



Equality Mainstreaming Report

April 2023



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## 1. Foreword

### Note from Principal and Chief Executive

Welcome to West College Scotland's Equality Mainstreaming Report which reports on the end of the life cycle of our Equality Outcomes 2021-2023.

We are encouraged by the progress we have made, particularly in connection with our work in wellbeing and digital inclusion which have been nationally recognised through various awards and recognition schemes. EDI is central to our core purpose, integral to everything that we do, and relevant to all our stakeholders.

As a College I think that we can be proud of the work we have carried out in connection with Equality Outcomes 2021-23. Equality Outcomes normally last for four years, however, as these were not normal times, we wanted to make sure that we did everything we could to support our staff and students through the global pandemic. We decided that our Equality Outcomes would last for two years instead of four to help us target action which would have the most impact. As you will see from this report, we successfully navigated the storm to achieve all four of our Equality Outcomes. I have been so impressed with the College community in how we responded to the COVID-19 global crisis. We moved rapidly to protect the interests of staff and students, and we pivoted with ingenuity and innovation. In this fluid situation, we were able to maintain quality standards and engagement with our students. Staff and students deserve recognition for their hard work and dedication.

The work in advancing equality is never complete; whilst we have made good progress in 2021-23 we must now look at our Equality priorities 2023-27. I am pleased through collaboration with staff and students that our Equality Outcomes in the next four years will focus on BAME, Disability, Gender and Gender based Violence, LGBTQIA+ and in the wake of the cost-of-living crisis individuals who are at a socio-economic disadvantage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Connolly', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Liz Connolly, Principal and Chief Executive**

## **2 Introduction**

### **2.1 Who we are**

West College Scotland delivers learning and vocational training to the West Region of Scotland, a catchment area of 1.2 million people, representing 23% of the resident population of Scotland. We have an important presence and deep roots in our main towns of Paisley, Clydebank, and Greenock. Our 'footprint' stretches north of Loch Lomond and south to Barrhead.

The College works across seven local authority boundaries and is committed with its partners and stakeholders to tackle the significant social and economic deprivation experienced by many who live locally to our three campuses (Scot Gov: No One Left Behind 2020). Greenock Town Centre, where our Finnart Street and Waterfront campuses are situated is the most deprived area in Scotland (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020).

As one of Scotland's largest Regional Colleges, we provide education and training to over 20,000 students. The College manages total funds of £70m and we employ around 1,150 staff.

The College is one of the Region's largest employers and is uniquely placed to help shape the West Region's educational landscape and contribute to its social and economic development. The College adds £13m to the region's annual economic output and spends £47m in salaries every year.

The equality outcomes discussed in this report are set within the broader context of our Collective ambition, pride and passion: a vibrant and dynamic College where all staff:

- Are student focused
- Take ownership
- Are honest and trustworthy
- Respect others
- Work together
- Strive for Excellence

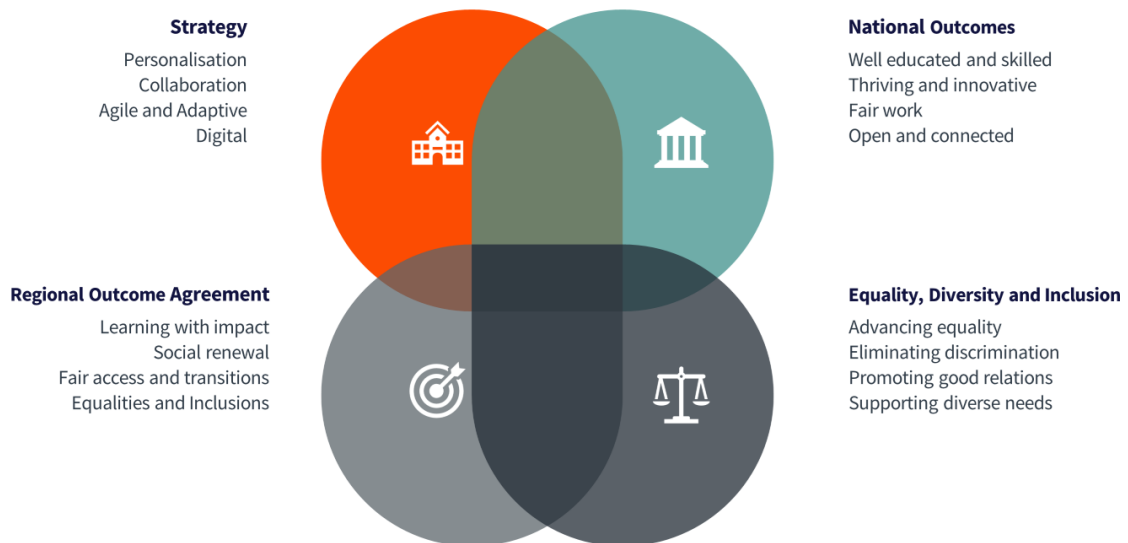
### **2.2 About this report**

In this report we set out our objectives to advance equality and tackle inequalities for the period 2023-2025 and we report on the progress we have made between 2021 and 2023. It demonstrates how, through a wide range of refreshed approaches, initiatives and updates to procedures, West College Scotland is working to embed equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the College and meet our responsibilities as a public sector body.

We use the social model of disability to inform our actions and approach and remain committed to proactively addressing disadvantage faced by anyone on their learning and

employment journey. This covers groups who are not specifically covered by the Equality Act 2010, but are known to have poorer outcomes, for example, those who are care experienced, carers, socio-economically disadvantaged and veterans.

## 2.3 Strategic Context



### 2.3.1 Corporate Strategy

Our Strategy sets out our priorities, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is interwoven throughout our four priorities of Personalisation, Collaboration, Agile and Adaptive and Digital.

### 2.3.2 National Outcomes

Our approach will assist our contribution in achieving Scottish Government's National Outcomes and sector priorities.

- Children and Young People: We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential.
- Education: We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
- Fair Work and Business: We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.
- Human Rights: We respect, protect, and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination,

### 2.3.3 Regional Outcome Agreement

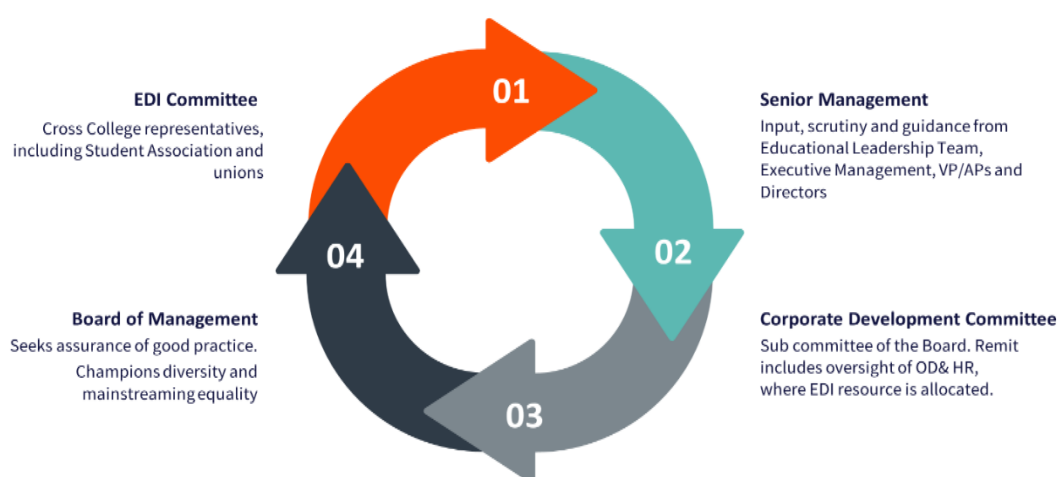
Our equality focus is also aligned with our Regional Outcome Agreement 2022-23, which addresses particular issues for minority students, and set out our intentions to address gaps, advance equality and enhance fair access.

- Fair Access and Transitions
- High Quality Learning, Teaching and Support
- Student Participation and Engagement in their Educational Experience
- Learning with Impact
- Public Health Emergency
- Equalities and Inclusion

## 3. Mainstreaming Equality

“Mainstreaming equality” means making equality integral in all our activities and functions. We aim to integrate equality into the day-to-day working of our organisation to ensure that every decision is informed by the need to minimise discrimination, promote the best possible outcomes and decrease unfairness in Scottish society. Below, we outline the progress which we have made to date.

### 3.1 Governance



Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is responsible for ensuring that our College not only complies with equality legislation but that we go beyond that to embed equality and diversity into the culture of the College. This Committee is chaired by the Director of Organisational Development and HR who is a member of the College’s Senior Management

Team. The Committee is comprised of representatives from across the functions of the College and includes trade union representation.

There are two Senior Management Team Equality Champions, one for WCS as an employer (Director of Organisational Development & HR) and as a provider of high-quality learning and teaching (tbc). Our Board considers equality and diversity in setting WCS's strategic direction, reviewing performance and ensuring good governance of the College.

Our Board of Management plays an integral role in establishing our vision for equality, as well as ensuring that we legally comply with the equality duties. Our governing body is clear on their role of putting robust systems in place to seek assurances that the legal requirements are being met and so that we can demonstrate effectiveness and progress in mainstreaming.

The Student Association is actively involved in this group and its contribution has directly influenced College activities to embed equality in all of our processes and facilities. For example, our attendance of Pride Events in July 2022.

### **3.2 Equality Impact Assessments**

In 2022, we changed the format and process for Equality Impact Assessments. Making it a requirement for the owner of a change to or a new project, product (including curriculum units for learning and teaching), or service to complete an enhanced equality impact assessment at the initiate stage and revisit this prior to implementation. They must have the sponsorship of a senior responsible officer.

### **3.3 Marketing and Communications**

Our marketing and communications activities ensure that equality is mainstreamed in our communications and profile. We ensure that we attract applications from a diverse range of people by advertising courses on a diverse range of websites. Promotional material provides information about the services available for people who share protected characteristics and highlights the zero-tolerance approach which is taken towards any kind of harassment or discrimination. We also review the use of images in communications to ensure that the College promotes equality and tackles stereotypes.

### **3.4 Organisational Development and Human Resources**

Equality and diversity are a fundamental principle in all HR policies and procedures, which are effectively promoted throughout the organisation. We assess the fairness and effectiveness of all HR policies and procedures through workforce monitoring, and annually publish an analysis of staff equality data. In August 2022, Leading Kind published the results of the Equality and Inclusion Assurance Audit that they undertook on behalf of West College Scotland. Some of the recommendations that they put forward were in relation to HR procedures and practices including:

- Having protected characteristics appear in alphabetical order in policies and procedures
- Replacing He/she with gender neutral pronouns in policies and procedures

As new or refreshed policies and procedures are created in line with the WCS policy review process these have been updated to reflect the above.

With the launch of our new Learning Experience Platform, 'Evolve' we have been able to offer self-directed learning on a variety of equality, diversity, and inclusion topics such as Anti-Racism, Black Lives Matter, Bullying and Harassment, Cultural Communication, Equity Vs. Equality, Gender Equality, Gender Identity, How Can We Be More Trans-Inclusive?, Introduction to Neurodiversity, Cultural Bias, and Privilege.

The mandatory modules of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Essentials, Managing Diversity and Unconscious Bias were reviewed and redesigned to focus on practical application through using case studies and real (anonymised) West College Scotland examples. Individuals are required to renew every three years through an automated electronic reminder system which alerts their line manager also.

As a Disability Confident Employer, we work hard to build a culture where staff feel safe to disclose any disability or long-term health condition, and we consult with staff about their perceptions of barriers, issues or concerns, and report back on action taken to address these. Through the provision of our Disability at Work Policy, we make sure that employees know that, should they acquire a disability, or should an existing disability or health condition worsen, every reasonable effort will be made to enable them to continue in their current job or an alternative one.

As a Level 1 "Engaged" Carer Positive status, we have made a commitment to support carers through workplace policies and working practices. We encourage staff to identify themselves as carers and provide support to help them manage their work and caring responsibilities.

We recognise that staff who share protected characteristics can face barriers to progression. The My Conversations approach aims to provide all staff with an opportunity to reflect on and influence their individual career and consider development which will assist career progression. This is a personalised approach which can enable staff to overcome any barriers whether real or perceived.

Our Attendance Management processes aim to identify health problems at an early stage and support the individual. Employees who suffer from ill health are treated respectfully and empathetically, and reasonable adjustments are made to support staff in returning to work. We recognise that disability can be the cause or a contributing factor in absence and performance issues, and we are committed to making every effort to help employees stay in



employment. Our Occupational Health service provides managers and HR with specialist advice on adjustments and rehabilitating employees back into the workplace.

### **3.5 Focus on Preventing Gender Based Violence**

We have been working jointly with the Student Association to develop an effective response to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

The College have submitted a Charter application and met with a representative from Emily Test to consider the panel's feedback and discuss some initial priorities to enable us to "pass the Emily Test". The Charter Award is an internal and external marker: an 'inwards' toolbox for universities and colleges to effectively prevent, intervene and respond to GBV in line with best practice, and an 'outwards' celebration of progress and accountability.

We have also had an initial meeting with White Ribbon Scotland and will be working with them to identify champions within the organisation and to raise awareness of the pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. White Ribbon Scotland is a campaign to involve men in tackling violence against women providing training and information workshops to engage men in our work and give them the skills to stand up to violence against women.

### **3.6 ED&I Initiatives**

The College marked International Women's Day 2022 by recording a webinar with senior female staff which provided an overview their career journeys, some of the challenges they have faced in their careers as women and advice for colleagues. This inspired a further two webinars and the initiation of the WCS ED&I webinar series with other titles including Pride and Racial Equality.

The College engaged with Pride month this year through holding 'Rainbow Office Hours' every Friday in June 2022. This was an opportunity for colleagues to come together and discuss LGBTQIA+ issues, themes in movies, television, literature and more. We also hosted a webinar with colleagues from the LGBT+ community and talked about a wide range of issues including bias in the workplace. The College was represented at both Glasgow Pride marches by members of staff, SMT, the Student Association and the Board of Management.

In September 2022, West College Scotland started the journey to set up three Equality Networks for both staff and students, these were:

- Disability Network
- Pride Network (LGBTQIA+)

- BAME Network

### 3.7 Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

The emergence of the catastrophic global pandemic in March 2020 changed the way we work, learn and teach. Our response to the pandemic was rapid and wide ranging, and despite the restrictions, our progress and success shows our College's capacity to adapt and respond.



We are conscious of the disadvantages protected groups have experienced in recent times, and throughout our response we considered the diverse needs of our staff and students, and how to mitigate disadvantage and advance equality. In particular:

### 3.8 Digital First

In February 2022, WCS launched a new Digital Strategy (2022-2026). At West College Scotland, embracing digital opportunities and developing our digital capabilities is essential in the modern digital world to enable us to excel in delivering the very best educational experience for our students and maximising accessibility for all. The strategy promotes an inclusive and accessible approach using our mantra 'useful for all, essential for some'.

The previous strategy was prepared prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and served the College well during the difficult transitional period which required significant, transformational, and systemic change within the organisation. The successful adoption and implementation of many of the key themes and drivers has resulted in significant successes for the College, when it was recognised for its efforts in Oct 2021 and Nov 2021 winning awards for: The Herald Diversity Awards, Digital Transformation Awards and Best Employer Awards for Use of Digital Technology. To win the 'Diversity Award' is testament to our continued commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The inequality in digital access is often more prevalent with particular groups. There is often a correlation with protected characteristics and socio-economic situation. In Scotland, someone from a Black, Asian or Minority ethnic (BAME) background is nearly twice as likely

to experience poverty as someone from a white Scottish/British background. Similarly, lone parents who are predominantly female, are more likely to be in poverty.

Since April 2021, we have distributed over 3,000 digital devices to support students in need and address inequality of access during and as we recovered from the pandemic. This enabled students to access and engage with new blended models of learning and assessment. We supported and provided access and structure to students off campus learning with online classes being part of the students' normal timetable, replicating standard classroom attendance. We also enabled student access to recorded class sessions for those who cannot attend or to replay later to reinforce learning. We invested in Read and Write text help software for all staff and students as a digital means of supporting all, not just as a critical inclusion tool for those who think, learn and work differently.

### **3.9 Supporting the Wellbeing of Students & Staff**

Support for health, mental health and wellbeing is vital to us all. We have Student Wellbeing Advisors on each campus who are available to have informal appointments with students to support a range of wellbeing needs, whether its study related or anything else. We offer a wide range of wellbeing support, both one to one and as small group workshops – available face-to-face and through Microsoft Teams. The advisors can also signpost to other services (such as counselling) within the college and externally if needed. We also have a Staff Wellbeing Advisor who has a similar role for staff.

A free counselling service is available to all students at West College Scotland and can help students who have mental health issues and feel anxious or depressed. This service, entitled "TIME 4 U" is promoted throughout the College and provides the space to talk on a one-to-one basis with a Student Counsellor.

Our team of student counsellors are complimented by Mental Health First Aiders across our teaching and support teams, and this enables staff to better understand the mental health related issues faced by both students and staff.

The College provide all students access to SilverCloud Online CBT Resource, an online mental health support platform covering support tools dealing with, COVID-19, anxiety, body image and resilience.

The Employee Assistance Programme provided by PAM Assist also includes an app for staff to access information on a wide range of mental health issues.

The C.A.L.M Mindfulness tool, developed by one of our teaching team. Continues to help students and staff cope with the demands of online learning/teaching or any anxiety about being within the College environment. A "Mindfulness safety valve" to release pressure in a healthy, controlled manner is achievable using C.A.L.M. The technique can be used at the start, during or at the end of a lesson. We have also offered 'Mindfulness Matters' to both

staff and students which is a guided meditation that allows staff and students time away from work and study to focus on self.

The organised wellbeing initiatives have proven extremely popular and have included Time to Talk Day, Stress Awareness Month, The Kiltwalk and 'Forward Together' On Campus events for staff.

There are also dedicated wellbeing services for students who are:

- Care Experienced
- Carers
- Estranged
- Veterans

### **3.10 Student Recruitment and Admissions**

In 2021, there was a review of our application system to ensure that it was straightforward, and the language used is clear and plain. The development of the online platform was tested and successfully passed AAA Compliance. Digital capability is not a barrier to completion as the Student Recruitment and Admissions team are happy to provide support to applicants. Adjustments can be made to the application process for students who have a disability. We also assist applicants who have additional requirements, such as those who do not speak English as a first language, or they are unused to online systems. We provide training for staff in Admissions in communicating with people who do not speak English as a first language. We ask applicants to disclose equality data at application stage which is analysed by our College's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee.

Applicants are encouraged to disclose learning differences or health conditions. If such conditions are disclosed, applications are referred to Enabling Services and reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to reach their potential.

Student Induction includes a session on equality and the importance of respecting others. An overview of the College's provision for people from different equality groups is provided. For example, we draw attention to the Sanctuary Room, where students can take time out for their religious beliefs.

We also promote the support available from Enabling Services, as we are aware that students may not feel comfortable disclosing a disability at application as they may feel that it could negatively affect their chances of success. In order to reduce any stigma, we emphasise that the service is available to anybody who needs a bit of support and have found this approach effective.

### **3.11 Equality in Learning and Teaching**

Our view is that quality of learning and teaching is inseparable from equality. We ensure that this is mainstreamed in our curriculum using several approaches. We have developed in-house guidelines for mainstreaming equality in the curriculum to ensure that all learning

and teaching materials are in line with good practice and that where possible our staff raise awareness of inequalities, prejudice, and citizenship matters.

Staff are encouraged to use the audit tool which is used to ensure that learning and teaching materials are systematically checked to review if they could advance equality or raise awareness of good practice. The tool also asks staff to check if the materials contain any reference to stereotypes which can reinforce prejudice. We have added Blackboard Ally to Moodle. Blackboard Ally is a tool that helps you make your course content is accessible to all users. It does this by automatically scanning course content and providing accessibility scores and feedback on how to improve the accessibility of the content. In this way lecturers learn about accessibility and can create resources that are accessible first time.

Essential learning for those responsible for creating learning is the WCS Learning Standards eLearning launched in 2021. The eLearning sets out expectations for digital learning provision for West College Scotland courses. It is designed to help individuals develop engaging, accessible online content which will support learners in their courses.

### **3.12 Assessment Arrangements**

We ensure that we make reasonable adjustments to our assessments process for students with a disability. We take a tailored approach to this by discussing students' particular needs and adjusting the assessment as appropriate. For example, a student may require additional time to complete the assessment, may require a reader or a scribe or may require assistive technology which we are happy to provide. We also avoid assessments on religious festivals, or at times of worship.

### **3.13 Supporting Students with a Disability**

Students with an identified disability or learning need can access additional support if required. This may include support for such examples as mobility needs, visual impairment, hearing impairment, dyslexia or mental health needs.

We supply students with USB wristbands which store assistive technology tools which they can use on their personal computers, and College desktops have a pre-installed suite of assistive technology to meet individual student needs.

We encourage students to let us know of their needs as soon as possible so that an individual meeting can be arranged to work out the best levels of support needed. We recognise that some students may not want to tell us about their requirements at application, and we regularly remind students that our door is always open if they need extra support.

Our students have reported that they have been particularly pleased with software packages which we provide such as Dragon Naturally Speaking. Increasingly, we are finding that digital technology solutions such as digital recordings which can then be automatically transcribed are receiving positive feedback.

Our College complaints handling procedure actively monitors complaints raised by students with a disability and the outcome of their complaint. Trend information is contained in our Annual Complaints Handling Report 2020-21.

### **3.14 Student Engagement**

We have an active relationship with our Student Association, who are involved in equality decision making through consultation and participation within our Equality and Diversity Committee. The President of our Students' Association works hard to ensure that equality considerations are high profile. The Student President has been actively involved in the participating at Pride events and setting up Equality networks for students.

Our Student Stakeholder Experience team regularly arranges focus groups with students to understand more about their experiences at the College and to explore additional ways to tackle barriers for students who share protected characteristics.

### **3.15 Tackling Hate Crime**

We are a third-party reporting centre for Hate Crime which enables staff and students to report potential crimes directly to us, as we understand that not all victims are comfortable with reporting their experiences directly to the police. This provision is particularly relevant for protected groups, who may find visiting police stations intimidating or daunting, or may perceive a comparative lack of support.

### **3.16 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans**

Students with a disability or learning difference requiring special arrangements for support in the event of an emergency evacuation have Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans. These Plans are individually tailored to students' locations and dates on which they will be in attendance. We then seek feedback from students following evacuation alarm tests, and time exits from the campus to ensure that we are providing a safe environment for all. All fire wardens are trained in the use of the evac chair.

### **3.17 British Sign Language Plan**

Our BSL Plan (2018-2024) details how we will improve our services for students and prospective students who use BSL, and how we promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services. The ARC Centre at Greenock Campus provides an integrated space for BSL students and staff to learn, be supported, socialise, interact, and network with each other in a manner which they prefer.

### **3.18 ESOL**

We offer a range of English for Speakers of Other Languages programmes for international students. These courses are designed to prepare students for further study at College or

prepare for entry into university. These programmes have been particularly helpful for refugees to prepare them for living and working in Scotland.

### **3.19 Care Leavers and Looked After Students, Carers, Estranged from Family or from an Armed Forces Family**

West College Scotland is proud to be a Corporate Parent. Our Corporate Parenting Plan outlines both existing support practice and our ambition to ensure we complete our role to the best of our abilities for our care experienced students - potential, current and in the future.

Working with the Lottery-funded Driving Change Project, which aims to improve the support available to young adult carers in Further Education across the UK, we have actively removed some of the barriers that can prevent young carers from accessing continued education, developed new policies and procedures, improved access to bespoke support and raised awareness – including demonstrating good practice in supporting carers in the wider community.

The College has also made a pledge to Stand Alone demonstrating we are publicly committed to supporting students who are studying without the support or approval of a family network.

We have enhanced support arrangements in place for Care Leavers and Looked After Students, Carers, Estranged from Family or from an Armed Forces Family. Our Student Advisory Support Team will offer help and advice about courses, funding and support services to make the transition to college as smooth as possible. This includes help with filling in forms and showing prospective students around the campus. The teamwork in partnership with other staff (e.g., Guidance Tutors) to ensure our students are supported, included, respected, achieving, and able to access the fullest range of services and opportunities.

Staff are supported through various training programmes e.g., Care Experienced Training from Who Cares? Scotland and the Care Experienced Toolkit "Each and Every Child". Launched in June 2021, *'Each and Every Child'* is a new initiative to change hearts and minds on care experience in Scotland, aiming to create a fresh, inspiring narrative to shift public attitudes and improve life chances of children, young people, and their families. The resource is valuable to all staff.

Each year, our College enrolls c. 300 care experienced young people under the age of 26. Support is now available to all students with lived experience of being in the care system regardless of age. The college has therefore updated its use of terminology from Care-Experienced Young Person (CEYP) to Care-Experienced Individual (CEI).





## 4. Progress Towards Achieving Our Equality Outcomes

<p><b>Outcome 1: During and post pandemic, staff and students from protected groups are supported and engaged in the recovery process.</b></p>
<p><b>Rationale:</b></p> <p>Evidence - Variation in Student engagement in online learning; indications of challenges working remotely.</p> <p>Engagement - Staff and Student Association keen to explore the potential new ways of working and learning.</p> <p>Drivers - SG Recovery Strategy – A fairer, greener, and more prosperous Scotland for everyone.</p>
<p><b>Key Methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn from Staff and Students about their pandemic experience.</li> <li>• Systematically consider the needs of protected groups in transition and recovery.</li> <li>• Consider if change can address deep seated challenges faced by protected groups.</li> <li>• Ensure the safety of all our staff and students in the transition and consider the diverse requirements of protected groups.</li> <li>• Compassion and understanding in each other's experience will be demonstrated.</li> <li>• Ensure timely and accessible information is provided about mobilisation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress:</b></p> <p><b>4.1.1 Engagement with Student Association – Transition and Recovery</b></p> <p>We are committed to enhancing the Student Voice/Representation through re-modelled partnership and working constructively with elected student representatives across the College. Elections for student representation are held annually and actively encourage nominations from under-represented groups of students. We have no barriers in place to election self- nomination for either the SA Executive team or our course/class representatives. We offer training and development to all elected representatives through either on campus face to face or online, depending on preference and need. All rep training materials are accessible.</p> <p>During 2021-22 COVID pandemic restrictions continued to impact on the ability of the WCS SA to engage with the whole student body, and the SA struggled to make their presence felt as a body for change and improvement. Despite this, the SA Executive positively engaged with initiatives and management teams across the college and made a substantial contribution to promoting positive health and wellbeing during the ongoing pandemic. The 2020-21 SA President has successfully been returned for another year in office, following early elections in May 2022. Our SA Exec team are fully equipped with appropriate ICT to enable on or off premise working and a dedicated office space is available on each of our main campuses.</p>

A refreshed SA constitution has been developed in partnership with NUS along with an updated partnership agreement between the college and WCS SA. We anticipate that both result in quotas of student reps that mirror our student population. We have dedicated representative posts available for LGBTQ, Care experiences, BAME and gender. A new approach to student representation has been agreed and will be taken forward into session 2022-23 to further encourage under-represented groups to self-nominate and provide support for their election manifesto campaigns.

The College proactively supports awareness of student representation through staff and student induction processes and monitors closely the outcomes and impact for key groups of students. Staff teams undertake self-evaluation and action planning to address any inequity in experience or outcomes for key groups of students and this is monitored through an annual portfolio review process.

#### **4.1.2 Health and Safety**

The consultation forum set up during the pandemic, the Mobilisation Group, came to a natural end as the 2021-22 academic year concluded. It consisted of key advisors from across the College representing Estates, HR, Health and Safety, Curriculum, Information Technology, Finance and Communications, as well as representatives from the recognised trade unions.

#### **4.1.3 Communications and Marketing**

A specific area on the staff and student intranets were set up to house the latest news, updates, guidance, and documents as the pandemic progressed. This ensure that everyone was kept up to date in what was a confusing landscape with changes happening at a UK, Scotland, and Local Authority level.

#### **4.1.4 Hybrid Working Pilot**

Academic year 2021-22 was a pilot year for Hybrid Working – a flexible split between working from home and working from the office. During that time there were three modes of working – Campus, Home, and Hybrid. This allowed for flexibility depending on individual need and responding to the different levels of lockdown from Scottish Government guidance.

#### **4.1.5 Staff Survey 2022**

The 2022 My Voice Survey which had 528 responses has been analysed by the gender, disability, race, gender reassignment and sexual orientation protected characteristics. There was very little difference between those who identified as male and those who identified as female.

In the section on 'Ways of Working' we asked staff to tell us about their hybrid or on campus working. There was a 10% increase in satisfaction when you looked at those who

declared that they had a disability compared to those who said they did not, 100% of BAME colleagues were positive about their ways of working. There was a 4% increase in satisfaction among those who said they were LGB. This indicates a positive management and transition to hybrid working arrangements among these protected characteristics.

#### **4.1.6 Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey 2022**

In April 2022 students at West College Scotland were invited to participate in the Scottish Funding Council's Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES). The SSES is undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council [SFC], which aims to provide a national approach to monitoring student satisfaction and engagement that over time, will provide a consistent basis for college regions to evidence impact and improvement within their outcome agreements.

The survey results are intended to enable SFC and colleges to demonstrate the impact of the sector and its contribution to meeting Scottish Government priorities.

Overall satisfaction was 91%, and increase of 6%, from the previous year. 91% of students also believed they were treated equally and fairly by staff, which was higher than pre-pandemic levels. The college continues to engage with all student groups, ensuring representation of diverse voices through within our feedback processes.

#### **4.1.9 'Forward Together' On Campus Events**

Support was available for staff and students who were anxious about returning to campus including through online information, events, and wellbeing advisors.

Staff were welcomed to 'Go Forward Together' into the new term with dedicated wellbeing days on each campus. Each day consisted of wellbeing related activities, such as yoga, mindfulness, and massage therapies - to encourage staff to take some time out for themselves as well as the opportunity to meet with colleagues old and new over refreshments and light-hearted activities.

#### **4.1.10 New Hybrid Working Guidance**

As we emerge from the pandemic, we are building upon the pilot work and have introduced new ways of working which enable staff to work on campus all the time, or to split their time between being on campus and being at home.

Our recent experience is that hybrid working has brought benefits to both individuals and to the College in terms of work-life balance, flexibility, and productivity. Therefore, it is important that we continue to maximise these benefits. At the same time, when more people are on Campus, it can help to improve the service for our students, customers, and stakeholders. Also, West College Scotland is a community college, and much of the experience is about students interacting and experiencing the College Community on campus, as well as the College staff being visible and available.

We published our Hybrid Working Document in coordination with 'Back Together' on campus events to highlight the three principles of Hybrid Working:

1. The needs of the customer (student or internal/external customer) come first. The best possible level of service is the overriding consideration.
2. Collegiate teamworking must be maintained.
3. All staff contribute to the on-campus experience.

#### **4.1.11 Awards and Recognition**

The Mobilisation Group was recognised through a 2021 staff award for keeping our students and staff safe during the pandemic through the provisions and arrangements put in place and for leading our recovery and return to campus.

In the 2022 Staff Awards the Health and Safety team were awarded 'Team of the Year' for their work during the pandemic.

### **Outcome 2: We stand up to racism and progress race equality.**

#### **Rationale:**

Evidence – Lack of BAME representation at higher grades; gaps in career progression.

Engagement – Highlighted in staff survey, leadership priority.

Drivers - SG Race Equality Framework; Covid-19 has exacerbated longstanding inequalities.

#### **Key Methods:**

- Increase the percentage of BAME staff overall and at management levels.
- Use the Scottish Government Race Equality Toolkit and make changes to progress equality.
- Assess and develop staff's understanding of racism.
- Critically assess and address structural barriers.
- Raise awareness of the impact of unconscious bias and make effective use of project implicit test.
- Publicly promote the College's anti racist approach and be a better ally.

#### **Progress:**

##### **4.2.1 Scottish Government Race Equality Toolkit**

All staff were made aware of the Race Equality Toolkit and given the link in August 2021. With the launch of our new learning experience platform, it is now a core learning resources within the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Category. As part of curriculum planning, all colleagues are asked to put equality at the centre of their pedagogy.

##### **4.2.2 Occupational Segregation**

Whilst overall representation of BAME is low there is no evidence to suggest that there is a particular challenge in any given area. The difference between the percentage of BAME colleagues in teaching and support is 12.9%.

#### **4.2.3 Awareness, Learning and Development**

All colleagues must complete Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion module within 3 months of starting and then refresh every 3 years. Managers complete Managing Diversity and Unconscious Bias in the same timescales (those involved in recruitment also complete the latter). Within the 'Recruitment and Selection' facilitator led workshop there is also an element of inclusion. With the launch of Evolve, we have enhanced and expanded our number of learning initiatives on the subject of race such as: Anti-Racism, Anti-Racist Toolkit, Black Lives Matter, Cultural Communication, Cultural Intelligence, Intersectionality, Overcoming Cultural Bias, Privilege, Toolkits to Support Refugee Integration, Understanding Other Cultures and What is Culture?

#### **4.2.4 Recruitment and Selection**

Recruitment panels receive no personal information about candidates other than the content of their application i.e., they do not know names, D.O.B. or information on any of the protected characteristics. The workshop that is essential for all managers on 'Recruitment and Selection' will be revamped in 2023 as part of the new 'LeadingEdge' People Manager Development Programme.

#### **4.2.5 Project Implicit**

The self-assessments that form part of Project Implicit will be required pre learning as part of the new revamped 'Recruitment and Selection' workshop in the LeadingEdge People Manager Development Programme.

#### **4.2.6 Black History Month**

In October 2022, West College Scotland participated in Black History Month by raising awareness of the theme and stories on social media and the intranet and conducting a webinar on Racial Equality which was hosted by the Organisational Development Manager with our Chair of the Board of Management and Community Outreach Lecturer talking about their experiences of racial inequality in their career journeys.

#### **4.2.7 BAME Staff Representation**

There has been no change to staff representation, however we are pleased to note an increase in BAME representation at a Board of Management level and within the student association. In 2023, we will be engaging with Black Professionals Scotland to understand how we can increase BAME representation.

#### **4.2.8 Student Engagement**

We are in the process of initiating Equality Networks, one of which is for BAME Students and Staff and their allies. The Student Association have been heavily involved in shaping the terms of reference and the proposal and the class rep system will be utilised to onboard members to the networks. Students also participated in their own events to mark Black History Month 2022.

### **Outcome 3: We enhance the wellbeing of our staff and students.**

#### **Rationale:**

Evidence – Increase in staff and student referrals to support; variation in reports of wellbeing.

Engagement – Student Association reports of mental health issues, staff survey noting the experience of anxiety.

Drivers - SG Supporting Scotland's Mental Health Recovery; Shadow GBV Pandemic; NHS overburdened.

#### **Key Methods:**

- Take account of student and staff data to identify key emerging trends and support the development of appropriate actions in relation to wellbeing.
- Further development current college communication mechanisms to promote awareness of positive wellbeing and signpost support.
- Development a staff training matrix to ensure that all college staff have access to appropriate CPD.
- Reduce stigma by talking about this more. Plan, deliver and evaluate promotional campaigns.
- Develop further partner networks to enhance practice, including NHS, SAMH, NUS.
- Develop reporting mechanism and explore how we can enhance support for women who experience Gender Based Violence.

#### **Progress:**

##### **4.3.1 Wellbeing Strategy**

The 2021 Wellbeing Strategy was developed in collaboration with student services, student wellbeing, student association, human resources and organisational development and senior management. The vision states that West College Scotland has the wellbeing of our community at the heart of everything we do. We think that wellness is everyone's business and by working together as a college, we continue to develop an atmosphere where our staff and students thrive. Working towards improving overall wellbeing adopting a mind, body and emotion approach is our vision moving forward as it affects how we feel and our capacity to function. We want to make sure that all our employees and students have the tools, knowledge, skills, and experiences they need to live fulfilled,

worthwhile, and happy lives. The strategy is intended to supplement existing efforts on all aspects of wellness within the College, as well as to complete our prior Student and Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategies.

#### **4.3.2 Students and Mental Health**

During the coronavirus pandemic, West College Scotland's first objective was to significantly improve the level of positive mental health and wellbeing support available to its community.

During lockdown, our staff and students had to quickly adjust to the shift to working online and delivering their role from home. Because of the rapid shift, there was a lot of anxiety, and using the College's wellbeing services became a crucial support mechanism.

Our experience and understanding from past years have shone a light on the isolation, loneliness, depression, grief from losing loved ones, unhealthy eating, lack of exercise, poor sleep and financial worries which our community faced. We have tackled each obstacle head on and are continuing to rise by working hard, expanding assistance through early intervention, and sharing a common aim of putting people at the core of what we do.

As part of our Wellbeing Strategy we have committed to collectively work towards and achieve the Student Mental Health Agreement Project which brings together the student association and institution to work jointly on mental health initiatives on campus.

Essential learning for all staff is the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing learning that forms part of induction. In June 2022 this was relaunched to make it more relevant to the kinds of issues that may arise in West College Scotland, making staff more confident in handling challenges, signposting to the relevant person/service/ information and being aware of the signs to look out for in students.

We continue to support student mental health through our wellbeing service which includes TIME4U Student Counselling, Student Wellbeing Services e.g., Press Pause, drop in to Chill Out and CALM curriculum.

#### **4.3.3 Communications and Marketing**

This year (2022) we launched our on branded version of the MyDay app to fully replace the student Intranet this makes it easier than ever before for students to access information on health and wellbeing. We also launched a new staff intranet area to raise the profile and signpost to the new staff health and wellbeing offer.

The recently launched WCS Wellbeing Facebook and Instagram pages allow College and Community Wellbeing initiatives to be shared across the WCS community. Highlighting local and national support services, sharing coping strategies and tools as well as information around different wellbeing topics, the use of social media allows us to reach staff and student's in an easily accessible way.

#### **4.3.4 Staff and Student Wellbeing Initiatives**

Organised wellbeing initiatives have proven extremely popular and have included Time to Talk Day, Stress Awareness Month and The Kiltwalk, 'Forward Together', our on-Campus staff only events included mindfulness, networking, massages and Paws Against Stress amongst the activities on offer.

Student Wellbeing initiatives were co-ordinated as part of 'Fresher's Week' and there continues to be wellbeing initiatives during lunchtimes, with activities such as colouring, games and social events to combat stress and isolation.

Wellbeing Matters is open to staff and students focusing on relaxation, meditation, positivity, healthy eating, exercise, sleep hygiene, kindness, forgiveness and improving focus.

With the creation of the newly furnished wellbeing spaces, we have seen an increase in the number of student walk ins, whether this be that the student themselves have come along to the space for support or have been encouraged to come along by teaching staff.

#### **4.3.5 Awareness, Learning and Development**

With Evolve we can now offer an expanded and enhanced learning development on wellbeing for staff. The Health and Wellbeing category on Evolve has learning on: 7 Minute Meditation, A Healthy Routine, Baby Loss Awareness, Building Better Habits, Building Better Mental Health, Burnout, Dealing with Stress and Work, Financial Wellbeing, Guided Breathing Exercises, How to Practice Mindfulness, It's Good to Talk, Life Hacks, Managing Burnout, Managing Stress, Menopause Awareness, Positive Self Help, Stigma and Mental Health as well as resources on supporting others including young people.

The Student Wellbeing Team offers workshops to class groups on various wellbeing related topics, such as Stress Management, the Pillars of Wellbeing, Resilience and Anxiety Management. Workshops can be created to respond to the needs of particular groups and are on offer throughout the academic year.

In 2022 we introduced an inclusion calendar which means we can target specific issues or initiatives throughout the year such as Menopause Awareness, Baby Loss Awareness, Prostate Cancer Awareness etc.

#### **4.3.6 Gender Based Violence**



We have been working jointly with the Student Association to develop an effective response to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

The college has submitted a Charter application and met with a representative from Emily Test to consider the panel's feedback and discuss some initial priorities to enable us to "pass the Emily Test".

We have also had an initial meeting with White Ribbon Scotland and will be working with them to identify champions within the organisation and to raise awareness of the pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women.

#### **4.3.7 Partnership Working**

A key outcome of our new Wellbeing Strategy is to *"Provide consistent, cohesive, safe, effective care and support for staff working in partnership with external agencies"* we already have established partnerships with local authorities, White Ribbon, Emily Test, Who Cares Scotland?, LGBT Youth Scotland. We will continue to expand, broaden, and deepen our partnerships.

We also work with many out of hours support areas Breathing Space, Samaritans, NHS24 111, Childline, Shout Crisis Messenger and Crisis Text Line.

#### **4.3.8 Staff Wellbeing Survey**

The Staff Wellbeing Survey was issued in March 2022 in order to gauge staff feedback on existing wellbeing provision within the College and inform service provision going forward. 10% of staff engaged with the survey, with a relatively even split of responses from teaching and support staff.

The results of the survey highlighted that staff would be more likely to access support for their mental health/wellbeing from 'in-house' supports, such as line managers or the Staff Wellbeing Advisor, as opposed to the current EAP service. It was also noted that initiatives such as the Step Count Challenge, My Health Scotland App and mindfulness sessions contributed to positive wellbeing amongst staff.

#### **4.3.9 Student Satisfaction Survey 2022**

Our overall national survey student satisfaction rate for 2022 was 91%, an increase of 6% on the preceding year, but still short of the success rate of 95% in Session 2018-19, noting that there was no satisfaction survey carried out in 2019-20. We are hopeful that the increasing trend will continue as we emerge post COVID into a new learning environment. In our SSES responses, 92% of students reported that their course helped develop necessary knowledge and skills for the workplace. During 2022-23 and beyond, the College will place high priority on the skills development of our students. We have set up a Meta Performance Centre to ensure that meta skills are recognised, embedded, and

articulated throughout all courses. Staff training materials and support are available from the college Essential Skills Team.

#### **4.3.10 Staff Survey 2022**

In the 2022 Staff Engagement Survey, My Voice we asked a series of questions about Health and Wellbeing, and they all received a very positive response:

- 73.5% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they felt comfortable talking to their manager about their health and wellbeing.
- 75.6% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they had a good work/life balance.
- 82% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they knew how to access support and resources for their health and wellbeing

#### **4.3.11 Awards and Recognition**

Two years in the same member of the Wellbeing Team was awarded the Staff Award for Wellbeing.

In November 2022, West College Scotland was awarded the Health and Wellbeing Award at the Inverclyde Business Awards (ICON).

### **Outcome 4: We are digitally inclusive.**

#### **Rationale:**

Evidence – Correlation with socio economic status and protected groups; variation in digital skills of staff and students.; analysis of SIMD data of our students for prioritised device support.

Engagement – Concerns expressed re student access to digital devices; staff reporting experiencing challenges working remotely.

Drivers - SG Realising Scotland's Potential in a Digital World; CDN Our Digital Ambition for Colleges in Scotland; WCS Digital Strategy.

#### **Key Methods:**

- That we meet the diverse skills development needs of protected groups.
- Target provision of devices to students most in need.
- Adapt, edit, and create digital learning and teaching resources to ensure an inclusive digital learning environment.
- Create supportive guidelines for all staff on digital content creation through the WCS Learning Standards;
- Create supportive video animation (with BSL and subtitled versions) for students on digital etiquette;
- Advancing equality will be the focus of our evaluation, selection, and investment of digital software.

- Engage and learn from partners such as JISC in enhancing digital access.
- Ensure that staff and students are aware of our range of digital resources and tools which can enhance accessibility.

#### **Progress:**

##### **4.4.1 Digital Strategy**

The Digital Strategy, launched in February 2022, recognises that changes in technology, changes in demographics, digitalisation, automation and industry 4.0 all have the potential to reshape the landscape in which we operate. This can disrupt the scale and nature of skills demand and the types of jobs that may be available which will help to reshape the economy. The strategy seeks to ensure that at West College Scotland, embracing digital opportunities, developing a digital mindset and developing our digital capabilities is essential in the modern digital world to enable us to excel in delivering the very best educational experience for our students and maximising accessibility for all.

##### **4.4.2 Digital Inclusion**

Our Digital exploration can, and should, enhance the user experience. Our ability to ensure our approaches are as accessible as possible is made easier through the inbuilt and additional accessibility features available in Moodle, MS Teams, and Office 365. These can be easily adopted in your practices and resources to improve the inclusion and accessibility needs of our students, stakeholders, and colleagues. Our BSL Digital Etiquette video and our Assistive Technologies specialism can be accessed to enable equality of experience and sound engagement opportunities.

We also ensure that digital teaching material is of the correct accessibility standards through our innovative learning team upskilling staff and promoting standards in digital learning design and development. We have been promoting the use of accessibility check in documents to ensure all published documents are accessible to all. We have adopted the mantra that Accessibility is Essential for some, useful for all.

##### **4.4.3 Equality Audit Tool**

This tool is intended to support us in identifying progress against key inclusion criteria and highlighting priorities for action. As such it provides a 'health check' that enables us to review inclusive practice and inform action planning as part of our curriculum review process.

##### **4.4.4 Evaluation, Selection, and Investment in Digital Software**

Since the formation of the Digital Strategy group in 2020, the evaluation, selection and investment in digital software has been a strategic and collaborative approach to ensure

not only return on investment but to ensure that inclusion and accessibility is at the heart of the process.

We continually map staff and student need to the most effective digital resources to ensure appropriateness and maximum engagement. Regularly evaluating the suitability of digital kit and approaches from student and staff user perspective.

The College has invested in accessibility software, Blackboard Ally, which will be used proactively by college teams to ensure that both staff and students are supported in accessing online materials that they need.

#### **4.4.5 JISC**

The 'Jisc Digital Capabilities Tool' which is available for all staff and all students can be used to enhance these digital skills. Our partnership with JISC allows us to continually benchmark and self-assess ourselves. One of the elements that we can do this is on the subject of digital inclusion in topics such as:

- Inclusive Digital Practices and Wellbeing
- A Strategic Approach to Inclusive Practice in Higher Education
- Using Assistive and Accessible Technology in Teaching and Learning

In 2022 in partnership with JISC we will be completing the Jisc Elevation Tool and including the findings and progress to date in our Regional Outcome Agreement. The digital elevation tool has been developed to provide senior strategic leaders in FE and skills organisations with an online self-assessment tool that allows them to validate their organisation's current position against five key themes and map their digital journey in each area against the digital elevation model. This will allow us to understand our gaps and create an action plan.

#### **4.4.6 Student Devices**

In response to the global pandemic the Student Device Loan scheme was initiated in 2020. Any student who required a digital device could make a request through by completing the Loan Request form. This is a simple, 8 question form with no expectation for the student to declare why they need to get a loan of a device. The process was improved in 2021 and 2022 to be included as part of the induction process and to match a student's device and software to their course requirements.

Since April 2021, we have distributed over 3,000 digital devices to support students in need and address inequality of access during and as we recovered from the pandemic. This enabled students to access and engage with new blended models of learning and assessment.

#### **4.4.7 Accessibility**

The Accessibility Steering Group (ASG) combines the work of two Accessibility groups which have been active over the last two years:

- The Project Action Group on Accessibility which was formed in 2019 to address compliance and legislation for online content to meet the requirements of the EU Directive on Accessibility, and
- The Digital Workstream Accessibility Group which convened early in the pandemic to provide guidance and support for staff and students.

It was agreed in March 2022 that a single group covering all Accessibility considerations for the College would be more effective in achieving positive outcomes for stakeholders. So far have been pivotal in the adoption of 'Blackboard Ally'. This is a tool that helps you make your course content in Moodle is accessible to all users. It does this by: Automatically scanning course content and providing accessibility scores and feedback on how to improve the accessibility of the content.

The next task for this group is the adoption of Blackboard Ally and further championing accessibility is essential for all and useful for some through CPD, initiatives and awareness.

#### **4.4.10 Student Satisfaction Survey 2022**

Students were very positive in their responses to digital questions in 2022 Student Engagement and Satisfaction Survey.

#### **4.4.11 Staff Survey 2022**

Most questions on ways of working in the Staff Engagement Survey was to understand the Hybrid Working Approach. The majority of these questions received over 70% satisfaction (Staff Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing). There were some discrepancies between teaching and support staff which is being looked at through local continuous improvement action plans.

#### **4.4.12 Digital First Learning Journey (Staff)**

Digital First is the College's programme of digital learning. A new interactive learning journey was launched in June 2022 which declutters the landscape of digital CPD and allows the learner to quickly identify where they are in their learning journey. The journey starts with the learner self-assessing themselves against the CDN Baseline Capabilities, going beyond the baseline with the JISC Capability tool and then building on this depending on the learning content and preference.

Accessibility and Inclusion is contained with the baseline capabilities meaning that this is seen as the foundation to digital skills before an individual should continue to build and develop.

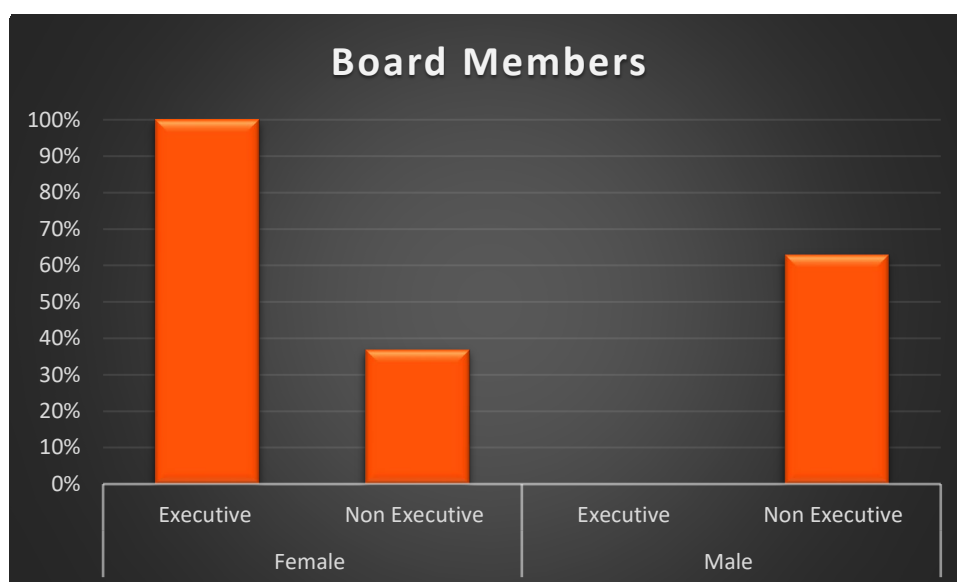
#### **4.4.13 Student Digital Capability**

Students are encouraged to use the Jisc Capability Tool to increase their digital capability. The College also uses insights to understand where digital learning gaps exist in students to provide further support through Moodle or target learning events. All students (and parents/guardians) are invited to sessions by way of 'Introduction to Microsoft Teams'.

#### 4.4.14 Awards and Recognition

The successful adoption and implementation of many of the key themes and drivers has resulted in significant successes for the College when it was recognised for its efforts in Oct 2021 and Nov 2021 winning awards for: Herald Diversity Awards and Digital Transformation Awards. The culmination of this success came in 2022 when West College Scotland won 'Best Use of Technologies' in the Herald Top Employer Awards.

## 5. Board Diversity



**Figure 1: Board Diversity**

With 40% of the board now being female, we have exceeded the Scottish Government's 30%, and made further progress towards the objective of a 50:50 gender balance. We plan to take action to increase not just the gender diversity, but the overall diversity of the WCS Board, including attracting more BAME members.

We have experienced challenges in attracting diverse Board candidates. Time commitments, lack of remuneration and the perceived culture of governing bodies can dissuade some from applying. Traditional criteria can sometimes limit the pool of women, e.g., previous board level experience.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our Board and will take the following actions:

- Communicate the intention of the WCS Board to increase its diversity to all stakeholders
- Take positive action in recruitment of Board members to encourage underrepresented groups to apply, e.g., through targeted advertising and search firms
- Use existing networks to advertise opportunities, e.g., LinkedIn, including specifically encouraging known individuals of an underrepresented group to apply

## 6. Staff Monitoring

We ask all our staff to disclose equality data regarding all the protected characteristics in the Equality Act. We use a self-service HR online system, and all staff are regularly asked to update their equality information.

In common with other public sector organisations, we find that we have varying rates of disclosure and reliability of information depending on particular protected characteristic. For example, the information which we gather on age, sex and race is more reliable than the information we gather on protected characteristics which are perceived as being more sensitive or confidential, such as sexual orientation.

Where the number of staff with a protected characteristic is fewer than ten, and the information is sensitive or personal, we have not specified the number in order to avoid individuals being identified.

### 6.1 Staff Profile

#### 6.1.1 Age

This analysis is based on headcount as of 1st November 2022.

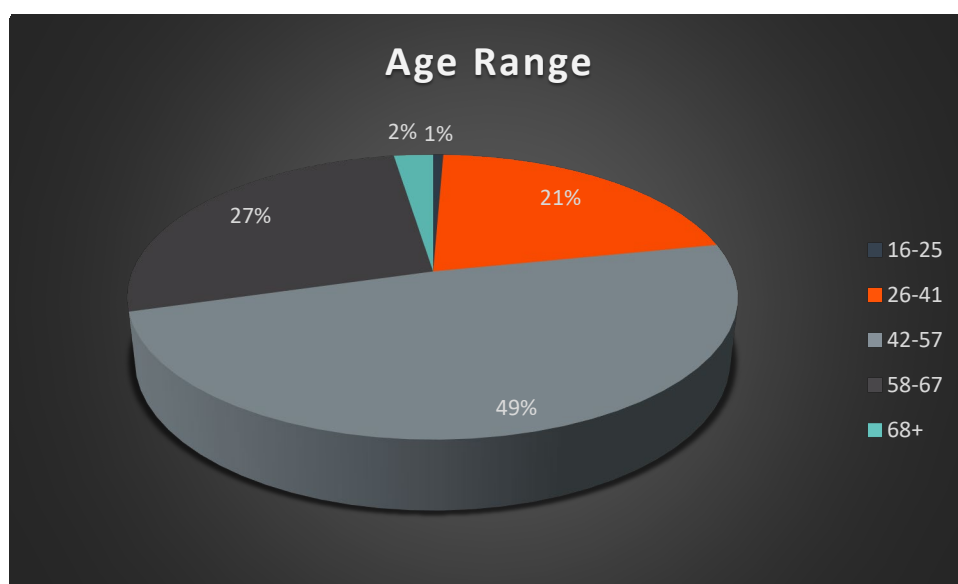
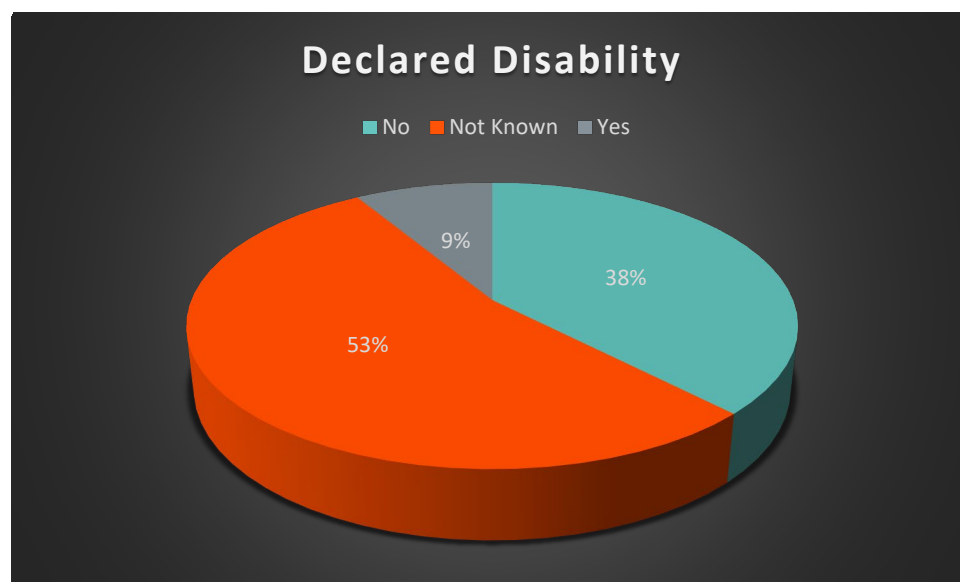


Figure 2: Staff Age Range

There is little difference in the data on age groups for teaching and support staff. The main difference is that in teaching there are no members of staff in the 16-25 age bracket. The age bracket with the highest number of staff in both areas is between 42-57 (49%). The second largest age group is aged between 58-67 (27%). These demographics are very similar to sector benchmarks.

There have been increases in staff aged 50 and over, which is consistent with the College's retention rates. The percentage of staff aged 60 and over has increased slightly. We will use strategic planning to further support an intergenerational workforce and use succession planning to anticipate and address the impact of our age profile.

### 6.1.2 Disability



**Figure 3: Staff Declared Disability**

Since the last Equality Mainstreaming Report (2020) we have seen a 2% increase in the percentage of staff who have declared a disability. Those declaring a disability has continue to rise since the development of our Equality Outcomes in 2017, when the rate was 3.73%. In 2019, it was 6%, and has increased to 7%. This is higher than the sector benchmark of 6%.

The proportion of staff who have declared a disability is lower than national indicators. The Scottish Government estimate that approximately 10% of the population who are economically active have a long-term activity limiting health condition. The College's proportion is higher than the sector benchmark of 5.9%, however.

The College will continue to encourage staff to disclose disabilities through use of the self-service HR system and promotion of the Disability Confident scheme.



We will be launching a Disability Network for Staff and Students and it is hoped that the 53% of staff who have not declared whether or not they have a disability will feel confident in declaring. We will also continue to promote disability at work procedure and health and wellbeing initiatives.

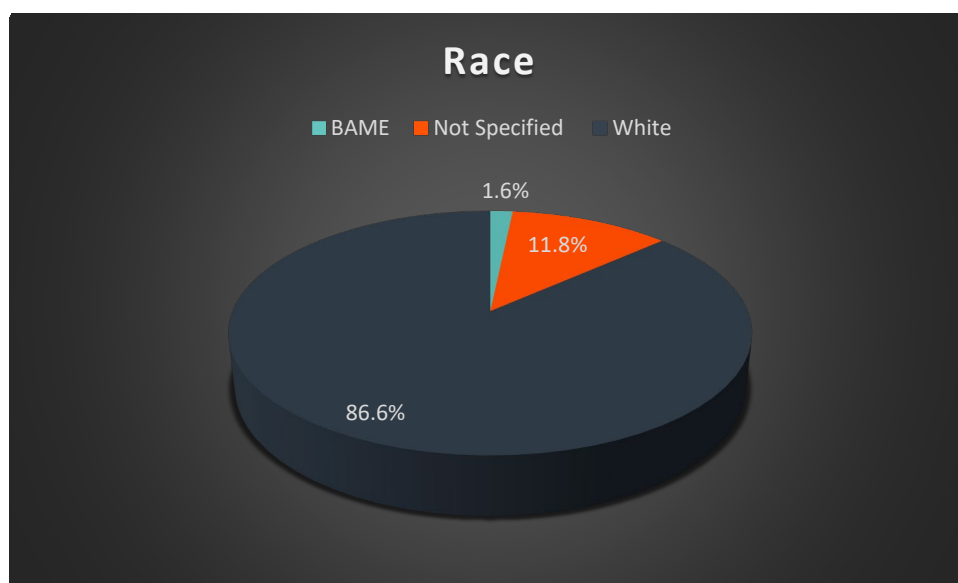
### 6.1.3 Gender Reassignment

The number of employees who have declared gender reassignment is not being specified as it is fewer than ten. More work has to be done as 82% of staff have not entered any data into this field in employee self-service.

### 6.1.4 Pregnancy and Maternity

8 employees have either taken maternity leave or have notified College that they are pregnant between November 2021 and November 2022.

### 6.1.5 Race

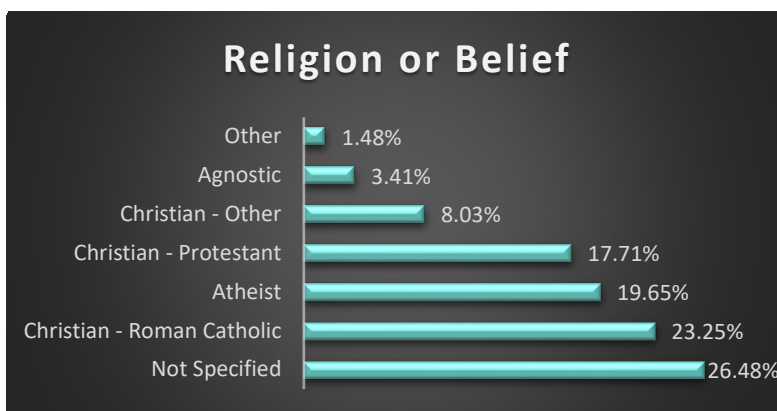


**Figure 4: % BAME Staff**

There has been a decrease in BAME representation (-0.1%) and an increase in non-disclosure (1%) since the last report in 2020. The BAME representation figure of 1.6% can be compared with the demographics of the campus local council areas of West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire, where between 1-3% of residents are BAME. The sector benchmark is 2.3%. Scottish Government's Race Equality, Employment and Skills – Making Progress report (2020) highlights the fact that race equality has stalled and the ethnicity employment gap has gone backwards. We recognise our opportunity to tackle institutional racism and that we have more to do to make race equality a reality. Whilst race

equality has been a key equality outcome 2021-23 we will have a renewed race equality outcome with key performance indicators attached to its fulfilment.

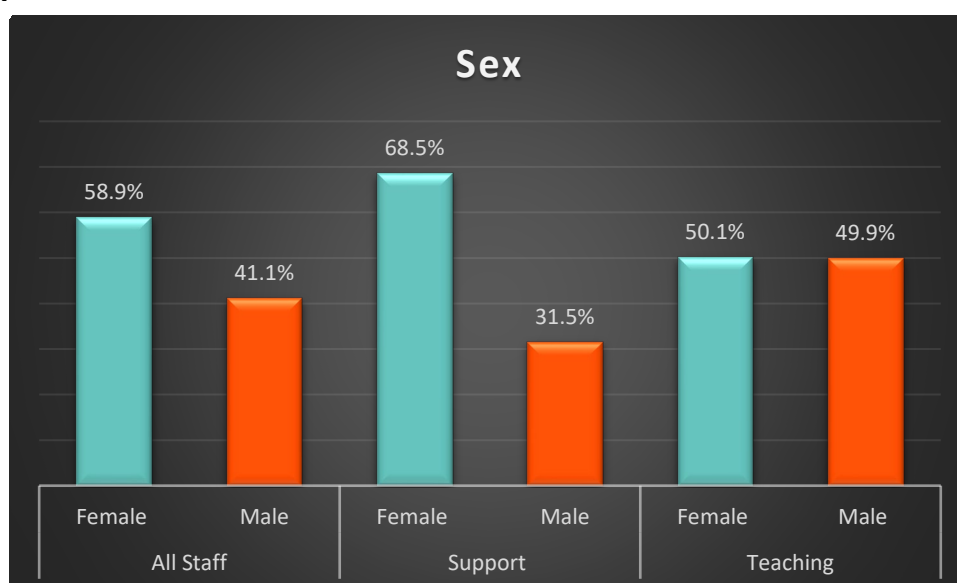
#### 6.1.6 Religion or Belief



**Figure 5: % Staff Religion/Belief**

Christian in the various denominations continues to be the highest proportion of religion/belief declared by staff. Christian – other includes orthodox but the number is not being specified as it is fewer than ten. The other category was either chosen by the staff member or other religions where the number of those disclosing was less than 10 including Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Spiritualism, Paganism and Hinduism. This shows a diverse number of religions/beliefs represented at West College Scotland. There has been a slight decrease (2.2%) in those not specifying their religion. We will continue to encourage disclosure.

#### 6.1.7 Sex

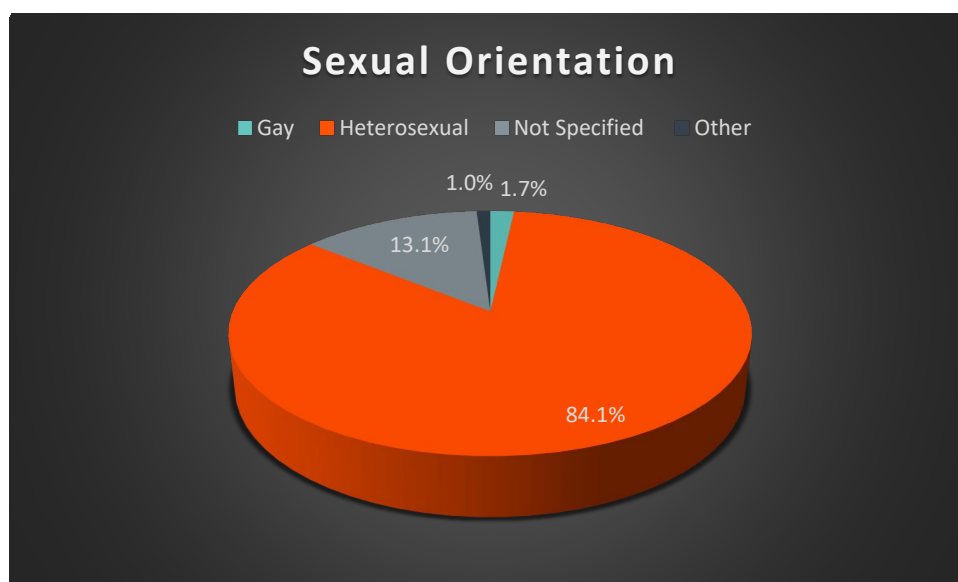


**Figure 6: % Sex Support/Teaching**

Overall, there is a 17.8% difference between male and female staff. This represents a slightly higher rate of proportionality since last reported.

There is a gender balance when we look at teaching as a whole but there has been very little change in the proportion of female Support Staff, with twice as many female support staff than male. Nationwide, women are more likely to work in the public sector, and around 75% of administrative, secretarial and service support jobs in Scotland are performed by women. We have delivered Unconscious Bias training for staff involved in recruitment and selection to assist in tackling occupational segregation, and we encourage professional development to enable career progression for female staff.

#### 6.1.8 Sexual Orientation



**Figure 7: % Sexual Orientation**

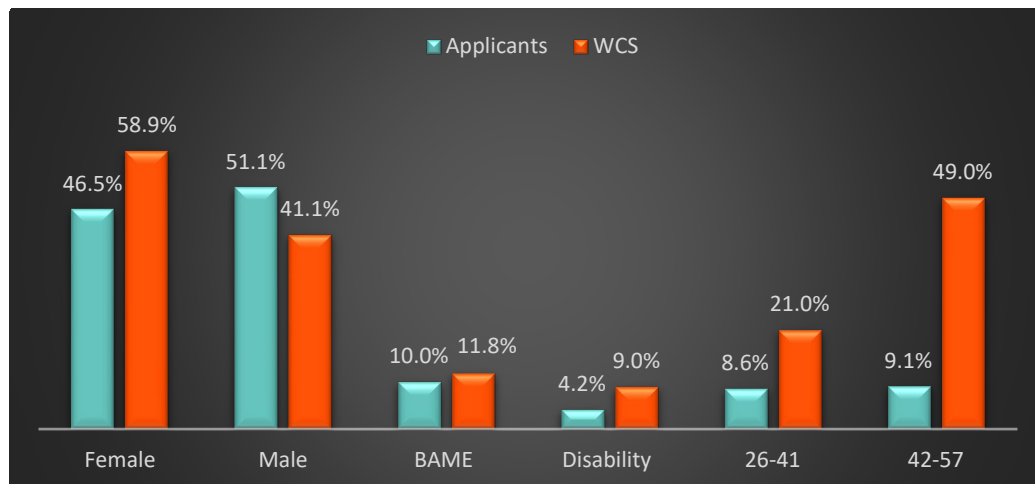
In the duration of our Equality Outcomes, the percentage of LGB staff as increased from 1.24% to 2.7%. There has been a 4.2% decrease in 'not specified' which could show individuals who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community are more comfortable disclosing this information. The other category is where the number of individual groups are less than 10 and cannot be stated, this includes Lesbian and Bisexual.

Currently, there are no external benchmarks published by the SFC or Scottish Government. Stonewall estimate that 1 in 10 people are gay, lesbian and/or bisexual. The 2022 Census contained questions on sexual orientation and will consider this data once available.

## 6.2 Recruitment Information

From 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021 to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 a total of 409 applications for 57 positions were received. There were no applicants who declared that their gender was different from assigned at birth.

### 6.2.1 Applicant Profile: Sex, Race, Disability and Age



**Figure 8: Applicant Diversity 1**

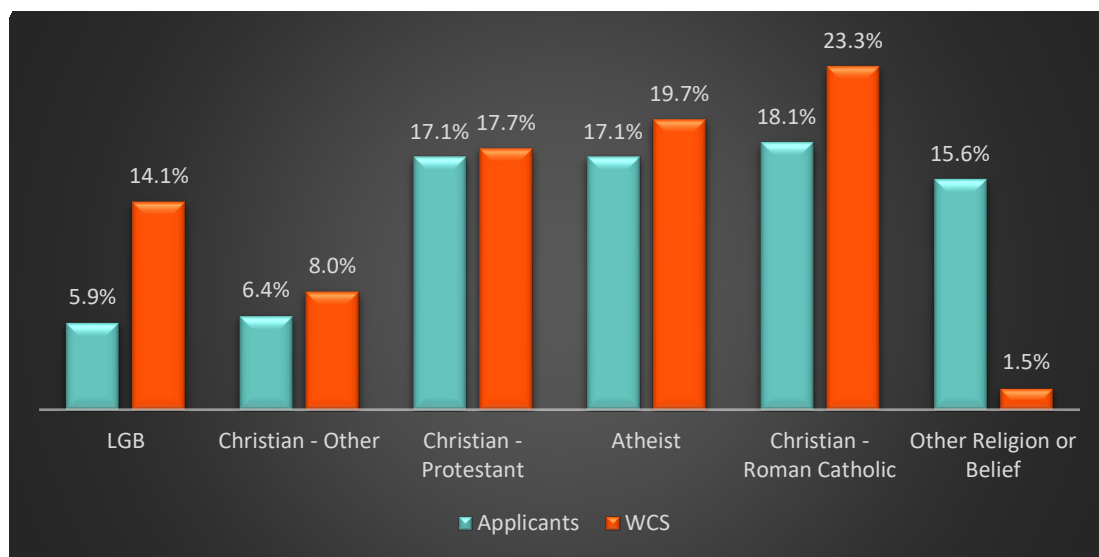
The proportion of male applicants was 10% higher than the proportion of males who work in the College, this meant that the proportion of females was comparatively lower.

The proportion of BAME applicants broadly matches the current staff BAME profile.

The proportion of applicants who have declared a disability is comparatively low. We offer a guaranteed interview and promote our Disability Confident status, but we will do more to attract individuals with a disability through more diverse employee stories and images used in marketing.

79.2% of applicants did not disclose their age making the data unreliable for comparison. Due to there being less than in the categories we are unable to disclose the percentages in the 16-25 and 58+ brackets.

## 6.2.2 Applicant Profile: Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief



**Figure 8: Applicant Diversity 2**

There has been an increase in applicants disclosing their sexual orientation and religion or belief.

There has also been an increase in candidates from the LGB community, but this is not proportionate to the numbers of staff in the College.

The proportion of those who have declared Christian – Other, Christian – Protestant, Atheist, Christian – Roman Catholic is similar between applicants and staff at West College. Due to the much higher disclosure rate of applicants compared to WCS there is a higher proportion of other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Paganism and Sikhism.

## 6.2.3 Recruitment – Conversion Rates

	Conversion: Applied – Interviewed	Conversion: Interviewed – Appointed
Male	43.06%	22.22%
Female	52.11%	27.27%
BAME	26.83%	27.27%
Disability	76.47%	61.54%
LGB	41.67%	50.00%
Christian	52.35%	19.10%
Atheist/Agnostic	43.52%	29.79%
Other Religion	30.56%	18.18%

**Figure 10: Conversion Rate Table**

Applicants with a disability are more likely to be invited to interview and have a higher appointment rate. This indicates the efficacy of the Disability Confident Scheme.

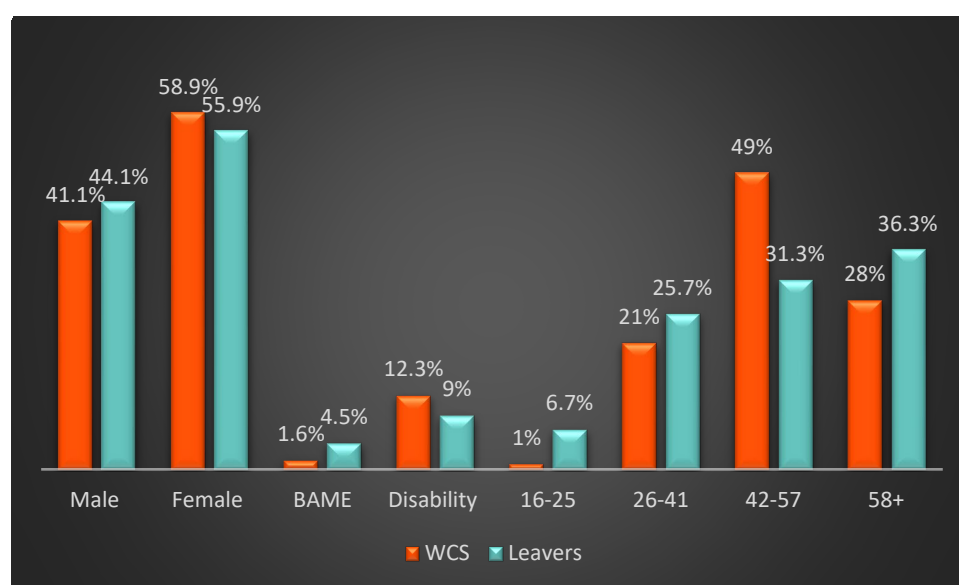
BAME applicants have a lower interview rate and a significantly higher appointment rate. We will investigate this further in our future aims to address race inequality.

While men and women have an equal occurrence of interviews, men have a slightly higher appointment rate.

Applicants who had disclosed “Atheist or Agnostic” had the highest comparative appointment rate.

### 6.3 Staff Retention

Data is presented below about the characteristics of the 179 leavers (November 2021-November 2022) compared with the existing staff demographics. The most frequently occurring reasons for leaving were resignations, voluntary severance, and retirement.



**Figure 11: Retention Age, Disability, Race and Sex**

The retention rates for men, women broadly correlate with staff demographics.

There was a higher proportion of BAME leavers compared to staff demographics. It is hoped that we can understand this more with the BAME Staff Network.

The higher proportion of leavers with a disability may be related to numbers of staff taking ill health retirement, and the fact that older age groups are more likely than younger to have long term health conditions or disabilities.

Staff in the 16-25 and 26-41 brackets were more likely to resign to pursue other opportunities.

We are not able to report on sexual orientation as the number of leavers is lower than 10, this does show a higher retention rate of staff we identify as LGB.

There was a higher rate of attrition for Christian staff compared to staff from other religions.

#### **6.4 Staff Progression**

There were 18 instances of staff who received an acting up allowance and/or progressed to a promoted post. Due to low numbers, we are not able to show percentages of the different groups however key insights are:

- There were more females progressing than males.
- The only age groups represented were 26-41 and 42-57. With the majority being 26-41.
- Individuals declared either having no disability or did not declare at all.
- 100% of those who progressed or received an acting up allowance were white.
- The majority declared their sexual orientation as being heterosexual and their religion being either atheist/agnostic or Christian.

Further investigations will be carried out into BAME, and Disability gap and actions will be developed in our revised Equality Outcomes.

#### **6.5 Staff Disciplinary**

There were 7 disciplinary instances, and men were more frequently involved than women. While the numbers are low, there is no indication of bias towards protected characteristics in outcomes. No other information is being provided due to the low numbers.

## 7. Equal Pay

### 7.1 Gender, Race and Disability Pay Gaps



**Figure 12: Pay Gaps**

The pay gap is the difference between average full- time equivalent salaries of male/female, BAME/White and Declared Disability/ No Disability permanent staff presented as a percentage.

The College’s gender pay gap has increased by 1.9 percentage points since 2021 to 8.7% but is still lower than in 2020 when it was 9.2%. Nationally, Scotland’s pay gap is 10.1% and this has decreased by 0.4% over the same period. BAME and disability pay gaps have also increased but by less than 1%.

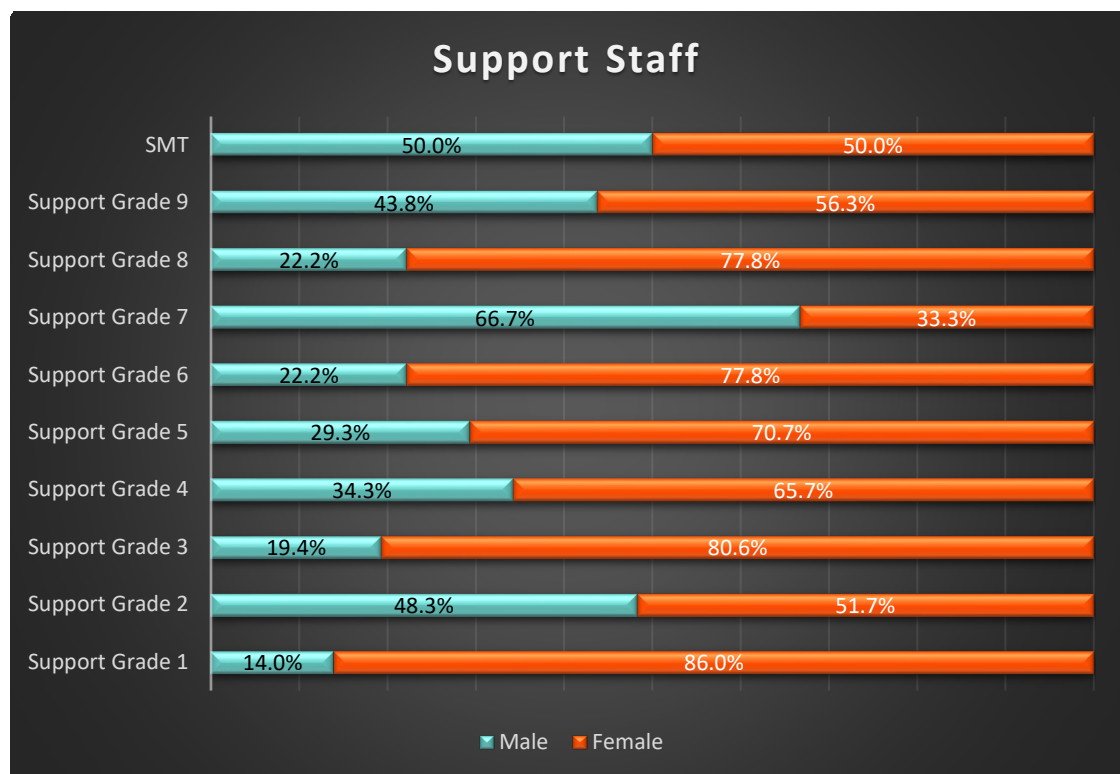
While the College pay gap compares well with the national pay gap, the Equality and Human Rights Commission advise that any pay gap which exceeds 5% is regarded as “significant”. The College has included action to address these gaps in its Equality Outcomes, including initiatives to address barriers to career development.

### 7.2 Occupational Segregation

Occupational segregation is also a contributing factor in equal pay gaps. Women and men still tend to work in different jobs. On the one hand, women and men often predominate in different sectors. On the other hand, within the same sector or organisations women predominate in lower valued and lower paid occupations.

Occupational segregation is evident from an analysis of different grades and roles at WCS as seen below.

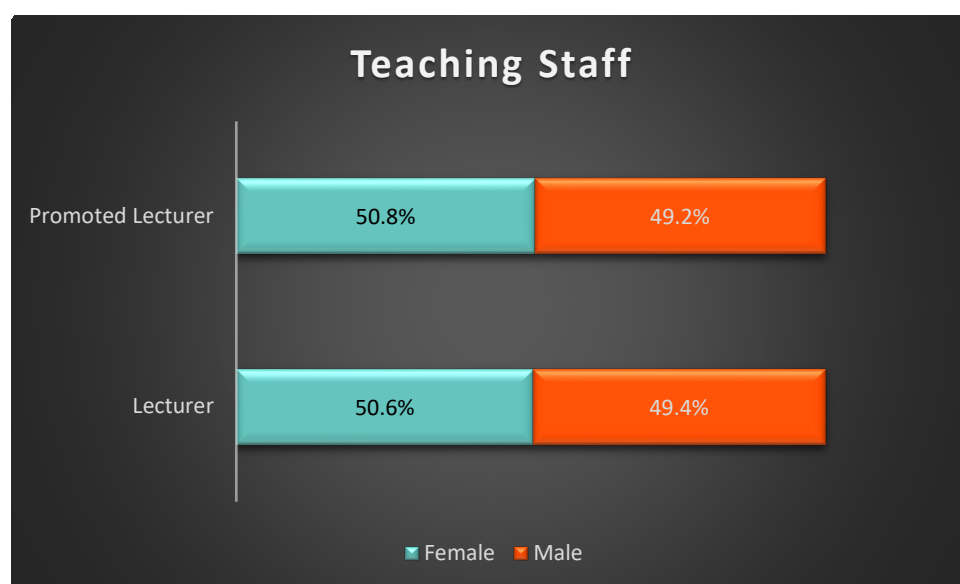




**Figure 13: Occupational Segregation (Support)**

A broadly proportionate gender balance can be seen in our most senior roles (Executive Management and Assistant/Vice Principals and Directors).

There is greater disproportionality in the lower grades, which contain the highest number of incumbents, and reduces the mean pay rate.



**Figure 14: Occupational Segregation (Teaching)**

There is a higher rate of gender proportionality with Teaching Staff compared to Support Staff.

We have not produced occupational segregation charts for disability and race given the low numbers of staff. However, we are conscious of the lack of BAME representation at management and senior levels, and we will work to improve this.

### **7.3 Our Progress on Equal Pay**

We use an analytical, factor-based job evaluation process for our Support Staff to ensure that we offer equal pay for work of equal value. Our Recruitment and Selection process has been designed to be as transparent and fair as possible. We are objective in the criteria which we use, and personal information is withheld during the recruitment process. We monitor recruitment equality data and assess the equality impact of the process to check for potential bias. We offer a wide range of flexible working policies which should assist our staff in maintaining a good work-life balance.

### **7.4 Equal Pay Statement**

We support the principle of equal opportunities in employment and believe that staff should receive equal pay for work of equal value regardless of their sex, race or disability.

We understand that equal pay is a legal right under both domestic and European Law.

We recognise that in order to achieve equal pay we must have a pay, grading and benefits structure that is transparent, flexible, based on objective criteria and free from bias.

We understand that to deliver equal pay for our employees it is also necessary to consider all of the causes of the pay gap and that these go beyond discrimination within pay systems. We recognise that our training and employment practices can impact on people as a result of their sex, race or disability in different ways. In particular we are committed to tackling gender-segregation both horizontally and vertically in occupations across West College Scotland, by removing incidents of stereotyping about skill and capabilities, by changing the culture associated with different jobs, removing barriers to accessing training courses and apprenticeships and promoting a healthy work-life balance.

Our overall aim is to achieve equal pay in employment for men and women, people who are disabled and people who are not, and people who fall into a minority racial group and people who do not. In support of this aim and our commitment to equality, we will work in partnership with trade union representatives; monitor the pay system to ensure it is open, transparent, fair and equitable; respond promptly to any complaints in relation to equal pay; and regularly assess and monitor the impact of our pay practices, taking remedial action as appropriate.

## 8. Student Monitoring

For the first time as part of the Equality Mainstreaming Report, we will be publishing our student profile data. In order to monitor and track our attraction and recruitment of students from the protected characteristics.

### 8.1 Student Profile

This analysis is based on student matriculation for session 2022-23.

#### 8.1.1 Age

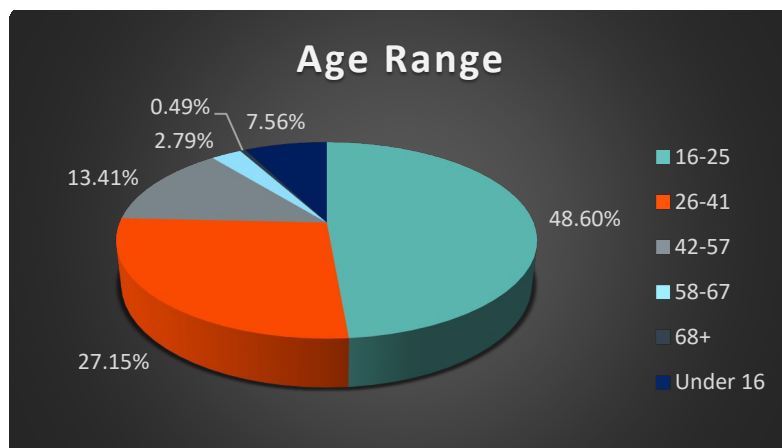
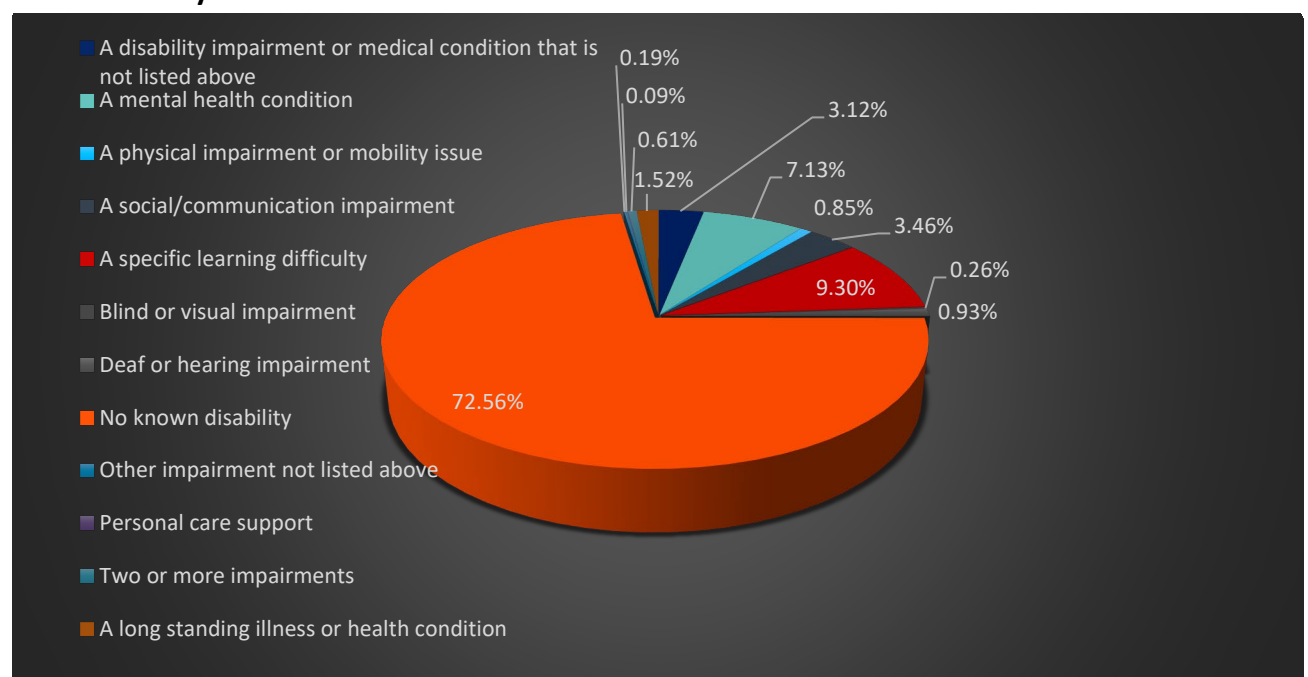


Figure 15: Student Age Ranges

As you would expect the highest proportion of students are in the 16-25 bracket. The second highest at 27.15% is students who are between 26 and 41. We also have an under 16 and considerable proportion of students who are 58+ (3.28%).

#### 8.1.2 Disability



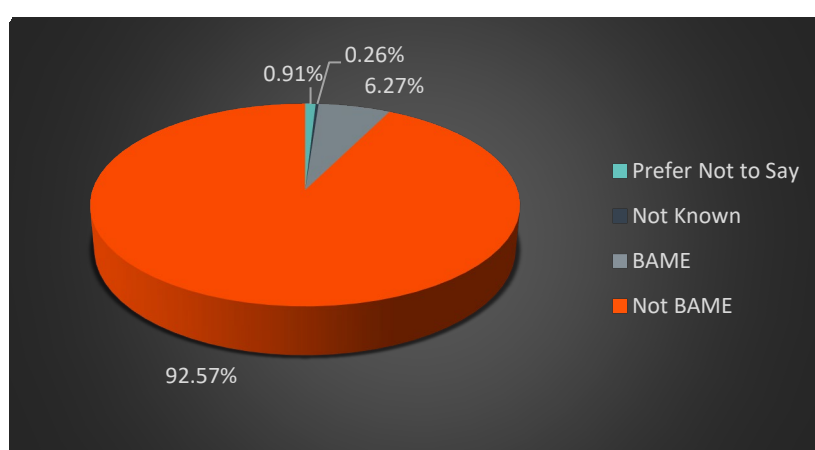
**Figure 16: Student Declared Disability**

27.44% of students have declared that they have a disability, long standing illness, condition, impairment or learning difficulty. The highest proportion who have declared is 'a specific learning difficulty' such as Down's Syndrome, ADHD, Dyslexia or Dyspraxia. The second highest is a mental health condition (7.13%), the College will continue to promote the Wellbeing and Counselling Services.

### 8.1.3 Gender Reassignment

0.6% students have declared that their gender identity is different from that at birth. 4.27% identify as transgender.

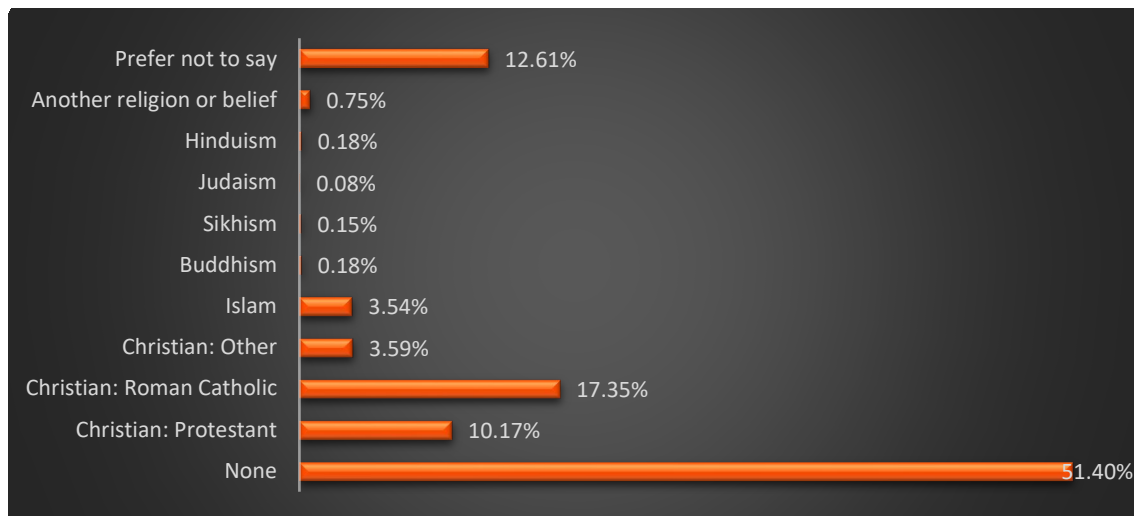
### 8.1.4 Race



**Figure 17: % BAME**

The reason we have a category that is 'Not BAME' is due to the options that students choose from this also includes Scottish, Irish, British, Polish etc. it would be remiss of us to call this category white. Instead, it is the category of individuals who have not declared their ethnicity to be Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic. According to the 2011 Census, we have a higher proportion of BAME than the Scottish population. It is also higher compared with the demographics of the campus local council areas of West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, and Renfrewshire, where between 1-3% of residents are BAME.

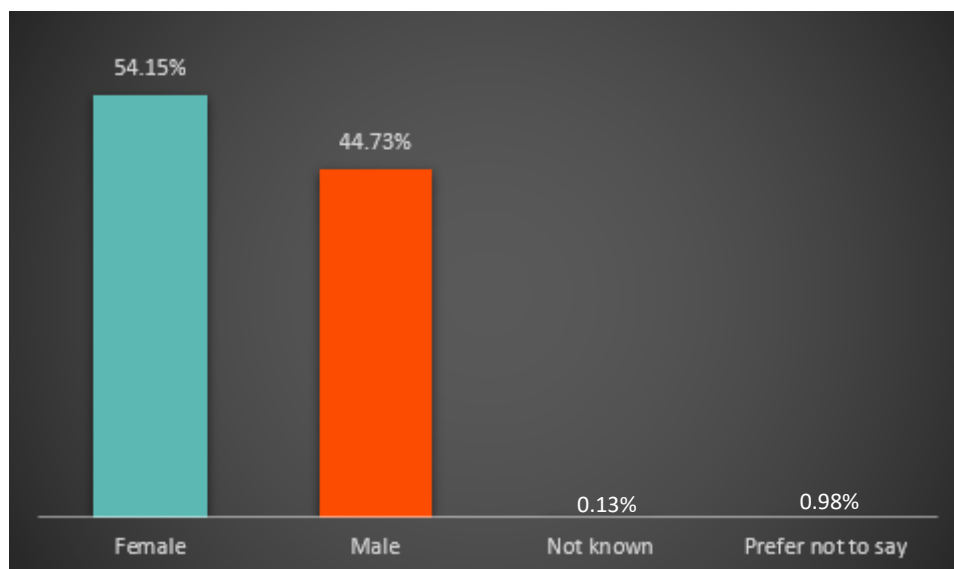
### 8.1.6 Religion or Belief



**Figure 18: Student % Religion/ Belief**

The majority of students (51.4%) have declared that they have no religion or belief. The 35.99% who have declared their religion are from a diverse group of religions, but Christianity is the highest.

### 8.1.7 Sex



**Figure 19: Student Sex %**

Overall, there is a good gender balance in the student population with less than 10% between male and female. There was a small number of students who said they described their sex in another way, but this number was less than 10 and could not be included.

There continues to be an under representation of males in sectors such as Care (89% female) and Hairdressing, Beauty, and Make-Up Artistry (92% female) and under representation of females in sectors such as Construction (97% male) and Engineering (92%).

There is good news in Maths, Science, Social Science and Sport there is a higher proportion of females (64%) in what was a traditionally male dominated field.

### 8.1.8 Sexual Orientation

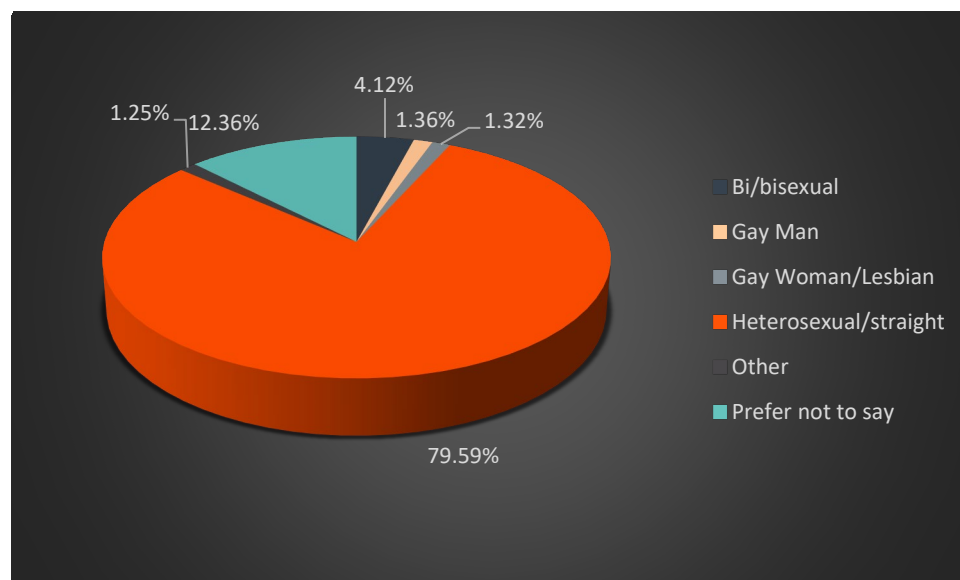


Figure 20: % Sexual Orientation

### 8.2 Attainment

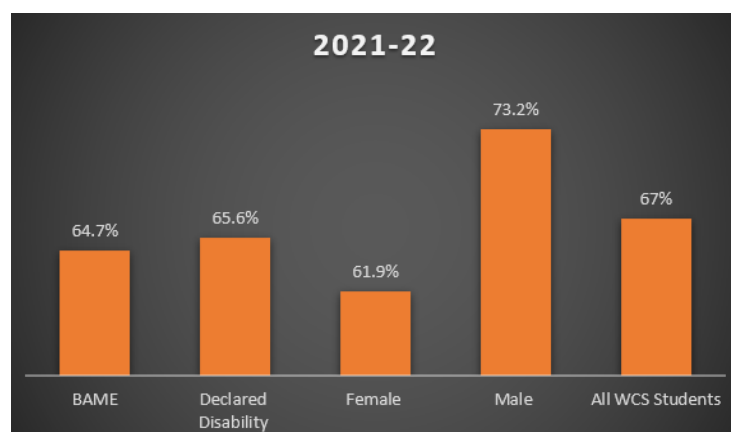


Figure 21: Student Attainment

We are pleased to note that the attainment level of all groups increased around 3pp in AY 21-22. This reflects the efforts of our staff in pivoting to blended/distance learning and assessments during the pandemic.

There has been a steady and gradual increase in attainment for BAME and Disability students during the life cycle of the last Equality Outcomes. This has been the same for 2021-22 with less than 3% and less than 2% between these characteristics (respectively) and the WCS average.

The attainment rate for male students is consistently higher than the rate for female students. This trend is similar to sector performance indicators. Many of our male students are employed apprentices and attainment rates are therefore higher for these students. This year female attainment is 5.1% lower than the WCS, we look to address this through our new equality outcome on gender.

## 9. Developing New Equality Outcomes

### 9.1 Process

We engaged with the Student Association to work together to develop Outcomes that reflect their priorities. We also asked staff to provide feedback through a short survey and engaged with the Board of Management.

As well as working towards the National Equality Outcomes and the WCS Equality Outcomes 2023-27, the College will:

- Working towards ensuring that students with a protected characteristic equal the retention and continuation rates of the College average.
- Working towards ensuring that students with a protected characteristic equal the attainment results of the College average.
- Create and nurture a College which supports inclusion, flexibility, and accessibility for all our students and staff by eliminating structural or systemic barriers to learning, teaching, and working.
- Ensure that effective, reasonable, and proportionate support is provided to address residual barriers to success for those identifying with one or more of the protected characteristics.
- Foster a culture in which rights are protected, and people experiencing discrimination or harassment relating to the protected characteristics are respected, supported, and empowered.
- Raise awareness of the protected characteristics, the barriers individuals face, how to support individuals and how we can all be equality, diversity and inclusion allies and champions.

Key Drivers:

- Equality Act 2010
- National Outcome Agreement
- Developing the Young Workforce
- Fair Work Framework
- College Corporate Strategy
- College Safeguarding Policy 2022-2025
- WCS Curriculum Strategy 2021-26
- Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026
- WCS People Strategy 2022-2030
- Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2022
- Digital Strategy 2022
- Student Engagement Survey Results
- Staff Engagement Survey (My Voice) Results



## **Equality Outcome 1 – Socio-Economic**

The College will:

- Continue to provide enhanced support to care experienced students to address residual barriers to success.
- Seek to support staff and students in financial wellbeing through awareness, education, signposting and resources.
- Through the 'green room' initiative support staff and students with food and clothing during the cost-of-living crisis.
- Seek funding for initiatives to enhance and support the wellbeing service for students such as 'Free Breakfast' and food vouchers.
- Build partnerships with our partners and charities to support staff and students who may be facing financial challenges including those at risk of homelessness.
- Raising awareness of the College SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) and the impact that has on learning, teaching and community outreach.

Key Drivers:

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Scottish Government Fairer Scotland Duty: Guidance for Public Bodies

## **Equality Outcome 2 – Racial Equality**

The College will:

- Improve representation of people of colour in roles across the College including senior leadership roles, the board and in governance committees, so that representation is more in line with the diversity of the community and students we serve.
- Continue to foster an anti-racist culture in which racism and systemic racial inequalities are actively challenged, robustly tackled and people experiencing racial discrimination or harassment are respected, supported, and empowered.
- Encourage inter culturalism through our inclusion calendar celebrating the cultures of our staff and students in order to maintain a welcoming and inclusive culture.
- Through the establishment of a BAME (and Allies) Network systematically review staff/student policies, processes, and procedures through the lens of racial equality and make continuous improvements.

- Participate in and work towards completing the Race Equality Charter.
- Continue to reduce the BAME pay gap.

Key Drivers:

- Scottish Government Anti-Racist Employment Strategy – A fairer Scotland for all.
- Scottish Government Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit
- Scottish Government Race Equality Framework 2016-2030
- Scottish Government Race Equality Training Framework

### **Equality Outcome 3 – Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence**

The College will:

- Improve the student gender segregation, with improvement in sectors with the highest disparities.
- Improve representation of females in senior leadership roles and the board, so that representation better reflects the overall gender diversity of the College community.
- Through gaining GBV Charter in recognition of taking the Emily Test and through a partnership with White Ribbon, foster a culture where gender-based violence is actively challenged, robustly tackled and people experiencing gender-based violence are respected, supported, and empowered.
- Continue to reduce the gender pay gap and make further progress towards 5%.
- Review work and family policies and procedures to ensure they are in line with current best practice and national bargaining.
- Continue to support targeted gender wellbeing initiatives such as baby loss, period poverty, endometriosis, breast cancer, prostate cancer, male mental health etc.

Key Drivers:

- Scottish Government Equally Safe Action Plan (preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls)
- Scottish Government Women's Health Plan
- Scottish Government A Fairer Scotland for Women (addressing the gender pay gap)
- Scottish Funding Council Period Poverty 2021-2022

### **Equality Outcome 4 – Disability**

The College will:

- Continue to encourage both staff and students in the disclosure of disabilities by reducing the stigma(s) that can be associated in order to fully understand the wide array of additional support needs and how better to support them.

- Improve representation of individuals with a disability in roles across the College including senior leadership roles, the board and in governance committees, so that representation is more in line with the diversity of the community and students we serve.
- Continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff and students through communication, awareness, learning, resources, and College service offers.
- Continue to promote and support our status as 'Disability Confident' and 'Carer Positive'.
- Review delivery methods and times in line with annual curriculum review plans in order to understand if there is more ways to support individuals with caring responsibilities to access courses.
- Establish and embed key accessibility standards when it comes to communications, digital platforms, and resources.
- Review all campuses to ensure that there are safe and accessible routes for staff and students with visible disabilities and designated quiet/sensory spaces.
- Through the establishment of a Disability (and Allies) Network systematically review staff/student policies, processes, and procedures through the lens of visible and non-visible disabilities and make continuous improvements.
- Review process for seeking reasonable adjustments or specialist equipment to ensure it is fair and easily accessible.
- Continue to reduce the Disability pay gap.

#### Key Drivers:

- Scottish Government Learning/intellectual disability and autism: transformation plan
- Scottish Government The right help at the right time in the right place: strategy for the learning provision for children and young people with complex additional support needs 2017-2026
- Scottish Government A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People
- Scottish Government Creating Hope Together
- Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing: Whole School Approach: Framework
- Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015

#### **Equality Outcome 5 – LGBTQIA+**

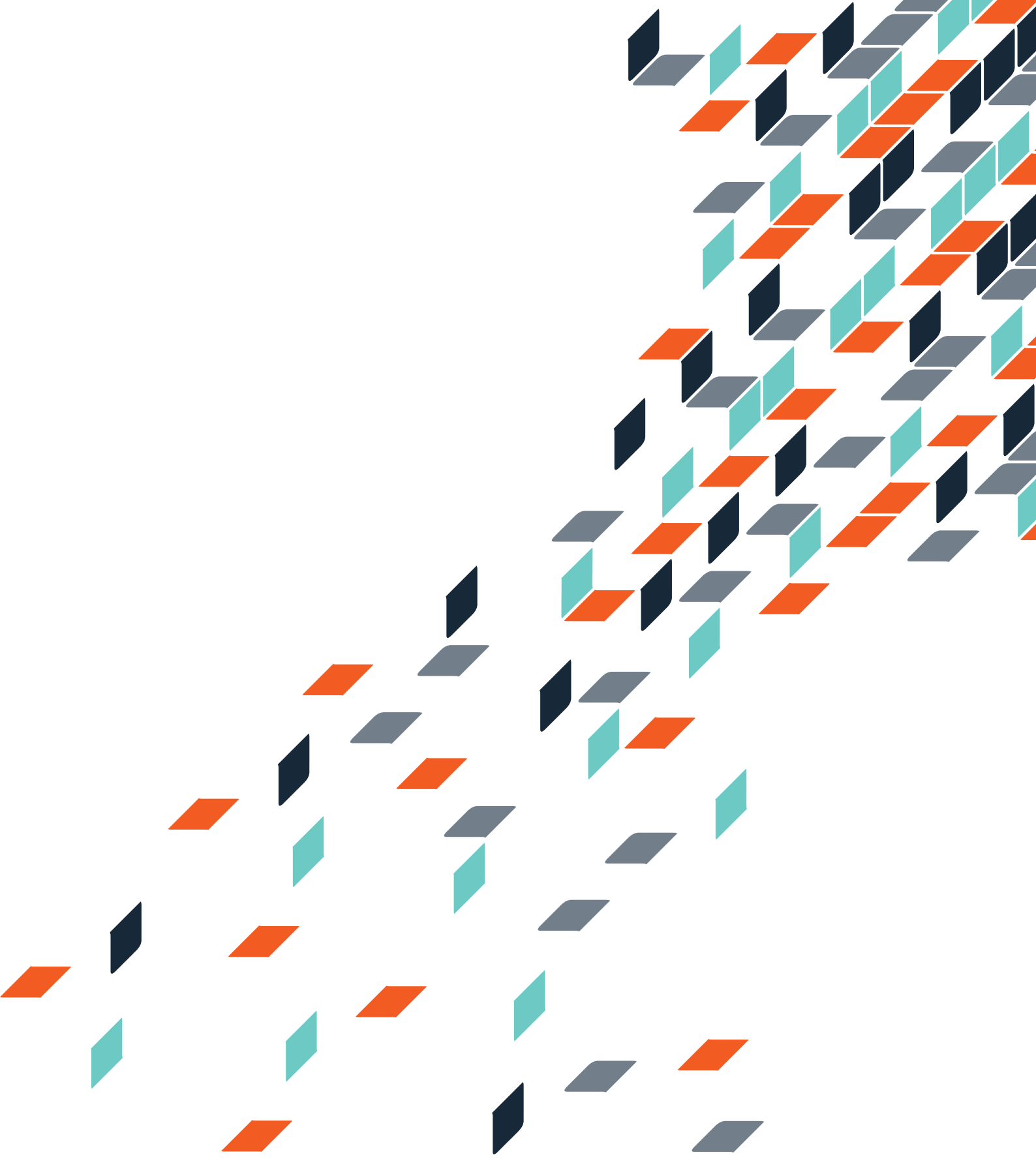
##### The College will:

- Through the establishment of a LGBTQIA+ (and Allies) Network systematically review staff/student policies, processes, and procedures through the lens of LGBTQIA+ equality and make continuous improvements.

- Review Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming guidance to ensure that staff and students who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming feel fully supported in living as their true selves.
- Review and improve the process in which staff and students should follow when transitioning in order to make it easily accessible and aligned to Gender Recognition Reforms.
- Complete the LGBT Youth Charter and continue to progress through the levels of Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

Key Drivers:

- Scottish Government Supporting Transgender Young People
- Gender Recognition Act
- Scottish Government LGBT Inclusive Education Recommendations



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**Paisley Campus**

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