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Regional Board Report

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Subject: Borders College Mainstreaming Update 2021-2023 and Equality Outcomes Action Plan (to be read in combination)	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☒ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☐
Prepared by: Amy Brydon (Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer)	**Date of Committee: 09/03/2023**

Purpose:

This mainstreaming report shows the progress Borders College has made in meeting the General Duty and Specific Duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Specifically, it reflects the progress made since publishing our last equality update in April 2021.

The equality outcome action plan details progress made towards meeting the college's equality outcomes and associated impact.

Executive Summary:

Key items:

The PSED requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (in employment), race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The paper meets our legislative reporting requirements through the publication of;

- Employee equality information
- Gender breakdown of Regional Board
- Progress in delivering the college's Equality Outcomes
- Gender pay gap information

Questions that Members should ask themselves when reading the paper:

- Is the Board satisfied that this report provides a suitable overview of the work the college is doing to mainstream equality and progress it equality outcomes?
- Is there anything the Regional Board had identified that is not reflected in this paper?

• Is there more the Board could be doing to further mainstream equality within its functions and processes?
Linked to Strategic Ambition(s): Take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland Proactively engage with our community and stakeholders to ensure our practice reflects their needs **Performance Measures:** Student Outcomes in top quartile of national colleges Student, staff & employer satisfaction in top quartile nationally
Linked to Strategic Risk Register: New Risk (outwith themes) : Legal and financial Choose an item.
Recommendation: To approve the document for publication.
Previous Committee Approvals: Senior Leadership Team, Equality and Inclusion Committee, Curriculum Quality and Student Experience Committee

For publication ☒	**Not for publication** ☐ **If not, why not?**

Regional Board. 09/03/2023

Title of Paper: Borders College Mainstreaming Update 2021-2023 and Equality Outcome Action Plan (Papers to be read together)

Introduction:

In combination, these reports demonstrate the progress Borders College has made in meeting the General Duty and Specific Duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Specifically, it reflects the progress made since publishing our last equality update in April 2021.

Since then, Borders College has continued to develop and deliver innovative projects to mainstream equality and progress its Equality Outcomes. This report provides key examples of good practice from across the college and demonstrates the impact of our work.

Background

As a public sector organisation, Borders College has responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This duty aims to make sure that organisations are thinking about how their decisions and policies affect people with different protected characteristics. In order to evidence we have done this, we publish equality information every 2 years, and prepare and publish equality outcomes every 4 years.

The PSED requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (in employment), race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The paper meets our legislative requirements through the publication of;

- Employee equality information
- Gender breakdown of Regional Board
- Progress in delivering the college's Equality Outcomes
- Gender pay gap information

The paper also provides information in relation to the Scottish Funding Council's newly published National Equality Outcomes, and how we intend to support these going forward.

Main body of Paper

Please refer to the separate reports.

Implications and Considerations

Financial Implications:

It is anticipated that investment will be required to progress equality outcomes and mainstreaming – particularly in relation to training and development, creation of inclusive spaces, and to host awareness events. In the majority of cases, funding has already been secured for these activities.

Learner Implications:

Overall, it is anticipated that continued and focussed work to further enhance our approach to equality diversity and inclusion will have a positive impact on retention, success and student satisfaction – in particular, in relation to protected characteristic groups.

Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment:

Staff Implications:

Overall, it is anticipated that continued and focussed work to further enhance our approach to equality diversity and inclusion will have positive impacts on recruitment, retention, progression and staff satisfaction – in particular, in relation to protected characteristic groups.

Sustainability/Environmental Implications:

Our work on equality diversity and inclusion closely aligns with the college's Global Citizenship Strategy. Through a combination of approaches our intention is to develop staff and students to become more tolerant and respectful of different cultures and belief systems, and more aware of our impact on the world around us.

Conclusion

Many of the examples within the Mainstreaming report evidence how the college is effectively responding to the legislative requirements set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Many others demonstrate how the College regularly steps beyond what is required within the PSED. Ultimately what is reflected in this report is the absolute commitment our staff have to their students, their colleagues, and to the organisation as a whole.

We anticipate the years ahead will be challenging. The cost of living crisis, and the continued impact of Covid-19 have created a socio-economic landscape in which

inequalities have become supercharged. It is within our gift to do what we can to address the most persistent inequalities faced by our college community while managing the increasing financial pressures experienced across the college sector. Despite these challenges, Borders College will continue to demonstrate its commitment to equality and inclusion. As the college enters a new phase in its development, with the appointment of a new Principal and members of the Executive team, it will continue its work to be a progressive organisation that is truly inclusive for all.

Recommendation

To publish the Mainstreaming Report and the Equality Outcome Action Plan.

BORDERS COLLEGE

Equality Mainstreaming Update Report 2021-2023

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Foreword

Pete Smith, Principal and CEO

I am delighted to introduce Borders College Equality Mainstreaming Update Report 2021-2023.

At Borders College, equality is at the heart of what we do. Our Strategic Ambition 2020-2025 includes the objective that "*We will take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland.*" Our College values state that we will be "*Inspiring, Innovative, Collaborative, Inclusive and Empowering*".

Our Equality Outcomes Action Plan 2021-2025 operationalises our intent. Our values-based culture empowers staff and students to achieve positive outcomes in their learning, work and life. We promote an environment that is inclusive and inspiring and we are determined to make sure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. In everything we do, we consider how we can make sure that we never unconsciously or consciously discriminate against individuals or groups of people, and that we promote equality of access and opportunity.

We know that inequalities persist in our wider society. Mainstreaming equalities will make work better and fairer for current and future staff. It will make for a much richer learning experience for our students. It will ensure the college is attractive and accessible to all – regardless of age, disability, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

In order for our plan to be effective, we recognise the value of strong, visible leadership and commitment throughout the College. We also believe that we must demonstrate best practice externally to all of our stakeholders. Our plan includes short, medium and long-term actions and activities. This report covers our progress in the period 2021 -2023. I believe it demonstrates significant progress in achieving our ambitions and highlights a number of examples of innovative practice.

Executive Summary

This report shows the progress Borders College has made in meeting the General Duty and Specific Duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Specifically, it reflects the progress made since publishing our last equality update in April 2021.

Since this time, Borders College has continued to develop and deliver innovative projects to mainstream equality and progress its Equality Outcomes 2021-2025. This report provides updates on this work and seeks to capture key examples of good practice and innovation across the college.

Equality diversity and inclusion work never truly has an end point. As such, we are committed to building on our achievements, pushing boundaries and seeking new opportunities to create even more inclusive spaces for everyone in the college community.

As part of our specific reporting duties, the college is required to report on the gender pay gap. This term refers to the difference in pay between male and female staff members. Within this report, we also make reference to the gender balance of males and females. These terms are used for reporting purposes only. We recognise and respect that people experience gender differently, for example, in the case of non-binary and trans identities.

Equality at Borders College

Borders College is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, and to creating a culture that respects and celebrates difference. We aim to provide safe, inclusive spaces for our staff, students, partners and visitors where everyone feels valued, welcome and included.

As a public sector organisation, Borders College has responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This duty aims to make sure that organisations are thinking about how their decisions and policies affect people with different protected characteristics. In order to evidence we have done this, we publish our equality information every 2 years, and prepare and publish equality outcomes every 4 years.

The PSED requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are:

Age	**Disability**	**Gender Reassignment**
Pregnancy and Maternity	**Marriage and Civil Partnership (in employment)**	**Race**
Religion and Belief	**Sex**	**Sexual Orientation**

About Our College

5326
students

281
staff

4 campuses

Galashiels | Newtown St Boswells | Hawick | Tweedbank

700+ courses

Our People

This section includes the following information:

- Staff equality profile
- Regional Board gender profile
- Gender pay gap information
- Student equality profile

The College is required to report on this information every two years.
Data was calculated as at October 2022

Regional Board: Gender Profile

The gender split of the Regional Board is currently 60:30 male and female representation. Of the 6 Board Committees, 50% of Chairs are female and 50% are male.

The Board recognises the challenges in building diversity, which is a perennial issue for Colleges across Scotland. The Board has explored a range of recruitment sources, including Changing the Chemistry, and has engaged with minority groups such as the Muslim women's group in Glasgow. Looking to the future, the Board is keen to explore new approaches to increasing the diversity within its membership and is actively seeking the input of Equalities practitioners in this work.

Equality Profile: Staff

Total staff 2021-22: 281

AGE

16-25	6%
26-40	21%
41-55	41%
56-64	25%
65+	6%

DISABILITY

No known disability	93%
A long standing illness	2%
A physical impairment or mobility issue	1%
A specific learning difficulty	1%
A mental health condition	<1%
A general learning disability	<1%
Blind/visual impairment	<1%
Deaf or hearing impairment	<1%
A social/communication impairment	0%
Other impairment not listed	0%

GENDER IDENTITY

2021

Male	Female	Other
32%	68%	0%

2022

Male	Female	Other
33%	67%	0%

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

2021

Heterosexual	80%
Bisexual	-
Gay Man	-
Gay woman/Lesbian	1%
Prefer Not to Say/ Info not provided	19%

2022

Heterosexual	80%
Bisexual	1%
Gay Man	-
Gay woman/Lesbian	1%
Prefer Not to Say	2%
Info not provided	17%

Equality Profile: Staff

ETHNICITY

	2022
White Scottish	73%
White English	11%
White British	6%
White Other	6%
Undisclosed	2%
White Irish	1%
White Welsh	<1%
Any mixed/multiple ethnic groups	<1%
White NI	0%
Asian, Asian Scottish or British - Indian	0%
Black, Black Scottish or British - Africa	0%
Any other Asian background	0%
Asian, Asian Scottish or British - Pakistani	0%
Other ethnic group	0%

MARITAL STATUS

RELIGION

	2022	2021	
None	44%	39%	None
Christian	32%	34%	Christian
Undisclosed	7%	21%	Undisclosed
Church of Scotland	1%	2%	Church of Scotland
Roman Catholic	1%	2%	Other
Other	<1%	1%	Roman Catholic
Buddhist	0%	<1%	Agnostic
Hindu	0%	0%	Buddhist
Pagan	0%	0%	Hindu
Muslim	0%	0%	Pagan
Other Christian	0%	0%	Muslim
Agnostic	0%	0%	Other Christian

Equality Profile: Staff

The College is exploring the opportunity to develop current HR systems to support improved analysis in relation to staff recruitment, development and progression. This will strengthen the College's position in identifying actions to improve recruitment and staff experience.

DISABILITY OR LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITION

Scottish Borders
24%

Borders College
8%

BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITY

Scottish Borders
1.3%

Borders College
< 1%

SEX

Female **51.3%**
Male **48.7%**

Female **67%**
Male **33%**

The College recognises the challenges in relation to disability disclosure and is working on a range of projects to improve disclosure rates, including work with external Public Service Partnership 'APT' on a disability recruitment review. We are also one of four organisations in Scotland undertaking a digital recruitment review in an effort to enhance the accessibility of our online recruitment practices.

Equality Profile: Staff

The number of staff declaring a disability in 2022 is **8%,** a figure which has remained steady since 2021. Although lower than disability disclosure within the Scottish Borders region, this compares well with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) national college staff data which for the year 2020-21 was **6.7%**

LGB disclosure has increased since 2021 from **1%** to **2%**. This sits slightly lower than the LGB population of the Scottish Borders which was **2.8%** at the last census.

In the reporting period, a total of **62** employees left the organisation for reasons mainly related to **resignation (26)** and **age retirement (10).**

Other reasons for leaving the College such as dismissal, early retirement and voluntary severance did not suggest anything significant with regards to gender identity or disability. The total number of staff with a declared disability who resigned from the college was low. All other protected characteristics in regards to all reasons for leaving the college were not significant either.

Gender Pay Gap

Borders College is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and firmly believes that pay should be awarded fairly and equitably to all staff, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The existence of a pay gap, for example in relation to gender or disability, is underpinned by a variety of complex factors - some of which lie beyond the influence of employment practice and policy. Ultimately, an individuals experience of employment will differ based on the protected characteristic group(s) to which they belong, as well as the degree of intersectionality they experience.

The College's commitment to achieving equal pay is demonstrated primarily in our Strategic Plan and Equality Outcomes. Together, these frameworks aim to strengthen our approach to diversity and inclusion. We strongly believe that encouraging a diverse workforce to use their talents, develop their skills and advance their careers is integral to the success of the college. We are therefore committed to regularly reviewing pay gaps and, where possible, proactively tackling the causes. Given the widening gender pay gap at Borders College, we will be seeking ways to address this - for example through investment in leadership development and training opportunities.

Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap refers to the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings, excluding overtime.

Men
£20.94
per hour

Women
£17.99
per hour

14.1% Mean gender pay gap

28.9% Median gender pay gap

7.5% Disability pay gap

The mean pay gap for Borders College is **14.1%.** This figure includes part time hours. This has increased since our last review in 2021 at which point the gender pay gap was **9.2%**. Contributing factors include an increase in the number of males in middle and senior management roles, and the departure of a number of experienced female lecturers from the organisation. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provisionally reported in 2022 that the overall mean gender pay gap in Scotland was **8.3%.**

The overall median gender pay gap at Borders College is **28.9%**. This figure includes part time hours. This has decreased since our last review in 2021 at which point the median gender pay gap was calculated at **30.1%.**

The average/mean disability pay gap at Borders College is **7.48%**. This is lower than the national disability pay gap which was estimated at **13.8%** in 2021.

Occupational Segregation

The college is aware that women and men tend to work within gender-segregated occupations and the jobs that are most likely to be carried out by women tend to be those associated with lower pay.

The College continues to experience a clustering of male and female staff in traditionally gendered roles. For example, a higher number of female staff in comparison to male staff account for service positions in the college (including cleaning/catering, caring and administrative positions). This is reflective of wider societal assumptions of what men and women 'do'. However, gender parity in the most senior levels of College management is achieved with a **3:1** ratio in favour of females on the Executive team and **5:4** on the Senior Leadership Team. The number of females represented within the highest levels of management demonstrates that female staff are succeeding in reaching the most senior posts within the organisation.

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Male
x **1**

Female
x **3**

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Male
x **4**

Female
x **5**

CLM

Male
x **5**

Female
x **2**

LINE MANAGER

Male
x **12**

Female
x **13**

Occupational Segregation: **Horizontal**

Horizontal Segregation (% of staff holding occupations for each category)

Occupation	Male	Female
Cleaning/Catering	13%	87%
Caring	15%	85%
Facilities	100%	-
Administration	19%	81%
Assessors	25%	75%
Coordinators/Advisors	11%	89%
Lecturers	45%	55%
Curriculum Learning Managers	71%	29%
Line Manager/ICT	48%	52%
Senior Leadership Team	44%	56%
Executive Management Team	25%	75%

Occupational Segregation: **Vertical**

Vertical Segregation (% of total staff holding occupations for each category)

Occupation	Male	Female	Disabled	Minority Ethnic Group
Cleaning/Catering	2%	7%	-	-
Caring	2%	6%	5%	-
Facilities	9%	-	9%	-
Administration	5%	12%	23%	-
Assessors	15%	10%	5%	-
Coordinators/Advisors	4%	18%	23%	-
Lecturers	44%	27%	27%	100%
Curriculum Learning Managers	5%	1%	-	-
Line Manager/ICT	13%	7%	4%	-
Senior Leadership Team	4%	3%	4%	-
Executive Management Team	1%	2%	-	-

Diversity of Applications

During the reporting period, the College received **236** applications for posts across the college.

236
applicants

61
posts advertised

A higher number of applicants identified as being female.

67%
female

33%
male

36%
females successfully appointed

29%
males successfully appointed

The highest concentration of applicants fell in the ages ranges of **25-34** and **55-64**

10% of applicants declared a disability. Of those applicants, **22%** were appointed.

3% of applicants identified as bisexual, gay man, gay woman/lesbian or other. Of those applicants, **14%** were appointed.

4% of applicants identified as being from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group or Mixed or Multiple Ethnic group. Of those applicants, **11%** were appointed.

The protected characteristics of **religion, sexual orientation** and **gender reassignment** are the categories in which applicants are least likely to share information, either by selecting 'prefer not to say', or choosing not to provide information. This is likely to be related to other factors outwith any real or perceived bias or discrimination at Borders College. However, further work is required to encourage disclosure in relation to these protected characteristics, and to understand the barriers relating to lack of disclosure amongst these groups.

Equality Profile: Students

Total students 2022: 5326

Age

Under 16	31%
16-19	17%
20-24	9%
Over 24	43%

Disability

12.8% Known disability in 2021

23.5% Known disability in 2022

Student disability disclosure has increased by **10.7%** since 2021.

Gender Identity

2022

Male inc. Trans	Female inc. Trans	in another way	Prefer not to say
45.9%	51.2%	<1%	2.4%

2021

Male inc. Trans	Female inc. Trans	in another way	Prefer not to say
49.3%	49.7%	<1%	<1%

There is an increase in the number of students choosing 'Prefer Not To Say' in relation to their gender identity since 2021.

Equality Profile: Students

ETHNICITY

	2021	2022
White Scottish	72%	78%
White British	14%	<1%
White English	5%	7%
White Other	2%	4%
Polish	1%	1%
Undisclosed	1%	1%
White Irish	<1%	<1%
White Welsh	<1%	<1%
Any mixed/multiple ethnic groups	<1%	<1%
White Northern Irish	<1%	<1%
Asian, Asian Scottish or British - Indian	<1%	<1%
Black, Black Scottish or British - Africa	<1%	<1%
Any other Asian background	<1%	<1%
Asian, Asian Scottish or British - Pakistani	<1%	<1%
Other ethnic group	<1%	<1%
Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	<1%	<1%
Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish, or Bangladeshi British	<1%	<1%
Chinese, Chinese Scottish, or Chinese British	<1%	<1%
Gypsy/Traveller	<1%	<1%
Other African background	<1%	<1%
Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or British	<1%	<1%

MARITAL STATUS

Same sex civil partnership <1%
Married 9%
Other 49%
Undisclosed 41%

Same sex civil partnership <1%
Married 13%
Other 63%
Undisclosed 23%

RELIGION

	2022	2021	
Undisclosed	54%	69%	None
None	36%	11%	Christian - Protestant
Christian - Protestant	5%	10%	Undisclosed
Christian - Roman Catholic	2%	5%	Christian - Roman Catholic
Christian - Other	1%	3%	Christian - Other
Muslim	<1%	1%	Another religion or body
Another religion or body	<1%	<1%	Muslim
Buddhist	<1%	<1%	Buddhist
Jewish	<1%	<1%	Hindu
Sikh	<1%	<1%	Jewish
		<1%	Sikh

Mainstreaming Equality 2021-2023: **Progress Made**

Mainstreaming the Public Sector Equality Duty means embedding equality into our day-to-day work.

This section of the report highlights progress we have made towards mainstreaming equality. Featured are examples of good practice from across the college that demonstrate that the college is meeting the three needs of the general duty.

As a public sector body, the College must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected characteristic groups
- foster good relations between people from different protected characteristic groups by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

The College is required to report on mainstreaming every two years.

Mainstreaming Equality 2021-2023: **Progress Made**

Borders College is a successful regional college that continues to play a critical role in advancing an inclusive economy for Scotland. Building on its expertise and knowledge, Borders College works in partnership with others to draw on specific expertise in order to provide excellence in a rapidly changing world.

The significant contribution that staff make to delivering outstanding and innovative learning approaches for students and employers is valued. The College continues to recognise its staff as its biggest asset and will continue to support and invest in their development so that we retain a culture which reflects our values and behaviours.

The establishment of the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, our involvement in the Edinburgh and South East City Regional Deal and Borderlands Deal are significant opportunities for Borders College to be at the heart of inclusive economic growth.

Advances in technology mean that we now live and work in an increasingly interconnected global network. We commit to providing our alumni with the knowledge, skills and values required to embrace the opportunities and challenges they will encounter as global citizens.

Borders College is progressing positively towards mainstreaming equality with examples from across the college demonstrating this. The profile of equality, inclusion and wellbeing has certainly increased within the college over the last few years. However, we have more work to do to ensure our collective understanding of EDI translates into the ability to effectively and proactively eliminate barriers for all protected characteristic groups. In this sense, the college is still in a position of learning and is transparent in its recognition that more work is required to ensure Borders College is a truly inclusive environment to work, learn and develop.

Where we were and where we are now: Key mainstreaming activities

APRIL 2021 ----------APRIL 2023

Strategy, Approach and Governance

- The Principal and Senior Leadership Team provide a clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. A strong lead is given to staff and students that equality of opportunity and respect for others matter to the organisation. In part, this is evidenced through the 2022 launch of our Global Citizenship strategy and college-wide 'respect' campaign.
- The College's Strategic Ambition supports the values of equality, diversity and inclusion. This document can be viewed by clicking on the link: **Strategic Ambition 2020-2025**
- The College's Regional Board is actively seeking to build diversity within its membership and is exploring a range of recruitment sources including Changing the Chemistry, and has engaged with minority groups such as the Muslim women's group in Glasgow.
- The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process continues to support the College in mainstreaming equality through all functions and processes. A number of new or revised policies were supported by the EqIA process during the reporting period. All EqIA's can be viewed by clicking this link: **Equality Impact Assessments**
- To enhance accessibility of our equality documents, we published our **2021 equality mainstreaming report** in easy read format.

KEY DEVELOPMENT: Eliminating discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations

A newly developed inclusive leadership programme is being delivered to all college managers in 2022/23. The programme encourages leaders to explore complex issues in Further Education through an equalities lens. The overarching aim of this work is to further develop inclusive practice and culture at Borders College.

IMPACT:

I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff (Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey)
2018-2019: **80%**
2020-2021: **90%**
2021-2022: **92%**

Where we were and where we are now: Key mainstreaming activities

APRIL 2021 ----------APRIL 2023

Estates, ISLT and Procurement

- The college continues to invest across all campuses. Facilities provided and provision offered is improving, particularly in relation to digital infrastructure, with further work planned to ensure college campuses are inclusive spaces for all.

- A new Service Desk feature on the college's Self-Service Portal enables staff and students to easily and accessibly log issues with facilities or ISLT provision.

- The college has signed up to the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Scheme to ensure the College is a safe and inclusive place for breast and chest feeding.

- The College commits to contracting only with suppliers that comply with legislation and practice relating to equal opportunities, human rights and anti-slavery.

KEY DEVELOPMENT: Advancing Equality, Eliminating Discrimination

Developed in partnership with BT, the college's new immersive classroom is aided by 4 high specification projectors to display 360 digital content and surround sound. The space offers students the opportunity to experience real life working environments directly from a college campus. This has significant advantages in terms of advancing equality in learning and teaching (i.e. for students with disabilities). The room can also be utilised to support people with sensory processing disorders as an immersive sensory zone.

IMPACT:
Post-Covid, campus spaces are increasingly being used for events and activities designed to increase wellbeing and to re-build student community. A mental health event in November 2022 saw over **150** staff and students engaging in staff versus student competitions in various college locations.

Where we were and where we are now: Key mainstreaming activities

APRIL 2021 ----------APRIL 2023

Supporting Student Success

- The student services team continues to provide person-centred advice, guidance and support to all students, including dedicated support for those who are care-experienced and those with mental health issues.
- A mental health counselling service offers a range of therapeutic approaches including psychodynamic, person-centered and cognitive behavioural therapies.
- A total of **45** 'Survive and Thrive' workshops were delivered to students at the start of the academic year. Sessions included 'recognising low mood', 'understanding the difference between stress and anxiety' and 'challenging unhelpful thinking styles'.
- The Student Services team play an integral role in awareness raising within the college. The team organise regular campaigns that focus on EDI issues including gender-based violence, period poverty, men's mental health and disability awareness.
- A new management information system provides real-time data on student retention and success across protected characteristic groups. This provides curriculum and support teams with a richer source of information with which to analyse student achievement and apply appropriate interventions to enhance learner success.

KEY DEVELOPMENT: Advancing Equality and Fostering Good Relations

College teams came together to design and host a series of 'Quiet Inductions' over the Summer of 2022. The aim was to provide an inclusive and accessible welcome to college for students who were experiencing anxiety or worry about coming to college. Sessions were open to all, but were specifically designed to support neurodivergent students and those with mental health conditions.

IMPACT:

Learning Support in place 2021-22: **238 (4.4%)**
Learning Support in place 2022-23: **280 (7.8% to date)**

Mental health support in place 20-21:**61 (1.4%)**
Mental health support in place 2021-22: **126 (2.3%)**
Mental health support in place 2022-23: **140 (3.9% to date)**

Where we were and where we are now: Key mainstreaming activities

APRIL 2021 ----------APRIL 2023

Supporting Staff

- The college continues to offer regular and accessible training and development opportunities to all staff. There has been a focus on equalities training over the past 2 years which is set to continue into 2023.
- A Wellbeing Committee, Chaired by the Director of People Services, is responsible for driving wellbeing and social activity across the college. Events are well attended.
- A range of benefits are available to staff with regular reminders of these shared within the college magazine. This includes access to Occupational Health support and Able Futures, which provide free mental health support for all staff.
- The College continues to develop guidance to support staff with a range of equalities issues. Most recently, Guidance for Supporting Trans People, which was co-designed with trans students, was launched

KEY DEVELOPMENT: Advancing Equality

In collaboration with NHS Borders, Borders College has launched a monthly Menopause Cafe which provides a safe space for anyone experiencing menopause to make connections and share experiences. The initiative was motivated by the fact that **20%** of our staff cohort are women between 44-55. With limited menopause support available in the Scottish Borders, the College felt it was important to provide a forum for peer support and learning. The Menopause cafe has been well recieved with many attendees sharing that it has made them feel less isolated in their menopause expereince.

IMPACT:

- In 2022, Borders College was named 'Best Workplace for Women' and 'Best Workplace for Wellbeing'

Where we were and where we are now: Key mainstreaming activities

APRIL 2021 ----------APRIL 2023

Learning and Teaching

- Learning and Teaching audits enable the College to evaluate the approach to learning and teaching across the college to ensure consistency of standard and to ensure that a range of appropriate and engaging materials are in use. Audits include evidence of individualised planning and learning and equality and diversity.
- Advances in digital infrastructure enable curriculum leads to use real-time equalities data to analyse potential learner success across all protected characteristics.
- 'Ask Me Anything' monthly sessions with quality and support staff enable 1-2-1 discussion that supports positive teaching practice and inclusive learning environments.
- A range of EDI training is made available to lecturers in various formats including bespoke department sessions, formal CPD opportunities, via the learning and teaching forum, and during informal lunchtime sessions.
- Lecturers working in partnerships with rural employers are careful to work only with those who welcome a diverse mix of students.

KEY DEVELOPMENT: Advancing Equality

As part of the college's digital transformation project, work has been undertaken to develop Canvas, the College's new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to improve accessibility and inclusive learning across the whole curriculum. This has included the implementation of a new 'learning and teaching' course for staff which facilitates self reflection of own practices as well as the sharing of good practice across the college.

IMPACT:
Student Satisfaction 2020-21: **90%**
Student Satisfaction 2021-22: **94%**

% observations graded as Excellent, Very Good or Good:
2020-21: **60%**
2021-22: **80%**

Mainstreaming Equality in our Media

Menopause Matters

13 September 2022

Getting the Scottish Borders talking about the M-Word

Charitable Enterprises

7 April 2022

Charitable enterprise project sees beauticians help improve children's lives

Disability Inclusion

8 September 2022

Borders College Puts Inclusion at the Heart of the Start of Term

Student Success

4 March 2022

Alicja's delight after 'triple win' at National ALBAS Awards

Wellbeing and Mental Health

8 September 2021

College unveils 'Breathing Space Bench' in a bid to boost mental health awareness

Advancing student opportunity

27 July 2022

Turing Scheme helps fund student trip of a lifetime to Toronto

Mainstreaming: **Case Studies from Across the College**

Being an inclusive College is not about grand gestures; it's about everyday interactions and behaviours that make the college a better place to learn and work.

This section of the report highlights examples of where the College's approach to mainstreaming equality has impacted on the learning experiences of our students, or has contributed to wider organisational understanding of equalities issues.

Case Study 1: **Disability Inclusion**

ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION, ADVANCING EQUALITY

Sam was studying HND Year 2 Business at Borders College. They had severe medical issues, including Neurological Functioning Disorder and suffered ticks and seizures.

Staff and other students were made aware of their situation and how this could be managed in the classroom environment. The student linked to other college support systems, such as the Student Association and Equalities Officer.

Borders College put together a medical protocol, including the student being taught on the ground floor, in a classroom having a safe environment.

The student felt very strongly about what is happening in the world at the moment, and wanted to overcome all forms of challenges with their disability. Throughout the year they continue to be a high achiever in classes. They were positive and upbeat, their resilience, sense of humour and sheer determination was awe inspiring for fellow students.

The student is hugely passionate about the Scottish Borders and Scotland, and along with all the positives the student was not scared to share their opinions.

At the 2021/22 Borders College student and staff awards ceremony this student was the overall winner of the 'Student most likely to be the First Minister of Scotland.'

Case Study 2: **Towards Gender Equality**

FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS, ADVANCING EQUALITY

When Alex started studying NC Gamekeeping at a different college her experience in a classroom was initially poor, as she was the only female on the course. She felt a strong male slant, both in terms of the language and the behaviours, used by staff and students. The male lecturers excluded her from some of the class discussions and failed to link her personal interest in wildlife photography, to the subject area.

Before transferring to Borders College to complete her HNC Gamekeeping, she set up a social media page on developing understanding of the “field to fork” concept, and where your food comes from. She posted videos of cooking venison recipes.

The students work placement at Borders College was on a remote Scottish island and she spent long periods of time working on her own. When she did encounter other gamekeeping staff, they were extremely supportive and there was a strong culture of everyone looking after each other.

She used her Course Tutor for advice and together they put in place classroom activities delivered both on campus and online that challenged the stereotype of a gamekeeping student. She was profiled as part of college marketing campaigns for the subject area and nominated for college graduation and national awards.

The success this brought had a positive impact on herself and her future career as a gamekeeper. It channelled new interest in a profession which had diversified into different roles and has become more acceptable for females to apply.

Case Study 3: **Breaking Barriers**

ADVANCING EQUALITY

Charlie , aged 16 , left school in December 2021 as a winter leaver and started on the SCQF Level 4 Passport to College course along with 11 other students. They were studying future skills provision including Data Science, Literacy, and the John Muir Award.

Charlie had issues with their funding and was struggling to obtain a birth certificate. They had wide ranging learning needs. In the same group were a range of students, with varying needs including care experience.

At Borders College the student had a holistic assessment of their learning needs, and required a high level of interventions from different support services. This situation coupled with the needs of the wider student group meant that a wrap around support system was put in place by a range of staff from curriculum, learning support, student funding, independent learning and student services.

The staff group met each Friday morning to identify and support the coordination and delivery of learning support for each student in the group. This allowed increased student bursary funding to become available quickly.

Students completed an “All About Me” document that provided a quick insight into needs that had not been picked up on the application form. External support was brought in to provide workshops on resilience and well-being. The “Early Intervention” meetings had every staff member investing time into student achievement and success. Students were also aware they were in the “spot-light.” The student success was 92% and 10 students gained full time places on FE college courses for 2022-2023.

Case Study 4: **Student Stories**

FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS, ADVANCING EQUALITY, ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION

As part of our ongoing work to raise awareness for equalities issues, we have been capturing the stories student and staff stories. These videos are an example of the College's efforts to foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without.

During Care-Experience Week we spoke to students about their experiences through the care system. This is Reece's story.

We spoke to Ben about his new student podcast that explores a range of issues affecting the student experience.

During Disability Awareness Month, Eve told us about her experiences as an autistic student.

Case Study 5: **Care Aware**

ADVANCING EQUALITY

The Borders Young Talent (BYT) programme was developed in partnership with Robertson Trust. It was established to widen participation in Further and Higher Education for young people irrespective of their background or economic circumstances.

Target groups for support include young people who are care-experienced, carers, those who are experiencing disadvantage due to economic/rural deprivation and those at risk of disengagement due to poor attendance or exclusion due to their behaviours.

As part of the BYT Programme, young people are provided with one-to-one mentoring to support a successful transition from school to college. The mentors role is to help the young person identify barriers to attendance or completion of their college programme and provide tailored support through the school-to-college transition.

The programme was extended in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting period of lockdown. The extension of the project saw a re-focussing of support away from part-time school link programmes towards directly supporting full time first year entrants to college. The new model allowed for greater scope in providing support to young people and in helping learners achieve their desired outcome.

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT BYT?

> "He puts you in the mood for the day. He does a lot of wee things, comes round and meets you and just keeps you going. He comes for coffee and a chat, and I even had him down at the farm and he was clipping sheep. He get his wellies and boiler suit. He just kinda chats away, just about normal stuff."

> "I was quite confident, but I was not the best behaved at school and at the start of college. But it's helped a lot with my behaviour and that. It's helped me calm down a lot."

Case Study 6: **Opportunities for All**

ADVANCING EQUALITY, FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS

Students enrolled on Supported Programmes courses have regular opportunities to gain work experience through community volunteering and by working in the college's restaurant. All courses take part in fundraising activities, volunteering and other community-based activities.

The annual Access Christmas Fair provides valuable opportunities for students with additional learning needs to develop skills in entrepreneurship and team work. Students prepare baked goods and crafts to sell, alongside a range of local artisan businesses.

In 2021, Borders College established a series of Wellbeing Cafes, and a Menopause Cafe. The Supported Programmes courses were invited to host the cafes, preparing and serving scones, teas, coffees and other refreshments. They also played a key role in the recent 'MenTalk' mental health campaign by making and serving free and healthy meals to students to improve wellbeing.

Involvement in these initiatives provides opportunities for students to build confidence and improve communication and organisational skills. The events, which are largely focused on equalities issues, provide insight into a range of topics which can be discussed in class.

This year, a group of Intro to Animal Care students are participating in the Young Enterprise Scotland 'Teams' project, which provides opportunities for students with additional learning needs to set up and run their own Young Enterprise student company under the guidance of a business mentor. With access to extensive resources, videos and step-by-step guidance, teams make all the decisions about their business, from agreeing a company name, managing the company finances and selling to the public through pop-up shops and trading stations.

The student company will sell a range of hot food options to students at reduced prices in order to combat food poverty and to support students on courses that typically required a lot of outdoor working.

The Teams project is enabling students to gain practical business experience, enterprising mindset and employability skills needed to help them build successful futures.

Equality Outcomes 2021-2025: **Progress Made**

In April 2021, the College published a set of four Equality Outcomes. We are required to publish these every four years and report on our progress towards meeting them every two years.

This section provides an interim progress update against these outcomes. To view our updated equality outcome action plan in full, please refer to **Equality Outcomes Action Plan: Progress 2021-2023.**

National Equality Outcomes (NEOs)

In 2019, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) entered into a strategic partnership to enhance leadership and oversight in tackling persistent inequalities in the tertiary system.

As part of this work, a series of National Equality Outcomes (NEOs) were developed with an expectation that educational institutions across Scotland contribute to these as part of their Public Sector Equality Duty.

NEOs were published by the SFC in January 2023 . We have aligned these to the college's Equality Outcomes 2021-2025. Between now and April 2025, we will take appropriate steps to contribute to the achievement of these NEOs, where appropriate to our students and staff.

Our Equality Outcomes 2021-2025

1

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

2

At Borders College we will improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce

3

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

4

At Borders College staff and students will feel more confident to report hate incidents and harrassment

Our Equality Outcomes: **Alignment with National Outcomes**

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

Aligns with the following National Equality Outcomes:

- Institutions will have regard to significant imbalances on courses and take action to address it.

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

Aligns with the following National Equality Outcomes:

- Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant populations, increase the representation of disabled staff in the workforce and on College Boards.
- Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase racial diversity and address any racial diversity issues in College Boards.
- Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase the racial diversity of teaching and non-teaching staff to align with student representation in the sector.
- Trans staff and students report feeling safe to be themselves in the tertiary system (*also aligns with EO 3*).
- Men (staff and students) know how to access mental health support, recognising intersectionality within that group. (*also aligns with EO 3*)
- Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual staff and students report that they feel safe being 'out' at college (*also aligns with EO 3*).

Our Equality Outcomes: **Alignment with National Outcomes**

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

Aligns with the following National Equality Outcomes:

- Success rates for college students aged under 19 will improve
- Success and retention rates of college students who delate a mental health condition will improve
- Disabled students report feeling satisfied with the overall support and reasonable adjustments received, including from teaching staff, while on their course.
- Institutions should have regard to attainment levels by racial group and ensure that their curriculum is diverse and anti-racist.

EO 4. At Borders College staff and students will feel more confident to report hate incidents and harrasment

Aligns with the following National Equality Outcomes:

- Staff and students feel supported and safe and are confident that complaints of harassment or bias on the grounds of race will be dealt with appropriately because complaints procedures are fit for purpose and offer effective redress.
- Students and staff report that they have confidence in institutional report and support mechanisms because they are fit for purpose.
- Staff and students know how to access support about violence, harassment and abuse, report their experience and feel properly supported in doing so because the services are fit for purpose.
- Institutions can evidence approaches that prevent and respond to violence, harassment and abuse

Outcome 1:
Progress Update

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

What have we done?	Short-term Result	Progress towards outcome	What do we need to do?
Gender segregation is addressed in promotion and outreach activities	Regular social media and news coverage showcasing students and staff in gender minority. Borders Menopause Cafe launched in October 2022. Inspirational talks delivered to classes.	3 years trend indicates that gender imbalance is reducing across a number of curriculum areas.	Re-engage with schools on this work.
Embedded activities within the curriculum to inform, inspire and engage students about issues relating to gender segregation	Increased organisational awareness through EDI training MenTalk campaign encourage more men to talk about their mental health. An equalities planning group delivers monthly activity relating to specific equalities themes.	Good engagement in events and activity, including increases in cross-college collaboration to plan and deliver activities	Continue to offer support to the curriculum to engage embed activities

Outcome 2:
Progress Update

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

What have we done?	Short-term Result	Progress towards outcome	What do we need to do?
Recruitment review underway	Working with Public Social Partnership 'Apt' to review the inclusiveness of the College's digital and face-to-face recruitment processes.	Awaiting recommendations which, when applied, should create even more accessible routes into College employment.	Apply recommendations once received.
Completed staff induction review	A series of projects underway to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of staff induction processes.	Projects are anticipated to equip staff with the appropriate skills, understanding and support to make a good start in their role and build a sense of belonging.	Implement all projects and evaluate their impact.
Design and delivery of an inclusive leadership programme for all college leaders	The programme provides targeted support to all leaders in relation to a range of current equalities issues	Staff feedback suggests the programme is increasing staff confidence and awareness of equalities issues.	Effective evaluation of programme throughout its delivery.

Outcome 3:
Progress Update

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

What have we done?	Short-term Result	Progress towards outcome	What do we need to do?
Published transgender guidance for staff	Improved staff confidence in supporting students.	Greater engagement with EDI Officer on issues relating to supporting trans people	Encourage all staff to engage with the resource
Delivered 'quiet induction' to support a more inclusive student induction process	Over 60 students attended sessions which offered quiet tours, 1-1 meet and greets with staff and introductions to key college services	It is difficult to quantify the long-term effect on retention but it is likely to improve the experience for neurodivergent students and those with mental health issues.	Deliver Quiet Induction as a mainstreamed EDI activity, building on its success each year.
Equalities dashboard on ProMetrix enables ongoing monitoring of protected characteristic groups	Staff now have the ability to monitor and review real-time equality data across student groups.	Longer-term, there is opportunity to monitor trands year on year and develop targetted interventions in response to real-time student data.	Continue to develop functionality to capture in-year disclosures.
Launched MenTalk campaign designed to encourage men to talk more about their mental health	Over 100 staff and students participated in events	It is hoped that campaigns encourage students to reach out for support and advice to help them succeed in their course.	Encourage staff and students with particular interests/lived experience to help drive and support similar campaigns.

Outcome 4:
Progress Update

At Borders College, staff and students will feel more confident to report hate incidents and harassment.

What have we done?	Short-term Result	Progress towards outcome	What do we need to do?
Launched a college culture survey to collect feedback relating to hate crime and harassment on campus	34 responses were received. Recommendations addressed via campaigns and staff training.	Improved understanding of the culture in relation to hate crime and harassment	Develop an accessible anonymous hate crime reporting tool to more effectively identify issues as and when they arise.
Launch of Respect campaign	Addresses themes relating to prejudice, discrimination and consent	Developing a culture of zero-tolerance and building better organisational understanding of prejudice and discrimination	Establish a respect working group to support the planning of 'respect' events
Safeguarding policies and procedures have been updated and an online system of recording safeguarding concerns has been established	Staff have a clear reporting process for safeguarding concerns. Additional deputy safeguarding officers have been recruited and trained.	Improved reporting processes will support most vulnerable students to keep safe and progress in their course.	Deliver ongoing Safeguarding awareness-raising and training
Working with local domestic abuse partners to increase presence of services across campuses	Increases in GBV disclosure when support services are on site.	Working with local domestic abuse partners is having a direct impact on the number of students choosing to disclose GBV	Continue to build partnerships

Equality Outcomes: **Case Studies from Across the College**

This section of the report highlights some of the work the college has already undertaken in order to achieve our Equality Outcomes.

Equality Outcome Case Study: **Mentalk**

Outcome 1

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

Mentalk is a men's mental health campaign that was developed by a team of mental health champions from across the college. Activities and events were designed to raise awareness of mental health support, target issues like food poverty which often contribute to poor mental health, and provide environments where men feel more comfortable to talk about their feelings.

Activities include:

- Weekly men's walking group
- Men's mental health cafe
- College FIFA tournaments
- Staff versus students sports
- Cooking demos: Meals on a budget

Impact:

Through the Mentalk campaign, the college has successfully raised awareness for an equalities issue that disproportionately affects men. Over 100 staff and students engaged in events and activities. The project is also providing opportunities for male staff to engage with equalities issues and their involvement has helped shape events that male staff and students are keen to engage with. This work has contributed positively to challenging discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

Case Study: Inclusive Leadership

Outcome 2

At Borders College we will improve diversity disclosure rates to better support and reflect the diversity of our workforce

In 2022 Borders College launched a bespoke inclusive leadership programme. Sessions were designed to equip managers with the skills, confidence and understanding to address equality issues in the workplace. Over the course of 6-months managers will cover a range of equality topics including mental health, menopause, unconscious bias, neurodiversity and intergenerational working. The programme encourages leaders to explore complex equality issues in relation to their job role with an overarching aim to create an even more inclusive culture at Borders College.

Training includes:

- Understanding the Equality Act 2010
- Managing mental health in ourselves and others
- Achieving a culture of psychological safety for improved performance
- Inclusive leadership for a contemporary workforce
- Leadership techniques for a VUCA environment
- Using cognitive psychology to develop colleagues and encourage effective decision making

Impact:

Through the training, college leaders have been effectively engaged in learning and discussion about equality diversity and inclusion. Feedback has been very positive with many stating that sessions are informative and that their confidence and understanding had improved as a result of attending.

Many staff still feel the need to improve their confidence and understanding in various equalities issues. We will continue to offer a range of formal and informal training opportunities to staff. A programme of equalities training accessible to all staff is planned for 2022-23. To provide continuity and consistency, themes will be aligned to the sessions being delivered to managers.

Case Study: Quiet Induction

Outcome 3

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

Quiet Induction was intended to focus on improving the student experience for neurodiverse people and was inspired by the 'quiet hour' practices that are increasingly seen in supermarkets, where the lights are dimmed and the noise is lowered to create a more enjoyable experience for those with autism and other sensory difficulties. We wanted to create a similar experience for autistic students at Borders College, where they could learn more about college life in a quiet and calm environment.

Our key objectives included increasing students' awareness of the support available, providing opportunities for students to familiarise themselves with the college buildings, developing early positive relationships with key staff, and providing 1-1 sessions for students to enrol. To ensure all events were fully accessible, all activity was underpinned by the NICE outcomes for autism-friendly environments

Crucial to the success of this project was seeking involvement of those with lived experience and their representatives. This was a feature of all aspects of our planning, delivery and design. Autistic staff and students and local disability partners played an invaluable role in shaping supported enrolment through their input and feedback. A team of student ambassadors, all of whom had lived experience of disability, provided quiet campus tours for all visitors. This was particularly beneficial for disabled visitors, who felt able to talk freely and comfortably with the team of volunteers about their personal circumstances. Equally, our volunteers were able to provide reassurance by sharing their positive experiences of being at College.

Supported enrolment enabled 60 students to become successfully enrolled on a course at Borders College. Without this support it is likely that many would have found it difficult, or would have been unable to secure their place.

The 'Respect' Campaign

Outcome 4

At Borders College staff and students will feel more confident to report hate incidents and harassment

In summer 2022 the College launched a new 'respect' campaign. The campaign is part of a larger piece of work to embed Global Citizenship across the College. The respect campaign aims to develop the the following themes:

- Be responsible to yourself, others, the community and the environment
- Be resilient - be ready for a challenge and have the appropriate coping strategies
- Be respectful to yourself, others and the environment

Achievements so far:

- Working group formed to progress the campaign
- Respect video launched
- During Student Welcome Sessions at the beginning of the year, new students heard from key staff about respect, discrimination and the college's responsibilities in relation to equality diversity and inclusion
- 45 'Survive and Thrive' workshops were delivered to students at the start of the academic year which were designed to increase resilience (e.g. recognising low mood, understanding the difference between stress and anxiety and unhelpful thinking styles/self-esteem.
- The College celebrated 16 days of action, raising awareness for the impact of violence against women and girls through wellbeing events and encouraging students to complete an online gender-based violence module
- Preparations to launch the BRIT Challenge in January 2023, encouraging staff and students to engage in fundraising challenges to enhance wellbeing. Proceeds will be re-invested in student wellbeing initiatives.
- Currently developing a series of consent workshops in partnership with Scottish Borders Rape Crisis

Progress: **Concluding remarks**

It is simply not possible to capture the richness of the ongoing EDI work at Borders College in one report. As such, this report serves as a snapshot, and tells a story, of what we have achieved over the last two years to mainstream equality and progress our equality outcomes.

Many of the examples within this report evidence how the college is effectively responding to the legislative requirements set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Many others demonstrate how the College regularly steps beyond what is required within the PSED. Ultimately what is reflected in this report is the absolute commitment our staff have to their students, their colleagues, and to the organisation as a whole.

We anticipate the years ahead will be challenging. The cost of living crisis, political unease, and the continued impact of Covid-19 have created a socio-economic landscape in which inequalities have become supercharged. It is within our gift to do what we can to address the most persistent inequalities faced by our college community while managing the increasing financial pressures experienced across the college sector.

Despite these challenges, Borders College will continue to demonstrate its commitment to equality and inclusion. As the college enters a new phase in its development, with the appointment of a new Principal and members of the Executive team, it will continue its work to be a progressive organisation that is truly inclusive for all.

BORDERS COLLEGE

Regionally Focused – Globally Engaged

Equality Outcomes Action Plan: Progress Update 2021-2023

January 2023

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Introduction

The following table illustrates progress made towards our Equality Outcomes 2021-2025. Further detail on how we continue to mainstream equality across the organisation is detailed in our Equality Mainstreaming Update Report 2021-2023.

Commented [AB1]: Ian – hyperlink to mainstreaming report when published please

As at January 2023 we have completed 14/18 actions.

Priorities between 2023-2025 include;

- Developing accessible reporting mechanisms for hate crime and harassment.
- Exploring opportunities to further embed equality and diversity within the curriculum.
- Increasing organisational awareness of the potential impact of unconscious bias across all aspects of business.

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Equality Outcomes: Progress Made 2021-2023

Not Started		In Progress		Complete		Not Complete	

Outcome 1: At Borders College we will reduce gender imbalance in subject areas where there is a gender split of more than 75% (Construction, Creative Industries, Health & Social Care, Sport, STEM)

Outcome Lead(s): AP STEM & Sustainability & AP Articulation & Essential Skills

Indicators:

- Priority actions related to gender imbalance are embedded into operational team working and quality processes
- More individuals from minority genders are recruited to curricular areas and support services
- Improved retention and attainment from students in a minority gender

Action(s)	Timescale	Responsibility	Progress Made	Overall Progress
Embed an annual plan of activities within the curriculum to inform, inspire and engage students about issues relating to gender	Apr 2023	CLMs	• EDI support and training featuring lived experience has been delivered across college teams, leading to greater organisational awareness of equalities themes/issues and how to address them. • Enterprise Roadshow hosted in Nov 2022 included a focus on female entrepreneurship. • Equalities calendar supports the coordination of monthly EDI events/campaigns. A cross-college working group drives this activity. • Recent organisational changes have aligned equalities more closely with curriculum	

segregation (e.g. inspirational talks)			• Equalities Officer scheduled to attend CLM meetings throughout the year to provide input on EDI. • Global Citizenship strategy and college-wide 'respect' campaign launched in Oct 2022. • Inspirational speakers from industry are a regular feature of vocational curriculum areas, e.g. hair and beauty, construction. • Andy's Man Club have hosted information sessions on multiple campuses to raise awareness for men's mental health.	
Address gender segregation in all promo and outreach	Apr 2022	All CLMs, Head of Marketing	• Case studies and news articles used regularly within college promotion, as detailed in mainstreaming report. • Borders Menopause Café was launched at Borders College October 2022 in partnership with NHS Borders.	
Take positive action in recruitment to attract gender minority applications to curricular areas and support services	Apr 2025	Recruiting Managers, Head of HR	• Managers to receive unconscious bias training during AY 2022-23, including how this can impact on recruitment • An independent review of the college's recruitment processes is currently underway.	
Develop pilot mental health student input	Apr 2022	CLM (STEM), Head of Student Services, MH	• Throughout the student induction period, the college's mental health team delivered a range of wellbeing sessions to students across the college	

		Officer, EDI Officer	• Monthly Wellbeing cafes are hosted by student support team in College restaurant. Each is aligned to equality themes outlined in the college's awareness calendar with relevant external organisations invited to attend.	

Impact

- **78** staff and students attended Andy's Man Clubs sessions in 2022. Sessions have resulted in disclosures of poor mental health. We understand that several students have accessed support through Andy's Man Club as a result of their input.
- The college has seen good representation of women in male-dominated pursuits, e.g. female students winning awards in Godolphin Stud and Stable staff awards and Lantra. A female downhill mountain biking student featured on the Adventure Show.
- **85** responses to Menopause Café consultation. The initiative is receiving positive comments from the local community on social media, and sessions are well attended. The café is having a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of those who attend. Some people have shared that it has made them feel less alone, less isolated, and more understood.
- Enterprise events have played a role in raising the profile of local female entrepreneurs.
- College Awareness calendar has ensured EDI themes are explored and promoted every month at Borders College including a combination of physical events, online campaigns and newsletter/newspaper articles.
- Inclusive Recruitment Review launched Oct 2022. Recommendations will support improvements to our processes where required.
- On the whole, withdrawal rates of male and female students have remained steady over the past 3 years at an average of **11%** for both groups. However, in curricular areas with high levels of gender segregation females are more likely to withdraw than males. For example, construction courses have an average withdrawal rate of **19%** for female students compared to **13%** for male students over the past 3 years.
- On the whole, the gender gap in the curriculum at Borders College is reducing. Over the last 3 academic years Construction, Creative Industries and STEM have all observed a year-on-year increase in under-represented genders. Construction has seen a **5%** increase in female students, Creative Industries has seen a **2.5%** increase in male students and STEM has seen a **2.7%** increase in female students. Sport and Outdoor and Early Years have also demonstrated an upwards trend in respect to gender segregation with more students from underrepresented gender groups in 2022-23 than 2020-21.

Next steps

- Continue to raise awareness of equalities themes
- Re-visit the opportunity to set up peer support groups for gender-specific issues, i.e. menopause and men's wellbeing
- Address recommendations from recruitment review
- Longer term, the College should address unconscious bias within learning and teaching, including work to decolonise the curriculum. We do not anticipate this work can be achieved within the remit of the current action plan. However, we can start laying the groundwork in terms of increasing understanding of unconscious bias and gently introducing the concept of anti-racist curriculum under the auspices of Global Citizenship.
- Ensure all leaders receive unconscious bias training and evaluate impact of training on approaches to recruitment.
- In certain curricular areas, the number of students preferring not to disclose their gender identity is increasing. The College should continue to monitor these trends and consider interventions, i.e. trans awareness training, where appropriate.

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

Indictors:

- Improved disclosure rates across protected characteristic groups
- More individuals recruited to the college from protected characteristic groups
- Improved staff awareness of how to support colleagues with protected characteristics

Action(s)	Timescale	Responsibility	Progress April - Sept 2022	Overall Progress
Review recruitment and induction processes to identify barriers for staff from protected characteristic groups and implement recommendations	Apr 2023	Head of HR, EDI Officer	• Induction review completed April 2022. All recommendations accepted by SLT. Projects now underway, including changes to delivering compliance and the introduction of a staff welcome day. • Recruitment review underway - currently working with 'Apt' to review the inclusiveness of Borders College recruitment processes. Apt is a public social partnership designed to reduce the disability employment gap.	
Address unconscious bias through delivery of training and awareness raising activities	Apr 2022	Head of HR, HR & Dev Officer	• Planned delivery in 2022-23 as part of newly developed college-wide leadership programme.	
Deliver EDI training for all line managers, including targeted support for LGBT+	Apr 2024	Head of HR, HR & Dev Officer, EDI Officer	• An newly developed inclusive leadership programme will be delivered to all college leaders which will cover: - Understanding Equalities Law - Managing Mental Health in Ourselves and Others - Achieving a Culture of Psychological Safety for Improved Performance	

and disability awareness			- Inclusive Leadership for a Contemporary Workplace - Leadership Techniques for a VUCA Environment - Using Cognitive Psychology to Develop Colleagues and Encourage Effective Decision Making • Ongoing support continues through delivery of bespoke EDI training sessions and advice and guidance as part of new 'Ask Me Anything' drop-in initiative for CLMs.	
Review EDI focus in staff induction processes and training modules	Apr 2023	Head of HR, HR & Dev Officer, EDI Officer, VP Finance	• Review of staff induction complete.	
Identify and address barriers to staff engaging in non-essential equalities CPD	Apr 2023	Head of HR, EDI Officer, HR & Dev Officer	Training provision has been reviewed and now includes: • Equalities information available on the staff portal • A range of informal CPD events e.g. online and through L&T forum • EDI training to be delivered at away days. • External training opportunities shared regularly	
Impact • Disability disclosure remains steady since 2021 at **8%.** This compares well with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) national college staff data which was **6.7%** for the year 2020-21. • LGB disclosure has slightly improved since 2021 from **1%** to **2**%. No staff members have disclosed transgender or non-binary identities. The recent census results in England and Wales has estimated that approx. **3%** of the UK population have disclosed LGB identity and **0.5%** identify as trans. • The average age of staff has reduced since 2021 from **49** to **47** years old.				

• The disability pay gap at Borders College is **7.48%.** This is lower than the national disability pay gap, estimated at **13.8%** in 2021. • Feedback on the Inclusive Leadership programme is positive with many attendees stating that their confidence and understanding of EDI issues has improved as a result of attending. • Feedback from inclusive recruitment review was positive. A number of recommendations will be considered, including application for a SUSE workplace award and the completion of an accessibility review of website and online recruitment processes. • Staff have engaged in a range of training including Dyslexia Awareness (**8** attendees), Tourette's Awareness (**16** attendees), Menopause Awareness (**98** attendees), Trans Awareness (**27** attendees), Gender-Based Violence (**29** attendees) • Lived experience training to continue into 2022-23 with trans awareness sessions booked for Creative Industries staff in 2022-23. The College is actively seeking trainers from diverse backgrounds to provide input on unconscious bias in 2023. • Staff induction guidance document created in line with new induction process. Training on new process will be delivered to all managers in 2023.	
Next Steps: • Evaluate impact of inclusive leadership training programme • Continue to track disclosures of protected characteristics year on year • Adopt recommendations from inclusive recruitment reviews and monitor impact on disclosure • Run a staff campaign to encourage disclosure across protected characteristic groups • Deliver a programme of all staff equalities training that aligns with the content of the inclusive leadership programme	

Outcome 3: At Borders College, retention and success rates for protected characteristic groups are close to the average of the student population
Outcome Lead(s): AP (Q&D)

Indicators:

- Improved retention and success rates for students in protected characteristic groups
- Improved retention and success rates for SIMD
- Robust Equality Impact Assessments completed
- Improved accessibility across college services and facilities

Actions(s)	Timescale	Responsibility	Progress April - Sept 2022	Overall Progress
Review accessibility of college communications, services and facilities, including renewed accessibility audits of all college campuses	Apr 2025	Head of Facilities, Student Funding Manager, Head of MIS, Head of Student Services, BCSA Support Officer, EDI Officer	• EDI committee to approve opting into the breastfeeding friendly scheme • College exploring the creation of a multi-purpose quiet zone for students who are neurodivergent/experiencing mental health issues • Introduce baby changing facilities across campuses • Welcome sessions for students were delivered in person, live streamed and shared on student portal	
Develop staff guidance on addressing EDI issues (e.g. supporting	Apr 2022	EDI Officer	• Draft transgender guidance complete for approval at equality and inclusion committee • EDI Officer and transgender students delivering LGBT awareness training to department teams. • Accessibility guidance developed and published • Newsletter articles providing advice and guidance on EDI themes.	

transgender students)				
Develop initiatives to combat issues that have a disproportionate impact on particular groups e.g. food insecurity, mental health	Apr 2022	Students' Association Support Officer, Head of Student Services, EDI Officer	• Menopause café to launch on World Menopause Day (18 Oct) • Supported enrolment provided accessible, quiet spaces for students to get 1-1 support to enrol and learn more about the college. This project was supported by a team of disabled students. • Exploring the introduction of a Borders College Food Larder to combat food poverty. • Mental health team running workshops designed to support students with their wellbeing, resilience, coping strategies etc.	
Develop EDI dashboard to enable ongoing monitoring of protected characteristic groups	Apr 2022	Head of MIS, AP (Q&D), EDI Officer	• Complete – meeting MIS Team to receive additional training and to review and refine information displayed • Quality manager regularly reports to Equality and Inclusion and Learning and Teaching Committees on success and retention of protected characteristic groups.	
Conduct diversity audits of course content and teaching and learning plans	Apr 2024	AP (Q&D) Quality Development Specialist	• Teaching and learning audit of Moodle content took place. Reported at teaching and learning committee in Oct 2021. • Equality audit calendar in place for 21/22 with annual audits taking place across all areas. This includes a desktop audit of equality and diversity.	

Impact:

- Equality Impact Assessments reviewed at Equality and Inclusion committee and published in full on the college website.
- Transgender guidance for staff has been published – this was developed in partnership with trans and non-binary students
- Accessibility guidance for staff has been published
- Proposal for Quiet Zone was approved by Equality and Inclusion committee. This was co-created with neurodivergent students. Currently identifying a suitable space.
- Supported enrolment helped over **50** students enrol on a Borders College course and build friendships and peer support networks with student disability ambassadors
- **158** students attended Welcome Sessions during Week 1 of term with **116** online streams – many of these are likely to have been full classes.
- Student FAQs developed based on audience Q&A, providing greater accessibility for information in relation to funding, mental health support, food poverty and other issues important to students
- Success and retention of Protected Characteristic groups remains a challenge; students who live in the 10% most deprived areas have the highest level of early withdrawal (**16%**). The second highest early withdrawal rates are students who are care experienced (**8%**), followed by those with a disability (**5%**).
- There has been a good level of engagement with cross-college campaigns and activities, including MenTalk and the Brit Challenge.
- A College Poverty Action Group has been recently established to provide focus for initiatives that will alleviate financial strain for students, specifically targetting interventions to address food and fuel poverty.

Next steps

- Provide ongoing support to staff to complete equality impact assessments – develop short online training video as a reference point.
- Launch Quiet Zone
- Build on the success of support enrolment/quiet induction
- Work closely with the Students' Association to provide supportive interventions for students facing the most significant barriers
- Continue to develop and deliver cross-college events and activities to improve wellbeing.
- Explore opportunities to address resilience and student wellbeing as embedded within the curriculum.
- Review accessibility across campuses

Outcome 4: At Borders College, staff and students will feel more confident to report hate incidents and harassment
Outcome Lead(s): Head of Student Services

Indicators:

- Improved awareness and analysis of student experience in relation to safety and inclusion
- Improved student and staff awareness of hate crime and support available
- Improved student and staff uptake in accessing support

Actions(s)	Timescale	Responsibility	Progress April - Sept 2022	Overall Progress
Collect and analyse student feedback related to hate crime through existing student consultation processes	Apr 2023	Students' Association Support Officer, EDI Officer	• Analysis complete. Actions/recommendations to be built into College GBV Prevention plan.	
Explore opportunities to improve accessibility of reporting processes, including the opportunity to implement a Report and Support tool	Apr 2025	EDI Officer, Head of Student Services, Student Services Team Leader, Learning Support Manager, Mental Health Counsellor	• Exploring opportunities to integrate anonymous reporting into 'one stop shop' helpdesk support • Develop anonymous reporting tool in the interim for Student Portal • Working with Scottish Borders Rape Crisis to consider ways to create closer links to the service for students on campus. • Police Scotland campus visits taking place • Border Women's Aid to host monthly drop-ins open to staff and students	

Develop an Equally Safe action plan to address violence against women and girls	June 2023	EDI Officer, Head of Student Services, Student Services Team Leader, Learning Support Manager, Mental Health Counsellor	• EDI officer delivered GBV sessions with student advice team and mental health team. • College representatives attend 'Fearless Edinburgh' group • Working with Rape Crisis to deliver GBV training to staff	
Develop equality themes for each academic year including campaigns, training and awareness raising	Apr 2023	EDI Officer, Students' Association Support Officer, Head of Student Services, Head of Marketing, Student Services Team Leader	• Respect campaign: staff/student 'respect' video in development, released November 2022 • BCSA hosted WelcomeFest – an inclusive 'freshers' event that was well supported by a range of local support organisations which had a positive impact on disclosure • Conducted consultation as part of planning for Menopause café • Welcome sessions and online student induction provided opportunities for staff to share key messages on our approach to equality and inclusion and global citizenship. • Monthly themed Welcome Cafes are planned throughout the academic year, each focussing on a different awareness topic. External organisations will be in attendance.	
Impact • Student GBV survey completed – **37** responses received • WelcomeFest promoted greater disclosure of GBV through accessibility to specialist services - **12** disclosures • Engagement with menopause café consultation: **285** engagements, **21** shares, **85** responses. **91%** of respondents identified a need for more menopause support in the Scottish Borders.				

• **158** students attended Welcome Sessions during Week 1 of term with **116** online streams, many of which were likely to be full classes. Students engaged with the accessible Q&A system (Slido) – questions are being collated by BCSA to share widely as FAQs. • **41** groups of staff and students participated in 'respect' video **Next steps** • Complete Equally Safe action plan • Develop and launch online hate crime reporting tool • Continue to plan activity around equality themes each month • Re-issue hate crime survey in 2023-24	

Equality Outcomes Action Plan: Progress Update 2021-2023

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Regionally Focused – Globally Engaged

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