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REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

Subject: Equality Outcomes and Action Plan 2021-2025	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☒ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☐
Prepared by: H Anderson	**Date:** 23 February 2021

Purpose:
An action plan to identify the key areas for development relating to equalities, diversity and inclusion.

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

Executive Summary:

As a listed public body, we are required to publish new equality outcomes every four years. The Equality Outcomes and Action Plan presents our equality outcomes and associated actions.

Where the mainstreaming report recognises the great work Borders College currently does in relation to equalities, this forward-looking document identifies opportunities to improve our organisational approach to EDI.

Equality outcomes should be developed through the analysis of robust evidence. To develop ours, we have utilised institutional, local and national data, staff and student consultation, research and consultation with protected characteristic groups or their representatives.

EO1 - At Borders College, we will reduce gender imbalance in subject areas where there is a gender split of more than 75%
Rationale: There continues to be a gender split of >75% across Construction, Creative Industries, Health and Social Care, Sport and Outdoor Activities and STEM.
Key actions: To continue with marketing and outreach, review the curriculum to eliminate gender bias and take positive action to recruit minority genders to subject areas and support services.

EO2 - At Borders College, we will improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce
Rationale: Low declaration rates (specifically for sexual orientation and disability) and lack of diversity in staff profile data.
Key actions: To review recruitment processes and our approach to inclusion, deliver equalities training for line managers and review bullying and harassment policies.

EO3 - At Borders College, retention and success rates for protected characteristic groups will be close to the average of the student population
Rationale: Retention and success is lower for students who are disabled, LGB and BME, mental health has the biggest impact in retention across all recorded disabilities.
Key actions: To review accessibility of communications, services and facilities,

provide equalities training and guidance for staff, develop initiatives to combat issues that have a disproportionate impact on particular groups and embed wellbeing across the curriculum.

EO4 - At Borders College, staff and students will feel more confidence to report hate incidents and harassment
Rationale: Some students and staff are not aware of how to recognise and report harassment and hate crime, low disclosure rates across student and staff groups, national research shows that female students are significantly affected by gender-based violence on campus.

Key actions: To evaluate and promote reporting procedures, provide training, run awareness-raising initiatives and develop Equally Safe action plan to address violence against women and girls.

This report must be published in an accessible location on our website no later than 30 April 2021. An easy-read version will also be produced and published before this date.

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

The College is required to publish an update against our equality outcomes no later than 30 April 2023.

Recommendation:

To accept the recommendation of the CQC to approve the Equality Outcomes and Action Plan 2021-2025

Previous Committee Approvals: Equalities & Inclusion, CQC

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

Borders College

Equality Outcomes and Action Plan 2021-2025

April 2021

Equality Outcomes and Action Plan

Foreword by the Principal

I am delighted to introduce Borders College's equality outcomes and action plan. This plan supports our Strategic Ambition by advancing equality of opportunity for all students of Borders College to be successful in their chosen programme of study and reach their full potential as Global Citizens. Our plan meets the requirements of the general duty of the Equality Act and provides a platform for change in how we can further embed equality in all that we do at Borders College.

Our values based culture empowers staff and students to make a valuable contribution to their learning, work and life. We promote an environment that is inclusive and inspiring and we are determined to make sure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

In everything we do, we will consider how we can make sure that we never unconsciously or consciously discriminate against individuals or groups of people, and that we promote equality of access and opportunity. We believe that our four equality outcomes capture these intentions and efforts.

Our approach is described in detail in the document. The practical steps to be taken to achieve our outcomes are presented as an action plan. We believe that the outcomes and the action plan will help us meet our strategic, legal and moral obligations. We will report on our progress annually and review our outcomes every two years.

We can only achieve our goals with the involvement and contribution of staff, learners, and our partners. We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in helping us develop these.

Angela Cox

Foreword by Interim Chair of the Regional Board

As interim Chair of Borders College Regional Board I am pleased to confirm that equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the College's purpose and recently launched Strategic Ambition.

The College primarily creates opportunities for members of our communities within Scottish Borders and the wider South of Scotland to thrive and reach their goals irrespective of their backgrounds and prior learning experiences. Our Board recruits its members from a wide range of disciplines and is reflective of the communities it serves. Board members, along with staff, are sensitive to the challenges and opportunities afforded by the distinctive nature of the region and its urban and rural communities.

The Board is committed to Borders College continuing to be a fair and ethical place in which to work and study.

Elaine Acaster

During the previous PSED reporting cycle, the outcomes we set ourselves were broad. Although this meant we could be flexible with how we tackle issues of inequality, it also created challenges in terms of effectively measuring the impact of our work. For an overview of the activity we undertook towards our Equality Outcomes for the 2017-2021 PSED cycle, please refer to our Mainstreaming report (insert link).

As we develop new equality outcomes we have the opportunity to review and reflect on our approach. We intend to make the following changes to the way we develop, implement and monitor outcomes going forward;

- We will improve the evidence base used in setting outcomes, including better use of baselines to measure impact.
- We will ensure equality outcomes are focussed
- We will develop more effective ways of tracking progress over the four-year reporting period

The experience of many people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the extent of pre-existing inequalities. In many cases, Government and organisational response to the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities for particular groups[1]. For women, pandemic responses have meant increased demands in terms of childcare, caring responsibilities and unpaid domestic labour. For disabled people, the withdrawal of care and support services and the lack of consultation throughout planning processes has left this group further marginalised. For Black and minority ethnic people, Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on their health and finances as a result of racial discrimination.

Embedded within our equality outcomes is a commitment to address the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on all protected characteristic groups. We will work to advance equality and eliminate discrimination for these individuals through the development of new ways of working, flexible modes of delivery, partnerships with local organisations and robust equality impact assessment processes.

Integral to the process of developing these equality outcomes was the involvement of groups who share a protected characteristic, or their representatives. Our equality outcomes for 2021-2025 have been shaped through consultation with staff, students and local organisations, institutional equalities data and national evidence. The process of developing equality outcomes has been subject to Equality Impact Assessment (insert link).

[1] Scottish Government (2020) 'If Not Now, When?' The Social Renewal Advisory Board Report, not-now-social-renewal-advisory-board-report.pdf, Accessed 23/01/21

Outcome 1: At Borders College, we will reduce gender imbalance in subject areas where there is a gender split of more than 75%

- Across Scotland subject choices continue to show differences based on gender stereotypes, with likely implications for career pathways in later life
- There is a gender balance of >75% across Construction, Creative Industries, Health and Social Care, Sport and Outdoor Activities and STEM
- 27% of 2020-21 full time programmes have more than 25% of males and females enrolled
- Over a quarter of our full time programmes have enrolments from only one gender.

From an early age, gender stereotypes have an influence on the choices that children and young people make in relation to the subjects they choose to study and, later on, the careers paths they take. According to the Scottish Government's 'Is Scotland Fairer' (2018) report, subject choices and career pathways continue to be influenced by gender stereotypes[2]. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has set challenging targets for the college sector with the aim of ensuring that no subject area has a gender disparity of more than 25%/75% by 2030. Although there is no current SFC requirement to produce a Gender Action Plan, national evidence and analysis of our student data shows there is still work to be done to address gender imbalance across many of our subject areas. We accept that addressing this issue requires a larger societal shift involving parents, educators and employers. However, we remain optimistic that we will begin to see the impact of our efforts as we continue to work closely with college staff and local partners to change classroom culture, challenge traditional values and attitudes and address gender inequalities. To address issues of gender inequality will include a combination of outreach, positive action, staff training and awareness-raising. For an update on our progress to address gender imbalance so far, please refer to our 2019 Gender Action Plan update[3]

[2] Equality and Human Right Commission (2018) Is Scotland Fairer? The state of equality and human right 2018', https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/is-britain-fairer-2018-is-scotland-fairer_0.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[3] Borders College (2019) 'Gender Action Plan Update August 2019', http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/downloads/gender_action_planseptember2019.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

Analysis of Student Data: Gender

At Borders College there is a gender balance of >75% across Construction, Creative Industries, Health and Social Care, Sport and Outdoor Activities and STEM. It is still the case that traditionally male-dominated programmes are dominated by males, and traditionally female-dominated programmes are dominated by females.

Mode and Year	Section	Male Including Trans Man	Female Including Transwoman	In another way	Prefer not to say
FT 2017-18	Construction	96%	3%	0%	1%
FT 2018-19	Construction	96%	3%	1%	1%
FT 2019-20	Construction	97%	2%	1%	1%
FT 2017-18	Creative Industries	12%	88%	1%	0%
FT 2018-19	Creative Industries	14%	85%	0%	1%
FT 2019-20	Creative Industries	15%	84%	0%	0%
FT 2017-18	Health and Social Care	10%	90%	0%	0%
FT 2018-19	Health and Social Care	12%	88%	0%	1%
FT 2019-20	Health and Social Care	11%	88%	0%	0%
FT 2017-18	Sport and Outdoor Activities	79%	21%	0%	0%
FT 2018-19	Sport and Outdoor Activities	61%	39%	0%	0%
FT 2019-20	Sport and Outdoor Activities	62%	38%	0%	0%
FT 2017-18	STEM	87%	13%	0%	0%
FT 2018-19	STEM	94%	5%	0%	0%
FT 2019-20	STEM	93%	6%	0%	1%

Key findings;

- Gender balance in Construction has remained largely steady over the last 3 years with between 96% and 97% of all construction students identifying as male.
- Creative Industries has seen a slight shift in the gender balance with a move from 12% of students identifying as male in 2017-18 to 15% in 2019-20.
- Health and Social Care have seen a slight shift of gender balance from 10% male students in 2017-18 to 11% male students in 2019-20.

- Sport and Outdoor Activities has seen a large shift in the gender balance from 21% female in 2017-28 to 38% female in 2019-20, however this is largely due to Horse Care courses coming under this area, which is dominated by female students (94% female in 2018-19 and 96% female in 2019-20).
- STEM has seen an upwards shift in gender balance from 87% male in 2017-18 to 93% male in 2019-20. This was due to the Horse Care courses, which had a larger female cohort moving to Sport and Outdoor Activities. Considering this, STEM has reduced the gender imbalance slightly from 97% in 2017-18 to 93% in 2019-20.

Evidence suggests that a number of barriers exist for women in rural areas including lack of affordable childcare, traditional values leading to gender stereotyping and rural isolation[4]. The persistence of gender stereotyping in rural communities often leads young men and women to make career choices based on 'traditional jobs' for their gender. This can result, for example, in large numbers of women in caring and service professions in rural areas. Similar gender barriers exist for men trying to access careers in health and social care, particularly concerning the challenges men face to providing personal care. The impact of these gender stereotypes continues to be reflected in gender profiles across many of our subject areas.

Students enrolled on courses traditionally dominated by one gender have expressed for a more gender-inclusive environment. For example, some students commented on use of inappropriate language and behaviour and feelings of exclusion and isolation. This appears to be more common in courses where females are in the minority. There are also calls from students to include more diversity within course material. One female student commented;

I'm disappointed that most of the coursework is male-oriented. The introduction of more female lecturers might make a difference – Borders College student

During consultation, staff identified the need to gain better understanding of equalities issues through formal and informal CPD and training. However, we typically find that uptake from this cohort is consistency low. Students expressed the importance of ensuring teaching staff have the confidence to respond appropriately to equalities-related issues; both in terms of effectively addressing inappropriate classroom behaviour and providing support to students disclosing sensitive information.

[4] Scottish Government Social Research (2015) Review of Equality Evidence in Rural Scotland. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2015/02/review-equality-evidence-rural-scotland/documents/review-equality-evidence-rural-scotland/review-equality-evidence-rural-scotland/govscot%3Adocument/00469898.pdf Accessed 23/01/21

A need has also been identified to raise awareness of gender-based violence (GBV) and harassment – this was particularly evident through consultation with student groups. Many are unaware of what constitutes GBV and there is evidence to suggest that instances of gender-based bullying while on campus can go unchallenged. This demonstrates the need for further staff training and broader awareness raising activities across the college to ensure that where instances of GBV occur, victims are well supported and aware of how to access support[5]. Our commitment to addressing GBV is demonstrated through the actions we will take in our 'Harassment and Hate Crime' equality outcome.

Outcome	Characteristic(s)	Evidence	Actions	Measures	Duty
At Borders College, we will reduce gender imbalance in subject areas where there is a gender split of more than 75%	Gender	There continues to be a gender balance of >75% across Construction, Creative Industries, Health and Social Care, Sport and Outdoor Activities and STEM	Curricular areas to put in place marketing, role models and outreach to address gender segregation Curricular areas to be reviewed to mitigate and remove gender bias Identify and address barriers to engaging in equalities CPD Take positive action in recruitment to attract gender minority applications to curricular areas and support services	Monitor student gender profiles by curriculum area and report on these results and design actions to address issues arising from these figures Teaching material is free from gender bias CPD uptake figures More individuals from minority genders are recruited to curricular areas and support services	Equality of Opportunity Foster good relations

[5] Scottish Government (2018). 'Equally Safe'. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/04/equally-safe-scotlands-strategy-prevent-eradicate-violence-against-women-girls/documents/00534791-pdf/00534791-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00534791.pdf. Accessed 25/01/21

Outcome 2: At Borders College, we will improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce.

- 8% staff have disclosed a long term health problem or disability
- 1% staff have disclosed they are LGB
- 19% staff preferred not to disclose sexual orientation
- No staff have disclosed transgender or gender-diverse identity
- 96% staff are White

Compared to national figures, several protected characteristic groups are under-represented in our workforce including disabled people, individuals from Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and those who identify as LGBT+. Protected characteristic groups are also largely under-represented on our Senior Leadership Team and Regional Board, which impacts on our ability to harness the voices of under-represented groups throughout strategic and organisational decision-making processes.

For staff, disclosing equality-related information has a number of benefits. For example, it provides opportunities to discuss disability-related reasonable adjustments and enables involvement in positive action initiatives for under-represented groups.[6] For an organisation, having a clear picture of workforce composition supports better decision-making, provides access to high-quality information that may indicate whether certain groups of staff are disadvantaged, and improves the overall quality of support provided to staff.

Guidance from Advance HE suggest that staff are more likely to engage in diversity monitoring processes if embedded within the organisational strategy for promoting inclusion and accessibility. Ensuring diversity commitments are visible on campus, and celebrating and sharing how diversity monitoring has helped remove barriers for staff and students can improve overall confidence that monitoring processes are beneficial. Visible senior management involvement is also likely to have a positive impact on disclosure rates.[7]

[6] Equality Challenge Unit (2009) 'Developing Staff Disclosure: A Guide to Collecting and Using Equality Data' https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/ecu/developing-staff-disclosure_1573997267.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[7] Equality Challenge Unit (2009) 'Developing Staff Disclosure: A Guide to Collecting and Using Equality Data' https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/ecu/developing-staff-disclosure_1573997267.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

Disability

At Borders College, staff disability disclosure is 8%. In comparison, 19% of the Scottish Borders population and 14.9% of the Scottish working age population have a disability.[8] The means disabled people are under-represented within our workforce.

We recognise that disclosure rates in relation to disability can be low and it is likely that this is not a true reflection of our disability profile, so we will continue to work with staff to encourage self-disclosure. We know from experience that focussed intervention can yield positive results. A 2019 disability project Border College undertook with Advance HE saw an increase of 2% in disability disclosure rates. We are therefore be confident that further progress can be made to improve disclosures for this group.

An Advance HE analysis of disabled staff experiences in college showed that disability and sexual orientation were two of the protected characteristics staff felt least confident in disclosing to their employer. Disabled staff reported that follow-up support was often poor, there were a lack of visible promotion opportunities as promoted posts tended to be filled by non-disabled staff, some college buildings lacked reasonable adjustments, and instances of mental health issues had been poorly handled.[9]

A 2020 report by Glasgow Disability Alliance has highlighted the growing inequalities disabled people face as a result for the pandemic. For example, certain conditions and impairments can put disabled people at greater risk from the virus, and barriers and inequality make disabled people more likely to face digital and financial exclusion and food insecurity[10]. As society recovers from the impact of Covid-19 there is a real risk that disabled people will be left even further behind unless action is taken to harness their voices in our planning. For example, the Scottish Government's 'If Not Now, When?' report (2020) states that the rise in use of digital during the pandemic offers real opportunity for employers to have a meaningful impact on the disability employment gap through the provision of more flexible and remote working opportunities[11].

[8] National Records of Scotland (2011) 'Scotland's Census 2011' https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/home.html. Accessed 23/01/21

[9] Advance HE (2017) 'Equality in Colleges in Scotland', https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/ecu/Equality-in-colleges-in-Scotland-Disabled-Staff-Experiences_1579513576.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[10] Glasgow Disability Alliance (2020) 'Supercharged: A Human Catastrophe. Inequalities, Participation and Human Rights before, during and beyond COVID19'. https://gda.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/GDA%E2%80%93Supercharged-Covid-19Report.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[11] Scottish Government (2020) 'If Not Now, When?' The Social Renewal Advisory Board Report, not-now-social-renewal-advisory-board-report.pdf, Accessed 23/01/21

LGBT+

Since the last census did not collect information on LGBT people we do not have access to local population estimates. However, Stonewall suggests that around 6% of the national population identify as LGBT.[12] There is also no definitive figure for the number of transgender people in Scotland, but the NHS have cited a tentative estimate of 0.5%.[13]

With 1% of staff at Borders College identifying as LGB, and no disclosures of transgender or non-binary identity, it is evident that this group is under-represented in our current workforce. These figures have remained constant over the last 4 years, although the number of staff preferring not to disclose their sexual orientation has fluctuated. In 2017 11% of staff preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation. This rose in to 23% in 2019 and has since fallen to 10% in 2020.

A 2018 report investigating the experiences of employed LGBT people has revealed that many LGBT staff don't feel comfortable enough to disclose their identity at work. One in five respondents were subjected to negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in relation to their LGBT identity, more than a third hid their LGBT identity at work in fear of discrimination, and one in eight wouldn't be confident reporting homophobic or biphobic bullying to their employer. Fewer than half of LGBT staff said that senior managers demonstrated visible commitments to LGBT equality[14]. The fear of discrimination in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity has been cited across multiple sources of LGBT equality research. Key recommendations coming from these reports include developing specific policy and guidance for LGBT and transgender staff, ensuring line managers are appropriately supported through training, and having visible senior management commitment to improving LGBT equality in the workplace.

"It's definitely hard to come out at work, especially in a rural area. There's always a fear of how people will react, particularly when you don't see other LGBT people around you." – Borders College staff member

[12] Public Health Information for Scotland (2020) https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faqs-and-glossary/student-frequently-asked-questions-faqs Accessed 23/01/21

[13] Scottish Public Health Network (2018) 'Health Care Needs Assessment of Gender Identity Services'. https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2018_05_16-HCNA-of-Gender-Identity-Services-1.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[14] Stonewall (2018). 'LGBT in Britain Work Report' https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_work_report.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

Race

Around 1% of the Scottish Borders population and 4% of the national population is from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community. The number of BME staff employed at Borders College is too low to declare in our reporting as it would potentially identify individuals. However, we can confirm that our BME staff population is comparable with the local BME population.

Evidence tells us that BME individuals in the UK are less likely to secure employment, and less likely to gain promotion. One in eight of the working-age population in the UK is from a BME background, yet only one in sixteen top management positions are held by BME staff[15]. At Borders College the race pay gap sits at -18% which tells us that on average BME staff are paid more than White employees. However, this is accounted for by the fact that of the few BME individuals we recruit, all are lecturers and therefore working in a high paygrade comparable to most other occupation groups. There are no BME staff occupying positions in management within Borders College.

The EHRC's 'Race Equality, Employment and Skills: Making Progress' report highlights the importance for organisations to take action to address institutional racism and improving equality for minority ethnic people[16]. The actions outlined below set out to address the recommendations within the report, including to address barriers in recruitment, organisational culture and policy relating to bullying and harassment.

Outcome	Characteristic(s)	Evidence	Actions	Measures	Duty
At Borders College, we will improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce.	Disability Gender Gender Reassignment Religion or Belief Sexual Orientation	Low declaration rates and lack of diversity is evident in staff profile data. National evidence suggests that workplace discrimination is a	Review recruitment processes to identify barriers to recruitment of staff from protected characteristic groups Review and critically appraise organisational culture	Monitor staff equality profiles and report on the results. Design actions to address issues arising from these figures. Collect evidence and develop actions based on findings	Equality of Opportunity Eliminate discrimination Foster good relations

[15] CIPD (2017). 'Addressing the Barriers to BAME Employee Career Progression to the Top'. https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/addressing-the-barriers-to-BAME-employee-career-progression-to-the-top_tcm18-33336.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[16] Equality and Human Rights Commission (2020) 'Race Equality, Employment and Skills: Making Progress'. https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/EHRiC/2020/11/15/Race-Equality--Employment-and-Skills--Making-Progress-/EHRiCS052020R3.pdf. Accessed 08/02/2021

		barrier to disclosure of certain protected characteristics	Address unconscious bias through delivery of training and awareness raising activities Deliver equalities training for all line managers, including targeted support for LGBT and disability awareness Review bullying and harassment policy in relation to specific protected characteristic groups. Support with staff guidance where appropriate.	Monitor training uptake and report on these figures Policy and guidance published Updates where relevant and introduction of staff guidance documents	

Outcome 3: At Borders College, retention and success rates for protected characteristic groups are close to the average of the student population

- Retention and success is lower for disabled students than non-disabled students
- Of all disabilities, mental health conditions have the biggest impact on retention and success
- Retention and success for LGB students is lower than heterosexual students
- LGBT+ students are more likely to experience mental health issues
- Retention and success is lower for BME students
- Rurality is a barrier to accessing support

Between 2017-20 a trend of consistently poorer outcomes for certain protected characteristic groups is evident, in particular for disabled and LGBT+ students. The impact of the pandemic has exacerbated inequality for many protected characteristic groups and we must be mindful of the unique challenges these individuals face as we plan our approach to addressing inequality.

Consultation with students has revealed that where some individuals have flourished in an online environment, others have encountered barriers to learning from home. Students lacking space found managing responsibilities around childcare, home-schooling and learning particularly difficult. The Scottish Government's 'If Not Now, When?' report has highlighted this as an issue that disproportionately affects female students and is intensified for disabled women[17].

"Having two children, I have to juggle everything when they are home from school. Their homework, my work, also running a house. It's more difficult when I am learning from home." – Borders College student

LGBT+ students across Scotland have also reported more barriers to home learning with some students sharing that they need to hide who they are around their families (Scottish Government, 2020)[18].

Food insecurity has long been challenge with a reported 9% of adults across the UK concerned about running out of food. Despite significant government investment to tackle this issue, it continues to be a concern for many with a reported 61% increase in foodbank use across the Trussell Trust network[19]. Before the pandemic, the Students' Association were operating numerous initiatives to tack food insecurity including on-campus food banks, free breakfast packs and 'Free Food Fridays'. These projects were popular and despite good

[17] Scottish Government (2020) 'If Not Now, When?' The Social Renewal Advisory Board Report, not-now-social-renewal-advisory-board-report.pdf, Accessed 23/01/21

[18] Scottish Government (2020) 'If Not Now, When?' The Social Renewal Advisory Board Report, not-now-social-renewal-advisory-board-report.pdf, Accessed 23/01/21

[19] Scottish Government (2020) 'If Not Now, When?' The Social Renewal Advisory Board Report, not-now-social-renewal-advisory-board-report.pdf, Accessed 23/01/21

links with local supermarkets who provided large volumes of food items, the team often struggled to keep up with demand. Throughout the pandemic, the Students' Association and Student Services team have continued to field student enquiries relating to food insecurity. However with limited access to campus, providing support for these individuals throughout the pandemic has been challenging.

Disabled people and individuals on low incomes are among those most likely affected by food insecurity due to insecure work and inadequate benefit levels[20]. We must continue to recognise the impact food insecurity can have on our learners, and ensure our staff have a good awareness of the groups most likely to be at risk so we can target our support to those who most need it.

Barriers to learning also exist in terms of access to digital services. Again, this issue is likely to affect some groups more than others. For example, disabled people and older people are less likely to have access to the internet and more likely to lack the skills and confidence to use digital tools or to engage meaningfully with online learning. During our consultations, disabled students shared their concerns around participating in online lessons. We heard from one group whose anxiety was a barrier to asking lecturer's questions and speaking out when lessons were moving too quickly. All agreed this had a negative impact on their learning experience.

"Because of my brain condition it takes me a little longer to process things than anybody else. I write things down as they are spoken and write things up at night. I don't like to be put on the spot." – Borders College student

[20] Scottish Government (2016). 'Dignity. Ending Hunger Together in Scotland'. https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/independent-report/2016/06/dignity-ending-hunger-together-scotland-report-independendent-working-group-food/documents/00502395-pdf/00502395-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00502395.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

Student Data: Disability

The percentage of full time students disclosing a disability decreased in 2019-20 to 24% to the same as it was in 2017-18. This is higher than local population estimates which suggest that 19% of people in the Scottish Borders have a long-term health condition or disability (Census 2011). For part time students, disability declaration has decreased from 20% in 2017-18 to 16% in 2019-20. This is slightly lower than local population estimates. Across all years, more students disclose disabilities on full-time courses compared with part-time courses.

Retention Rates for Disabled Students

Retention for disabled students is lower than for non-disabled students. Although retention rates appear to have increased in from 2018-19 (69%) to 2019-20 (74%), the number of students declaring they had a disability has decreased from 2018-19 to 2019-20 by 6%. For students of all age groups, mental health is consistently one of the top three reasons for withdrawal.

As the table below shows, retention rates for students declaring multiple disabilities is higher than for those stating one disability. This is likely to be due to the wrap-around support provided to those who disclose multiple learning disabilities. For part time courses, we see the opposite where those declaring multiple disabilities are typically less likely to stay at college. Feedback from staff suggests that although learning support services extend to part-time students, the level and availability of support provided is dependent on the course studied. This may account for the poorer retention of this group.

Year	**Full Time % Retention one disability**	**Full Time % Retention Mental Health only**	**Full Time % Retention two or more disabilities**	**Full Time % Retention Mental Health Declared and other disabilities**
2017-18	75%	65%	73%	67%
2018-19	66%	50%	75%	70%
2019-20	73%	64%	75%	68%

Year	**Part Time % Retention one disability**	**Part Time % Retention Mental Health only**	**Part Time % Retention two or more disabilities**	**Part Time % Retention Mental Health Declared and other disabilities**
2017-18	90%	90%	86%	80%
2018-19	88%	87%	79%	77%
2019-20	86%	84%	84%	90%

Of all recorded disabilities, mental health conditions have the greatest impact on retention. In 2018-19 this dipped as low as 50%. Support staff report that the majority of students that reach out do so at crisis point. In 2019-20, 93% of student support referrals cited mental health or personal wellbeing as a reason for referral.

The intersectionality between gender and mental health reveals that barriers to accessing support are greater for men than women. Of those receiving ongoing support for mental health through Borders College counselling services, only 36% were male. This correlates with data showing that only 36% of referrals to NHS talking therapies are for men. Societal expectations, traditional gender roles and lower levels of emotional literacy play a role in why men are less likely to get help for mental health problems.[21]

Access to support services in rural areas is challenging for a number of reasons. Not only are these services typically underfunded and therefore less available, but issues such an anonymity in small rural communities can affect the accessibility too. Similar issues exist across other services, such as drug awareness, counselling, and sexual health services. From the feedback we have received from students, barriers to accessibility can sometimes extend to college services.

It is interesting to note that a high proportion of students who have disclosed a disability access our support services[22]. In a survey of 364 students, 45% respondents disclosing mental health issues had engaged with Student Services, 50% had contacted the ISLT team and 57% had contacted the learning support team. This reinforces the importance of keeping accessibility at the heart of our support offer.

Success Rates for Disabled Students

Success rates for 2019-20 appear to be lower than previous years (16% lower for disabled students and 18% lower for non-disabled students). This could be attributed to;

- The ongoing impact of Covid-19 on mental health.
- The hospital-based ‘Project Search’ course, which is attended by disabled students, was unable to run placements last year. This course is running for a further year to support students to achieve. The extension has had an impact on the 2019-20 success figures.
- A number of courses in the Supported Programmes area have been removed to promote inclusion for disabled students on mainstream programmes. The impact of this change on disabled students’ success rates is unknown but we intend to explore this and identify additional support requirements where necessary.

[21] Mental Health Foundation (2020). Men and Mental Health. Men and mental health | Mental Health Foundation. Accessed 23/01/21
[22] Borders College Students’ Association (2020). Equalities Analysis: BCSA Survey’. http://www.tartanmonkey.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Intersectional-Analysis-Student-Survey-1-Oct-2020.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

It is important to note that Covid-19 has had an impact on our ability to accurately analyse success and retention data for 2019-20. Further analysis is therefore required to ascertain the reliability of these results.

Staff feedback highlighted a number of potential barriers to accessing learning support and suggests there is more work to be done to improve the accessibility of learning support for students of all levels.

"In general, I feel that [students] do not exactly understand what the learning support role in the college is, or there is a stigma for younger students to ask for help if they have not received this in the past… As of last week we are still receiving forms to support students. This can be down to students not knowing what support is available to them or they are anxious about people knowing that they have a learning need and are now in a position where they are so far behind, they are really struggling. It also may be down to staff … not knowing about the services that we provide so they will not be able to pass the information on to their students." – Borders College staff member

Student Data: Sexual Orientation

Between 2017-2020 the number of full-time students identifying as LGBT+ has risen. The number of students choosing not to disclose their sexual orientation has also increased which suggests that barriers continue to exist for LGBT+ coming out in the college environment. For part-time students, the number preferring not to share their sexual orientation is much higher. This may be because students completing work-based courses and Modern Apprenticeships are concerned about how this information may be associated with their employment records.

Retention Rates for LGBT Students

Retention for full-time LGBT+ students is lower than for heterosexual students. Figures have remained relatively consistent between 2017-2020. Retention rates for part-time students is better across all categories. In 2018-19 there was no difference in retention rates between heterosexual and LGBT+ students. However, in 2019-20 there was a marked 16% downward variation in retention for those declaring they were LGBT+.

Success Rates for LGBT students

Our data shows that LGBT+ students are less likely to be successful than heterosexual students. In 2017-18, 63% LGBT+ students were successful compared to 69% of heterosexual students. In 2018-19, 55% LGBT+ students were successful compared to 68% heterosexual students.

National evidence shows that LGBT people often anticipate some level of discrimination while at college, university or in a modern apprenticeship with instances of discrimination occurring in some subject areas more than others. Stonewall Scotland reported that 23% LGBT+ people believe they will face discrimination at college or university and 16% feel uncomfortable being open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. More than half (54%) believed they would be discriminated against in construction and engineering apprenticeships and 54% of gay and bisexual men expected to face discrimination when studying sports subjects. It is therefore likely that fear of discrimination may influence a student's decision to disclose their sexual orientation to the college.[23]

There is also evidence to suggest that LGBT people are more likely to experience mental health issues. This in turn could affect an individual's ability to complete their course. LGBT Scotland's (2017) report on life in Scotland for LGBT+ young people showed that 84% of LGBT young people and 96% of transgender young people had experienced mental health problems, and 50% LGBT young people and 63% of transgender young people experienced suicidal thoughts and behaviours. Nearly all respondents (94% LGBT young people

[23] Stonewall Scotland (2014) Your Services Your Say: LGBT Peoples Experiences of Public Services in Scotland https://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/system/files/ysys_report__lgbt_2014.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

and 95% transgender young people) said bullying had negatively affected their education and 63% LGBT and 68% transgender young people said it had negatively affected their attainment. 9% LGBT young people and 27% transgender young people reported leaving education as a result of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in the learning environment[24]. In 2019-20, 28% of LGBT+ students at Borders College stated they had a mental health condition. LGBT students at Borders College are also more likely to leave college than heterosexual students.

When we asked LGBT+ students how we can better support them, they identified the following: Strong support networks; Knowing you are not alone; Good access to support services; Staff that are aware of how to support LGBT+ people; Safe spaces for LGBT+ people.

Student Data: Age

Success and Retention Rates by Age Group

[24] LGBT Youth Scotland (2017). 'Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People'. https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1354/life-in-scotland-for-lgbt-young-people.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

Analysis of student retention by age shows that the most significant increases in withdrawal appear in the under 16 and over 24 age groups. However, the number of students in the under 16 group is substantially lower than any other cohort so percentage figures will be skewed for this group (e.g. in 2019-20 there were just 17 students in this category).

Research has shown that young adults are more likely to report stress arising from the pandemic than the population as a whole with 18-24 year olds most likely to report hopelessness, loneliness and suicidal thoughts and feelings. The impact of the pandemic on young people, including curtailed education, reduced job prospects and less contact with friends, has meant this is a period of especially high risk for experiencing mental health issues.[25] The volume of referrals received by Borders College mental health and wellbeing services made by young people correlates with the apparent rise in young people experiencing mental health issues.

Our focus on mental health impacts for younger students does not mean attention should be detracted from older cohorts. Suicide is currently the biggest killer of men under the age of 45, with men aged 40-49 having the highest suicide rates in the UK. As shown in the table below, the most common reason for withdrawal in the past 3 years for over 24s has been mental health or poor physical health/poor attendance.

Over24 Age Group

Reason	**17/18**	**Reason**	**18/19**	**Reason**	**19/20**
Personal/Domestic-mental Health	26%	Personal/Domestic- mental Health	20%	Poor Physical Health/ Poor Attendance	19%
Enrolled but never attended	23%	Entering Employment	19%	Personal/Domestic-mental Health	16%
Entering Employment/ Poor Attendance	9%	Enrolled but never Attended/Poor Physical Health	13%	Enrolled but never attended	14%

A sharp increase in withdrawal was observed for this group in 2019-20 (+9% from 2018-19). Although withdrawal increased in 2019-20 across all groups, the over 24s saw the biggest rise. This may be due to the social and economic impacts of Covid-19. For example, individuals in this age group are more likely to have caring responsibilities, have a requirement to balance work and education, and may

[25] Mental Health Foundation (2020). Coronavirus. The Divergence of Mental Health Experiences during the Pandemic. https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/MHF%20The%20COVID-19%20Pandemic%202.pdf. Accessed 23/01/2021

face increased financial responsibilities. It may also be that support services are altogether more accessible for younger students and more work required to address the gap in adult services and the accessibility of our own support to reduce the number of withdrawals in this group. The loss of local employers and increased levels of redundancy means that more older people will seek opportunities to upskill and retrain, therefore numbers of students in this age group are likely to increase. This makes it all the more important to monitor trends and develop more effective support mechanisms for this age group.

Student Data: Race

The full time percentage of BME students has remained at 2% for the last three years while the part time percentage has moved from 3% in 2017-18 to 2% in 2018-19 and then increased to 5% in 2019-20. Over the past 3 years, the BME student population has tracked higher than the local BME population which currently sits at around 1% (Census, 2011).

Retention Rates for BME students

BME students on full time courses have lower retention rates than those from a White background. However this is flipped for the part time students as those from a BME background have higher retention rates. This is not the case in 2019-20 where there was a drop in part time retention from 2018-19 by 9%.

Success Rates for BME students

BME students on full-time courses achieve a much lower percentage success rate than White students. It should be noted that the number of students stating they are from a BME background is very small and this can have an adverse effect on percentage figures. However, the percentage less achieving on a full time course from a BME origin is as follows 2017-18 -10%, 2018-19 -14%, 2019-20 -9%.

The attainment gap for BME students is becoming an increasing cause for concern. Evidence has shown that a student's race and ethnicity can significantly affect their outcomes. For example, White students are 13% more likely to achieve a first- or upper-second-

class degree then BME students.[26] This correlates with the BME attainment gap at Borders College which is on average 11% across the past 3 years. A Scottish Government report addressing race inequality in Scotland has suggested that the promotion of anti-racist education is low, and that racist behaviour and incidents remain a serious problem in many areas of Scotland.[27]

Outcome	Characteristic(s)	Evidence	Actions	Measures	Duty
At Borders College, we will work to ensure retention and success rates for protected characteristic groups are close to the average of the student population	Disability Sexual Orientation Age Race	Retention and success rates are lower for disabled, LGBT and BME students Younger students are at high risk of experiencing mental health issues Students in the 24+ age group are more likely to withdraw from College Males of all ages are at higher risk of suicide, particularly between the ages of 40-49	Review communication strategies leading to the promotion of inclusive, accessible communication for all Embed lived experience of people with protected characteristics, or their representatives, into all planning Review accessibility of services and facilities for protected characteristic groups with particular focus on disability and LGBT, including renewed accessibility audits of all college campuses Provide relevant equalities training for staff Develop guidance to provide staff with the knowledge and	Retention and success rates for students in these groups resemble the average results for the student body as a whole. Robust equality impact assessments completed including evidence of consultation with protected characteristic groups Enhancement of accessibility of facilities and services. Recommendations from accessibility audits are addressed Figures and feedback from staff CPD monitored and reported. Publish relevant guidance	Equality of Opportunity Eliminate discrimination Foster good relations

[26] National Union of Students (2019). Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities': Closing the Gap. https://www.soas.ac.uk/bame-attainment-gap/file140448.pdf. Accessed 25/01/21

[27] Scottish Government (2017). Addressing Race Inequality in Scotland: the way forward.' https://www.gov.scot/publications/addressing-race-inequality-scotland-way-forward/pages/6/. Accessed 25/01/21

			confidence to support a diverse group of students Continue to raise awareness for mental health with specific focus on addressing the issues surrounding men's mental health Develop curriculum that reflects the experience of minority groups. Develop initiatives to combat issues that have a disproportionate impact on particular groups i.e. food insecurity and digital poverty Embed wellbeing across all curriculum Explore the impact of the reduction of Supported Programme courses on the success of disabled students	Increase referrals for support from all students. Increase referrals for support from male students Review to content of curriculum to ensure it reflects a diverse range of backgrounds, for example including LGBT and BME. Uptake of initiatives, improved outcomes for specific groups Evidence of wellbeing activity across all curricular areas Identify whether this is a contributing factor to success rates of these groups. Explore additional support measures.	

Outcome 4: At Borders College, staff and students will feel more confident to report hate crime and harassment.

- There has been an increase in the number of hate crime charges in 2019-20
- Disclosures of hate crime and harassment remain low for staff and students at Borders College

During the pandemic, increased reporting of hate crime has been observed across Scotland[28]. Racially aggravated crime remains the most commonly reported with an increase of 4% compared to 2018-19. Sexual orientation aggravated crime is the second most commonly reported type of hate crime with an increase in 24% of charges in 2019-20. There was an increase of 24% in religiously aggravated charges and an increase by 29% in disability aggravated charges. Charges with an aggravation of transgender identity increased by 2.5%. These figures show that hate crime is on the rise. However, the increase could also be suggestive that there is a growing confidence among victims to report their experiences.

Despite the national increase in hate crime reporting, Borders College continues to receive minimal disclosures from both students and staff. We are aware of two disclosures from students in 2019-20 and 0 staff disclosures during the same period. From our consultations it is apparent that individuals are often unaware of what constitutes a hate crime, aren't aware they can report their experiences to the college, or would choose not to tell someone.

The Scottish Government set out key recommendations to tackle and reduce bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and sexual harassment in their 2018 'Is Scotland Fairer?' report where it has been highlighted that organisations should develop robust recording and monitoring processes for instances of bullying and harassment and use this data to inform plans to tackle these issues[29]. Currently Borders College has no accurate and centralised way of reporting this information. It could therefore be the case that more disclosures have been made, with information being held by individuals supporting the victims. Some anecdotal evidence suggests this may be the case. Given our current reporting mechanisms are inadequate; a significant improvement in the accessibility of our reporting mechanisms is required over the coming years.

[28] Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (2020). 'Domestic abuse and stalking charges in Scotland 2019-20' https://www.copfs.gov.uk/images/Documents/Statistics/Domestic%20Abuse/Domestic%20Abuse%20and%20stalking%202019-20.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[29] Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018). 'Is Scotland Fairer? The State of Equality and Human Rights 2018'. https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/is-britain-fairer-2018-is-scotland-fairer_0.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

Gender-Based Violence

All too often incidents of violence and abuse against women and girls go unreported and there is significant evidence to suggest that gender-based violence remains a serious issue in Scotland. The Scottish Governments 'Equally Safe Strategy' highlights that 79% of domestic abuse incidents had a female victim and a male perpetrator, and 95% of rapes or attempted rapes recorded by the police where gender known had a female victim.[30]

A report on 'Sexual Violence in Further Education', showed that experiences of unwanted sexual behaviour is commonplace for women in further education. In a survey of 544 UK-based further education students, 75% of respondents had experienced an unwanted sexual experience, 28% had been pressured into establishing an unwanted sexual or romantic relationship, one in three experiences of sexual harassment took place at college and only 14% of those experiencing unwanted sexual behaviour had reported it. A third of respondents reported that the experience(s) had affected their mental health. Disabled students were significantly more likely to experience sexual misconduct than non-disabled respondents.[31] Locally, Scottish Borders Rape Crisis Centre have recorded significantly more incidents of GBV and domestic abuse this year compared to last which is understood to be a combination of improvements in recording and monitoring of information and an increase in survivor disclosure. This evidence strongly indicates that gender-based violence is prevalent on college campuses and that we need to take stronger action to increase understanding of the issue among staff and students, and do more to encourage disclosure.

"Due to Covid everyone is at home and we do not know what goes on behind closed doors. I think this should be a matter that is talked about more and more help is available for those who go through this." – Borders College student

I completely agree it is important to developing a culture where students feel safe to disclose and feel confident when they do that they will be supported. Harassment, hate crime and GBV…is vastly under reported, normalised and accepted. – Scottish Borders Rape Crisis Centre

[30] Scottish Government (2018). 'Equally Safe. Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence against Women and Girls.' https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/04/equally-safe-scotlands-strategy-prevent-eradicate-violence-against-women-girls/documents/00534791-pdf/00534791-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00534791.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[31] National Union of Students (2019) 'Sexual Violence in Further Education'. https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/sexual-violence-in-further-education-report. Accessed 23/01/21

Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia

LGBT+ people are more likely to experience hate crime than heterosexual people with certain LGBT groups found to be at particular risk including gay men, young people and those from Black and Ethnic Minority groups.[32]

According to LGBT Youth Scotland, 92% of LGBT young people and 96% of transgender young people experience homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying during their time in education. Of those who attend college, 25% of LGBT young people and 39% of transgender young people had experienced bullying while studying. 95% LGBT young people who had experienced bullying said it had negatively affected their education and 63% said it have negatively impacted on their attainment. 9% of LGBT young people and 27% of transgender young people left education as a result of bullying in their learning environment[33].

Racism

The Advance HE report 'Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged' revealed that racial harassment is a common but under-reported experience for students and staff[34]. Across Scottish campuses, 24% BME students reported experiences of racial harassment and 1 in 20 said racism had made them leave their studies. More than a quarter of staff reported racist name-calling, insults and jokes. It was also found that students and staff rarely reported racial harassment because they lacked confidence that their institution would address the issue, and were unaware of how to report it. Many institutions were found to have significantly underestimated the level of racism on their campuses and were over-confident in terms of people's willingness to come forward. In cases where informal complaints were raised, for example through their tutor or Student Union, the majority of institutions lacked formalised processes for collecting data on informal complaints.

This research correlates with what we've found at Borders College. In terms of formal complaints regarding race, we recorded just one complaint in 2019-20 which related to racist course content. This low rate of reporting suggests barriers to our current complaint handling processes. In additional to this, there are currently no formalised processes for recording informal complaints relating to race, or indeed any other form of hate crime.

It should also be highlighted that specific inequalities exist from BME individuals living in rural areas. Due to the relatively low numbers of BME people living in these areas, the issue of racism is often overlooked. Studies have found that in rural areas, victims of racist

[32] Hudson-Sharp, N. & Metcalf, H. (2016). 'Inequality among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Groups in the UK: A Review of Evidence' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539682/160719_REPORT_LGBT_evidence_review_NIESR_FINALPDF.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[33] LGBT Youth Scotland (2017). 'Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People'. https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1354/life-in-scotland-for-lgbt-young-people.pdf. Accessed 23/01/21

[34] Equality and Human Rights Commission (2019). 'Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged'. https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged.pdf. Accessed 27/01/21

incidents often feel there is no-one to turn to because of lack on information and BME support services which deters them from seeking help.

To address issues of hate crime and harassment we must first address the low levels of reporting. Only once we have the appropriate and accessible processes in place will we be able to identify the extent of hate crime and harassment on our campuses and begin tackle the emergent issues.

Outcome	**Characteristic(s)**	**Evidence**	**Actions**	**Measures**	**Duty**
At Borders College, staff and students will feel more confident to report hate incidents and harassment.	Gender Gender Reassignment Disability Race Religion or Belief Sexual Orientation	Lack of awareness of how to recognise or report harassment and hate crime Low disclosure rates for hate crime and harassment	Develop robust hate crime and harassment reporting procedures Investigate barriers to complaint-handling procedures Launch Harassment and Hate Crime reporting procedure and deliver associated training Develop and Equally Safe action plan to address violence against women and girls	Incidents of harassment and hate crime are reported Increase in complaints received Procedure published and training delivered Action plan developed and impact recorded	Eliminate discrimination

We found no evidence of inequality relating to the protected characteristics of pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnership. Without this, we are unable to identify the scale and nature of issues and push for action to tackle inequality for these groups. However, we will continue to address equality issues for all protected characteristics for staff and students under Equality Outcome 2 '*At Borders College we will improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce'*, and Equality Outcome 3 '*At Borders College, retention and success rates for protected characteristic groups are close to the average of the student population*.' Where inequalities emerge, we will address these through our mainstreaming activities.

Our approved Equality Outcome Action Plan can be found in *Appendix 1.* Progress will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Equality and Inclusion Committee. A mid-way progress update will be approved by the Board and published on Borders College website in April 2023.

Appendix 1.

Characteristic(s)	Evidence	Actions	Measures	Duty	Progress
Outcome 1: At Borders College, we will reduce gender imbalance in subject areas where there is a gender split of more than 75%					
Gender Sex	There continues to be a gender balance of >75% across Construction, Creative Industries, Health and Social Care, Sport and Outdoor Activities and STEM	Curricular areas to put in place marketing, role models and outreach to address gender segregation Curricular areas to be reviewed to mitigate and remove gender bias Identify and address barriers to engaging in equalities CPD Take positive action in recruitment to attract gender minority applications to curricular areas and support services	Monitor student gender profiles by curriculum area and report on these results and design actions to address issues arising from these figures Teaching material is free from gender bias CPD uptake figures More individuals from minority genders are recruited to curricular areas and support services	Equality of Opportunity	

Characteristic(s)	Evidence	Actions	Measures	Duty	Progress
Outcome 2: At Borders College, we will improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce.					
All, specifically sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and race	Low declaration rates and lack of diversity is evident in staff profile data. National evidence suggests that workplace discrimination is a barrier to disclosure of certain protected characteristics	Review recruitment processes to identify barriers to recruitment of staff from protected characteristic groups Review and critically appraise inclusion in relation to protected characteristic groups Address unconscious bias through delivery of training and awareness raising activities Deliver equalities training for all line managers, including targeted support for LGBT and disability awareness Review bullying and harassment policy in relation to specific protected characteristic groups. Support with staff guidance where appropriate.	Monitor staff equality profiles and report on the results. Design actions to address issues arising from these figures. Collect evidence and develop actions based on findings Monitor training uptake and report on these figures Policy and guidance published Updates where relevant and introduction of staff guidance documents	Equality of opportunity Foster good relations Eliminate discrimination	

Characteristic(s)	Evidence	Actions	Measures	Duty	Progress
Outcome 3: At Borders College, retention and success rates for protected characteristic groups are close to the average of the student population					
All, specifically disability sexual orientation age and race	Retention and success rates are lower for students who are disabled, LGBT and BME. Younger students are at high risk of experiencing mental health issues Students in the 24+ age group are more likely to withdraw from College Males of all ages are at higher risk of suicide, particularly between the ages of 40-49	Review communication strategies leading to the promotion of inclusive, accessible communication for all Embed lived experience of people with protected characteristics, or their representatives, into all planning Review accessibility of services and facilities for protected characteristic groups with particular focus on disability and LGBT, including renewed accessibility audits of all college campuses Provide relevant equalities training for staff Develop guidance to provide staff with the knowledge and confidence to support a diverse group of students	Retention and success rates for students in these groups resemble the average results for the student body as a whole. Robust equality impact assessments completed including evidence of consultation with protected characteristic groups Enhancement of accessibility of facilities and services. Recommendations from accessibility audits are addressed Figures and feedback from staff CPD monitored and reported. Publish relevant guidance Increase referrals for support from all students.	Equality of Opportunity Eliminate discrimination Foster good relations	

		Continue to raise awareness for mental health with specific focus on addressing the issues surrounding men's mental health Develop curriculum that reflects the experience of minority groups. Develop initiatives to combat issues that have a disproportionate impact on particular groups i.e. food insecurity and digital poverty Embed wellbeing across all curriculum Explore the impact of the reduction of Supported Programme courses on the success of disabled students	Increase referrals for support from male students Curriculum reflects a diverse range of backgrounds Increased retention and success for those more likely to experience these issues e.g. SIMD, disabled people. Evidence of wellbeing activity across all curricular areas, increased referrals to student support. Identify whether this is a contributing factor to success rates of these groups. Explore additional support measures.		

Characteristic(s)	Evidence	Actions	Measures	Duty	Progress
Outcome 4: At Borders College, staff and students will feel more confident to report hate incidents and harassment.					
Gender Gender Reassignment Disability Race Religion or Belief Sexual Orientation	Lack of awareness of how to recognise or report harassment and hate crime Low disclosure rates for hate crime and harassment	Improve accessibility of hate crime and harassment reporting procedures Launch Harassment and Hate Crime reporting procedure and deliver associated training Develop and Equally Safe action plan to address violence against women and girls	Incidents of harassment and hate crime are reported Procedure published and training delivered Action plan developed and impact recorded	Eliminate discrimination	