantee that all College students studying health and social care are included in the NHS life insurance scheme,
- An additional £5M digital funding for students
- An additional £5M hardship funding from the Scottish Government.

[10] http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/news-and-events/archive/students-feel-happy-safe-and-prepared-to-learn-at-borders-college/
[11] Link to Borders College Students' Association (2020)
[12] http://www.tartanmonkey.co.uk/bcsa-impact-report-2014-2016/

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There are various mechanisms in which students are able to feedback and the college has enabled the BCSA to incentivise feedback.This has increased engagement with these activities.

What we still need to do

A recent BCSA survey told us that 95% of respondents feel safe and included at Borders College. However, bullying and harassment continues particularly through the use of social media. Part of our response to this will focus on taking steps to raise awareness for the prevalence of racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and gender-based violence on campus and in our community.

Borders College recognises that involving students as co-creators throughout planning and development processes to ensure students have the opportunity to shape decision-making throughout the lifespan of a project. An excellent example of this partnership is illustrated through the way in which students were involved in the development of the college's Strategic Ambition 2020-2025 where the views of 120 students were captured through survey responses and additional feedback was collected through a series of focus groups.

The College provides various ways in which students can inform our developments including focus groups, audits, surveys, open forums with senior staff, compliments and complaints process. Feedback gained from these has direct impact on the learner experience at Borders College.

5.3 Equality Outcome 3: Learners are prepared for life, work and to be responsible citizens

What we said in April 2017

We promote positive attitudes to citizenship and diversity across our curriculum, including making a contribution to society through activities that support others and through work. We promote this activity through our website news items.

Learner involvement in the wider college activity has improved, with learner representatives taking a more active involvement. The pressure from learners to have a greater say is now evident and the College staff are responding well to the challenge this creates.

We reviewed and rewrote our Learner Engagement Strategy with it becoming one of our main strategies in support of our corporate plan. This strategy provides guidance and direction for us as we develop our approach to learner empowerment, in particular through the development of the Student Association and the partnership agreement.

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Where we are now

We continue to promote positive attitudes to citizenship and diversity across our curriculum, including making a contribution to society through activities that support others and through work. Examples include:

- Growing the Young Persons Guarantee (Growing the Young Person's Guarantee (borderscollege.ac.uk)
- Inclusiveness at the Forefront as College Renews it's Status as a Disability Confident Employer (Inclusiveness at the forefront as College renews its status as a disability confident employer (borderscollege.ac.uk)
- Stefanie Ovrcomes Challenges to Complete her Studies (Stefanie overcomes challenges to complete her studies (borderscollege.ac.uk)
- College commended for its Commitment to Student Carers (College commended for its commitment to Student Carers (borderscollege.ac.uk)
- Winners of Lantra Scotland's Pretigious ALBAS announced (Winners of Lantra Scotland's prestigious ALBAS announced (borderscollege.ac.uk)

Borders College promotes volunteering opportunities for students, including working as part of the Students' Association team. During the 2020-21 induction, BCSA ran sessions with Volunteer Centre Borders to promote the benefits of volunteering. A Borders College student won the Local Hero award for the support they offered to local brain injury charity 'Heads Together', and for their volunteer work with BCSA[13]

As part of the wider curriculum offer students are expected to take part in work placement activity as part of their study programmes. This allows them to develop employability skills and experience realistic working environments.

The curriculum are currently working on a proposal to undertake a project which would involve working in collaboration with industry to develop a sustainable pipeline to recruit, prepare and progress women 16-24 into STEM careers which will include progression routes in to both Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships in STEM occupations.

Students are encouraged to undertake client initiated projects or a community project related to their studies. Graphic Design students undertook a project for "Duns Play Fest" supporting a community initiative to market and promote community arts. Horse Care students support the local Riding for the Disabled charity by preparing horses and assisting with delivery of weekly riding sessions at our off-campus riding school. Sport students promote health and wellbeing by running hockey tournaments, indoor athletic events to school pupils across the Borders. Mountain bike students deliver riding and rider safety courses at local primary schools. The mountain bike course proudly boasts that one of their students Polly Henderson is an acclaimed International sportswoman in a predominately male sport.

[13] http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/news-and-events/joe-named-local-hero-at-volunteer-awards/

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Our Response to COVID-19

We have a strong focus on preparation for work, making use of work placements, work experience and realistic work environment to support our students to prepare for all aspects of work. Covid-19 has affected our ability to provide student work placements, however we have prioritised access into the building for those on practical courses so they can access the realistic work environments that are offered at the college.

What we still need to do

We must commit to continue to celebrate diversity, promote inclusive and safe environment for all and actively challenge discriminatory behaviour and language. As we move towards post COVID we will refocus our efforts in training and developing staff awareness of equality issues experienced by our learners. We also recognise the importance of re-establishing close collaboration with employers in order to resurrect work placement opportunities.

5.4 Equality Outcome 4: Staff feel valued and have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills and to progress in their careers

What we said in April 2017

We provide a comprehensive programme of training and development as well as being able to provide opportunities for staff to attend external training events and conferences to develop their knowledge and skills.

We offer a City & Guilds Licentiateship Award in Learning and Development to enable staff to develop and progress in their careers and to gain recognised qualifications.

We undertake an annual Employee Engagement survey which enables us to measure staff satisfaction and asks staff if they feel valued.

Staff must complete core elearning modules in order to complete probation. This includes those that promote equality and diversity. Induction of new staff also includes an introduction to the College's equality duties and legal requirements.

The College has introduced the living wage for its employees. This has helped to close the gender pay gap.

Recruitment processes include taking positive action for disabled applicants, and following HR best practice to avoid unfair discrimination.

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We promote the right of all employees to have an individual review with their manager.

We are committed to offering training and development to all staff, regardless of circumstances, within our priorities and resources. As a consequence of this commitment we have high numbers of academic staff teacher trained, whether full or part time.

Training and development of staff in all aspects of the equality duty will remain an important feature of all continuing professional development days. We have a proportionately higher rate of female staff, due in part to societal job segregation and the higher proportion of support staff and part time roles at the College. We have considered what we can do to tackle this, and our action plan details initiatives such as equality awareness training, and training and development activities.

The percentage of ethnic minority staff compares well with local demographics. We realise that our staff disability disclosure rate of 5% is low compared with research from the Scottish Government which shows that 20% of the population in Scotland have a disability. We plan to take action to address this, and will think of ways to encourage staff to disclose a disability, and make them aware of the support available.

Where we are now

We continue to provide a comprehensive programme of training and development as well as being able to provide opportunities for staff to attend external training events and conferences to develop their knowledge and skills.

We now undertake a biennial Employee Engagement survey which enables us to measure staff satisfaction and asks staff if they feel valued.

CPD programmes include training on LGBT+, transgender awareness, care experienced individuals and Gender-Based Violence Awareness.

A review of staff CPD has identified that engagement with equalities CPD is challenging. Typically we find that the majority of attendees are female support staff. We are also aware that there are barriers to some of our lower paid staff (e.g. cleaning staff) being able to access training. Often this is related to part-time working and digital literacy. It is important that all staff have equitable access to training and support. We will be exploring ways to make our training more accessible for those who are currently not accessing it.

SLT identified a need to provide more engaging equalities CPD that incorporates real-life case studies where possible. The HR department and Equalities Officer are working closely to deliver this.

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We have launched new compliance eLearning modules for staff which serve to ensure Borders College is more aware of supporting our most vulnerable individuals. Modules include:

- Gender-Based Violence Awareness training
- Corporate Parenting training
- Understanding Mental Health training
- Autism Awareness training

Our Response to COVID-19

Throughout COVID-19 the College has focussed on strategies to improve staff wellbeing. The majority of this work has been developed in consultation with staff via meetings of the Wider Leadership Team and the Wellbeing Group. Examples of wellbeing initiatives include;

- Staff Coffee Club to catch-up or share experiences.
- Weekly ‘protected time’ for all staff which cannot be used for meetings of emails
- 2 hours protected CPD time to update on new technology or book onto a 1-1 or group session.
- More access to college buildings to allow small groups of staff to meet
- A programme of social events led by the Wellbeing Group including weekly cook-alongs, quiz nights and Christmas activities
- One feel Good Day per month for staff to invest in mental and physical health. During these days, out of offices should be switched on and staff are encouraged to take a break from the screen and do something outside if possible.

What we still need to do

In some areas, there is a hesitancy for academic staff to engage aspects of student support. This is largely borne from the understandable worry that this will add more to already demanding workloads. However, in order to appropriately safeguard our students it is important that we improve attendance rates for equalities CPD, and in particular encourage more male staff and more teaching staff to attend.

It is important we ensure our training opportunities are accessible to all. We will explore the barriers that exist and work to overcome these to ensure all staff are afforded the same development opportunities while working at Borders College.

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5.5 Equality Outcome 5: The college community is at least representative of the local community and offers a model of good practice in the promotion of opportunities for individuals with protected characteristics

What we said in April 2017

We want to ensure there is fair access to our services, employment and our contracts regardless of an individual's characteristics. We monitor the applications and recruitment of students and staff to understand trends and in planning to take positive action where this is deemed necessary. Having done this for several years we are fully aware of the trends in many occupational areas. Locally, these are similar to the national trends; the most noticeable of which is the gender differences in several occupational areas. This has an impact on our gender pay gap with far more women in the lower paid occupations.

We continue to have a gender pay gap as the larger proportion of women in the whole workforce and within management positions is insufficient to compensate for the impact of the much larger proportion of women in the lower paid jobs.

Our Regional Board's membership by gender for the last two years has been 60% women and 40% men. It has signed up to the 50/50 by 2020 pledge on gender and is keen to be recognised as a Board that promotes diversity. It is looking at how it can improve its diversity further by engaging with local groups that support diversity and will look to co-opt members that will help it become more diverse. It recognises that diversity amongst its membership will help in its function of leading a regional, community-based college.

Where we are now

During our advertising campaigns to recruit new volunteer members to our Regional Board we took a proactive approach to encouraging applications from underrepresented groups. Adverts identified that we were especially keen to hear from individuals from groups who were currently under-represented on Boards of Scottish public bodies, such as women, disabled people, ethnic minorities and people aged under 50. As a consequence, we now have a Regional Board that has a gender balance but recognise that there is more we need to do to have representation from people with other protected characteristics. We scrutinise our promotional material to ensure that it promotes the education and training services we provide in a non-discriminatory way. We are proactive in creating images that challenge stereotypes and promotes diversity, particularly in challenging gender stereotypes.

We began a staff disability project with Advance HE which was suspended as a result of Covid-19. However, initial work on this project increased disability disclosure

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rates by 2%. We plan to continue this work to further improve disclosure rates. We also acknowledge we have very low LGBT+ disclosure rates among our staff cohort (1%). In order to increase these disclosures we must create a more inclusive environment for LGBT+ people. We appreciate that the rural nature of the Scottish Borders has a wider impact on people's ability to feel comfortable to come out at work. However, we have a responsibility to play our part in making the Borders an inclusive place to live and work.

Borders College worked in partnership with BCSA to become the first college in Scotland to achieve the Silver LGBT+ Charter of Rights, awarded by LGBT Youth in September 2017. BCSA has advocated for LGBT+ students and has worked with HR to arrange more recently transgender awareness training for staff. Borders College, BCSA and LGBT advocates with the College should continue to ensure all staff are taking an active role in improving LGBT inclusion at Borders College.

In 2020 BCSA appointed two LGBT+ Officers who provide vital support to BCSA to progress LGBT+ initiatives, including facilitating LGBT groups and online forums, and developing campaigns to address appropriate LGBT+ language and use of pronouns.

We review our admissions procedure annually, taking feedback from both students and staff. We believe that fair access to our courses is achieved by having a transparent admissions procedure based on best practice and with a clear appeals process in place. Our admissions policy is designed to provide fair access and to ensure that applicants are directed to the most appropriate course for their needs and ambitions.

We have updated our procurement policy and procedure to ensure that subcontractors are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

We regularly share opportunities for staff to learn more about equalities issues. These include webinars and networking opportunities to learn and discuss the following;

- Race equality
- LGBT+
- Gender-Based Violence
- Disability inclusion

Our response to COVID-19

The College has worked with Hey Girls to develop an online ordering service that ensures free sanitary products are delivered to students during lockdown and as Covid-19 restrictions continue. To date a total of 1,224 sanitary products have been distributed through the online ordering system.

Following feedback that disabled students are finding it difficult to access exercise during Covid-19, we have promoted a range of accessible online exercise activities through Scottish Disability Sport. These include yoga, stretching, high intensity

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interval training and wheelchair-based exercise. We have extended these opportunities to staff through the Wellbeing Group.

During induction BCSA provided opportunities for students from protected characteristic groups to access support through online information sessions delivered by organisations including LGBT Youth Scotland and NHS Borders.

BCSA created closed online groups for a range of student groups. This provides a space for students to meet each other while learning from home;

- BCSA Empowering Women, 13 members
- BCSA Student Parents, 11 members
- BCSA Disabled students, 6 members
- BCSA Student Carers, 2 members
- BCSA LGBT+ Social Space, 10 members
- BCSA Mature Students, 21 members
- BCSA Black Students, 2 members
- BCSA Think Positive (Mental Health), 16 members
- BCSA LGBT+ Representation, 7 members

What we still need to do

There is still a need for us to increase diversity disclosure rates, with particular focus on disability and LGBT+. We will continue to work in this to improve in this area, which will include a review of all recruitment and staff induction processes.

Our Charter is due for renewal in 2021. In order to progress our approach to supporting LGBT+ people, we should consider progression to the Gold standard.

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5.6 Equality Outcome 6: Users of our facilities and services can access them easily

What we said in April 2017

Scottish Borders Campus was audited by Capability Scotland following refurbishment in 2009. The report concluded that the team were impressed by the standard of access at the campus and their recommended actions were addressed through the previous Equality Action Plan 2013-17.

The report noted Borders College is already an exemplar of good practice, Capability Scotland's team of Disability Equality trainers have delivered training to a significant number of staff, with this focus continuing over the last four years and will continue for the duration of this plan. The report is available on the College website[14].

We offer a wide range of student services and have a Student Advice Centre at the main campus, with drop in clinics available at the College's other campuses. Services available include; personal and emotional support; help with financial planning including accessing eligible support funding and benefits; advice and support to find suitable accommodation and/or access childcare; first aid support for mental health issues with student services staff working closely with appropriate external support agencies. There is also a service for sexual health issues for young people including C-Card and C-Card+ and access to free sanitary products.

The Student Advice Centre at the main campus is a recognised Remote Reporting Centre for Lothian and Borders Police.

Good use is made of the learning support service. Achievement rates for students using this service are the same as for the student population apart from mental health issues, dyslexia and autism. The Learning Support Team will work over the duration of this plan to address this through increasing specialist knowledge and intervention and the increasing use of technology to support independence in learning and for employment.

Where we are now

We have completed work in the library, creating a disabled toilet and installing a power assisted door at its entrance. A portable hearing loop is now available at the main campus reception.

We offer training in working with people with disabilities as part of our Continuous Professional Development Programme. This programme has included training

[14] http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/downloads/Scottish%20Borders%20Campus%20Final%20Report%2021.08.12.pdf

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sessions on Creating a Level Playing Field, Working with Individuals with Autism, Working with Individuals with Downs Syndrome and a number of training sessions on supporting students with poor mental health.

Our student advice services are promoted well within the College with high numbers of students reporting awareness of the services.

The range of services being used by students has extended, with a focus on developing individual resilience and independence in addressing barriers to learning. The Learning Support team are currently supporting between 150-175 students, covering a wide range of learning difficulties. There continues to be a high demand for this service but the team work very closely with academic and support staff to ensure that learners receive the right help at the right time to support achievement of their chosen programme. There is also an increased emphasis on developing learning support strategies to encourage learners to be independent.

The Student Services and BCSA team work closely together to promote a range of services to students, including C-Card, C-Card+, food banks and free breakfasts, online mental health service 'Together All' and more recently a free delivery service for any student requiring sanitary products.

Our Response to Covid-19

An Equality Impact Assessment was developed as we planned to bring staff and students back onto campus[15] . Within the EIA we made careful consideration to the equality impact of any changes made to the estate, including the addition of one-way systems, signage and related communications. Key recommendations included ensuring individual risk assessments were completed for those at higher risk of contracting COVID-19, ensuring accessible signage was in place, maintaining disabled access and rest points throughout one-way systems, giving continued access to the colleges multi-faith prayer room and developing processes to identify and support those exempt from wearing face coverings.

All staff were required to complete a COVID-19 Individual Risk Assessment before returning to campus. Developed by Scottish Government, it helps staff determine their 'Covid age' to ensure reasonable adjustments are implemented for any staff at risk.

In order to tackle digital poverty, and to ensure the college was able to continue operating effectively we provided digital devices for 540 students and 170 staff, and 20 myfi internet devices for those with poor internet connection. VPNs were also provided from 170 staff to enable remote access to all internal IT systems. In addition to this, a WLT WhatsApp group and central Covid e-mail account were established to allow key messages to be communicated quickly.

[15] http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/downloads/EIA%20-%20Return%20to%20Campus%20STUDENT%20Focus.pdf

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What we still need to do

According to a recent BCSA survey, disabled students identified barriers to accessing various student services[16]. Ensuring services, processes and communications are accessible for all is very important and we will ensure this continues to be a focus going forward.

Through student feedback we are aware that students with invisible disabilities continue to face challenge. It is important we ensure staff are aware of the impact these challenges can have on disabled students.

The accessibility audit completed in 2009 covered our largest campus at Galashiels. To ensure our entire estate is accessible for all we will carry out audits for our sites at Hawick, Newtown and Tweedbank

[16] http://www.tartanmonkey.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Intersectional-Analysis-Student-Survey-1-Oct-2020.pdf

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