

**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties  
Annual Progress Report 2021-22**

**Contact:**

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://www.nrc.ac.uk/corporate/equality/>

**Signature:**

*Fiona McDowell*

*Sean Kelly*

**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the  
Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good  
relations duties and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and  
Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2021 and March 2022**

## **PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme**

### **Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice**

- 1 In 2021-22, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

*Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*

#### **Autism Friendly College**

In August 2021 we were delighted to achieve Autism NI's Impact Award which recognised the efforts the College has made to making our campuses more Autism friendly. This award also included training nine of our college staff as Autism Champions.

As part of our ongoing commitment to make our campuses wholly inclusive, and as an accredited Autism Friendly College, the Education Support department hosted a series of autism-friendly information sessions for prospective students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) throughout the year, including a specific Autism-friendly session before our open days. The ASD information sessions, which ran across all six campuses, included guided tours to give prospective students a chance to familiarise themselves with communal areas of the College, such as the library, canteen and bathroom facilities. Student Services staff were on hand at each campus to advise on the support available to students at the College. Academic staff were also available to offer advice on subject choices. We also have recorded tours of the campus, available on our website, for prospective students unable to join us on campus for an information session or tour. We hope that the information sessions and tours will help towards a smooth transition for prospective students joining us in September to start their course.

#### **Easing transition from School to College**

During May and June, we hosted SENCO Networking events on each campus, inviting representatives from local Secondary schools and other partner organisations to attend to strengthen our partnerships and build positive working relationships. There was an opportunity to meet with the Education Support Coordinator from each campus and learn more about the support available to students with additional learning needs at the College.

### **Support for Ukrainian Refuges**

The Careers Team attended several external events hosted by Jobs and Benefits Office to provide information, guidance, and support for Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. A central contact number for the Careers Team was circulated amongst Ukrainian support centres. The College advertised and provided face to face and remote advice and guidance and advocacy for those considering study in FE. Syrian and Ukrainian students were directed to appropriate classes based on their individual capabilities. Specialist provision for these groups has included facilitating initial English language assessments and the provision of qualification equivalency documentation.

Post enrolment, the Careers Team links students with Education Support and Northern Plus who can provide additional mentoring support outside of the classroom.

We also have discrete provision in Antrim and Portstewart for these refugees. Initially this provision was informal, non-accredited, to help them integrate into the local area (and language) however, many have now progressed through formal accredited ESOL qualifications.

Albeit this is the first year we have accommodated Ukrainian displaced persons, we have been dealing with Syrian students for five years now through the VPRS/NIRRS programme.

### **Learning Disability Week**

By way of celebrating Learning Disability Week 2022 the Education Support Department prepared brief *Lunchtime Learning* videos on some of the more common Learning Disabilities and Difficulties experienced by students at Northern Regional College. Disabilities and difficulties covered include:

- Autism
- Epilepsy
- ADHD
- Dyslexia
- Hearing impairments
- Visual impairments
- Mental Health Conditions
- Retention strategies for students with Learning Disabilities and Difficulties.

These short videos, which were shared with all staff, are ideal for giving a brief insight into the conditions in order to best support students within the College.

### **Northern Plus**

As reported in 20/21, in response to low retention, achievement and success rates, the College developed a pilot student focused strategy “Northern Plus”.

Due to the success of the pilot the service, which runs to ensure timely support for students below acceptable levels of attendance and punctuality, has continued during 21/22. It also exists to help non-achieving students to

refocus, and co-ordinate support other than academic for students who are struggling with various debilitating factors.

During 21/22 973 students across the six campuses used the service. Onward referrals were also made as follows:

- Careers – 124
- Inspire Counselling – 171
- Education Support – 194
- Student Finance – 105
- Other external services – 16
- Sexual Health Clinic – 5

The service has improved students' confidence, ability to manage time and course requirements, attendance, wellbeing, chances of success in the academic year, relationship with lecturers, chance of achieving long-term goals and chances of progression to a higher-level course.

### **Students' Union**

The elections for the 22/23 Students' Union President have recently taken place. The new Student president is in her first year at the College studying Level 3 TV and Film. During the 21/22 academic year she was the LGBTQIA+ Officer for the Coleraine Campus and attended all the NUS-USI events which the Students' Union participated in. She has endeavoured to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and has set up a LGBTQIA society on campus for her fellow peers. She also created and directed videos for LGBT history month and was the winner of the COVID safety video.

At the annual NUS-USI conference our students got involved in the election process of our new NUS-USI president, 'students deserve better' campaign and policy workshops. Our students helped develop new student housing and gender-based violence policies which will be implemented across the sector.

The three main campaigns which the Students' Union ran this year were 'Anti-bullying', 'Spiking' and 'LGBT awareness'. These were three main issues which were brought up by Class Reps and they were very keen that we would run campaigns raising awareness about these complex areas. Whilst some of the campaigns we ran were online, we also had several external organisations in to speak to students including Start 360, Action Mental Health, AB coaching and the Sunshine Project.

### **LGBT Awareness**

Our student officers and class reps highlighted that they would like to see more support in place for students from the LGBT community. Our LGBTQIA+ officers in the Coleraine campus created multiple videos for LGBT history month covering Identities, Pronouns, History of LGBTQIA and the services which are available.

Students also highlighted the importance of staff understanding pronouns and the correct terminology and so pronoun pins were introduced for students to access from education support should they wish to wear one.

### **Digital Accessibility**

We are committed to improving the accessibility and usability of our website to benefit all users. We continue to work closely with our IT department to identify and resolve any accessibility issues outlined through the Web Accessibility Evaluation tool (WAVE) to make the website accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Our accessibility statement which is available at <https://www.nrc.ac.uk/accessibility> outlines the activities we undertake to increase accessibility as well as our continuing efforts to create an inclusive user experience.

Our Digital Learning Team now include Accessibility Awareness in all their training sessions with staff and continue to use tools to ensure all learning materials on Canvas are accessible.

### **Women in STEM Project**

The College continues to be a partner in a £1 million international project aimed at getting more women into STEM related subjects in higher education. The [W-STEM project](#) was conceived to improve the recruitment of women into STEM subjects primarily in South American universities. The College is both the only Further Education institution to be involved and the only institution from the UK. Led by the [University of Salamanca](#) in Spain there are fifteen partners from [Ireland](#), [Finland](#), [Italy](#), [Colombia](#), [Mexico](#), [Chile](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Ecuador](#) and Northern Ireland.

We recognise the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and have embedded STEM subjects into our curriculum focussing on the practical and industrial application of the subjects to help promote employment opportunities. Our STEM curriculum provision has expanded to include Higher Level Apprenticeships in Computing, Construction and Engineering and various STEM-related events and activities take place throughout the year to engage with key stakeholders to explore and promote the range of STEM opportunities at the College.

The College has so far been actively contributing to the planning and management of the project as well as collecting and sharing benchmarking data. In addition to delivering more female-focused STEM events, future involvement for the College will be to lead a work package for the project to map admissions processes and positive interventions that encourage successful enrolment.

### **Employee Mental Health Charter**

The College have continued to partner with the Chest, Heart and Stroke 'Well Team at Work' initiative by implementing a targeted health and well-being action plan. Various activities, campaigns and awareness raising initiatives have taken place during 21-22 to help improve employee mental health, such as:

- World Mental Health Day – Mood Matters Workplace session
- Mental Health Awareness Week – Inspire Wellbeing Services session
- Zero Suicide Prevention Online Training
- Free online Health Checks
- Time to Talk Day – staff were provided with thermal travel mugs and encouraged to connect with colleagues over break time.
- Financial Wellbeing Sessions with the Money and Pensions Service
- ‘Step into Summer’ step challenge
- Nutrition and Cookery classes with Vital Nutrition
- How to get a good night’s sleep webinar
- Bereavement and Loss webinar
- Move it Monday’s exercise videos
- Parenting NI sessions
- Introduction to Meditation session
- Wellbeing Champion training
- Men’s Health session

### **Skill Up**

The College continues to deliver the DfE funded Skill-Up programme of online courses. Originally intended as a means for providing NI residents with free upskilling courses during Covid-19, the flexible delivery and ease of access has proven popular particularly with women who may be constrained attending college due to family commitments.

### **Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP)**

The College’s vision for widening participation is that any eligible individual in its catchment area should be able to gain access and succeed within higher education, irrespective of their personal or social background.

The Widening Participation Plan is consistent with the DfE ‘Access to Success Strategy’. The Policy aims to ensure there is increased participation in higher education at the College from groups currently under-represented. In particular, it is a key strategic goal to ensure that students from the following groups are appropriately represented among the higher education student body:

- MDM Quintile 1
- having a disability (physical, sensory or learning)
- from low participation neighbourhoods (areas of high deprivation)
- young Protestant males (from areas of high deprivation)
- adult returners, particularly work-based learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The College continued the WAP Coordinator role which is a key development for progressing the WAP agenda within the College. It is envisaged that this role will mature and develop over the next three years and act as a focal point for WAP activity within the College and will be key to the delivery of the College’s WAPP. The College will seek to further develop stakeholder engagement through outreach programmes and projects. The College views this engagement to better reach the groups and individuals targeted within

WAP. The College will continue to target stakeholders including community groups, councils, and schools.

### **Bytes Project**

The Connect with Tech programme in 2022 aimed to encourage young people at most risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) into education and careers in STEM subjects. The programme delivered training and mentoring to 160 young people, across a wide reach of our four council areas and was held off-site in community centres and schools. The programme included digital and leadership skills development alongside soft skills. The programme received a budget of £417k and is currently in post project review.

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### **Schools and Community Engagement**

The Entitlement Framework programme provides the opportunity for school pupils to participate in vocational subjects they would not have the opportunity to do at school, while also providing pupils with an alternative learning experience within an FE environment. During 21/22 the College engaged with 18 schools and 630 students with a curriculum offer from Level 1/2 Occupational Studies to Level 3 A Level, in a range of vocational areas e.g., Beauty, Business, Construction, Engineering and Hairdressing. The strong partnerships with post primary schools are very much valued by the College.

We also work within our local communities to provide education. The focus this year coming out of the Covid restrictions has been re-building engagement with learners within communities. We had a total of 26 classes run in Community this year with those within the Neighbourhood renewal areas proving the most successful. A community group received Halifax funding and successfully completed a Pearson BTEC Level 2 in Art & Design and a new group, Women Breaking Barriers, received external funding to complete an OCN Level 1 Award in Using tablets & Mobile Devices. Summer classes targeted young people to complete The Young Leader and Women, Get Set, Go awards in Sports Leadership. In the year 22/23 it is planned within community education to promote OCN Level 1 awards as an introduction to education that will lead on to other FE courses.

The Community Access to Lifelong Learning (CALL) Project continues to provide a range of innovative and exciting activities, free of charge to participants, to engage the broader communities of the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas of Ballyclare and Ballymena (Ballee, Ballykeel, Harryville). The College provides learning/taster sessions shaped by the needs of the young people involved and offers a range of community-based activities and

classes for other residents, such as healthy eating, how to use the internet and arts and crafts as well as accredited qualifications.

**Sector Committee**

The College is a member of the FE Equality Coordinators' Forum which consists of Belfast Metropolitan College, South Eastern Regional College, Southern Regional College, South West College and North West Regional College. This forum meets five times per year to develop and promote a best practice and consistent approach to the implementation of Section 75 within FE in Northern Ireland.

During 21-22 the forum considered Section 75 Demonstrating Effective Leadership Self Audit Checklist, Equality Monitoring Data, Disability Action Plans, Black FE Leaders Group, Equality Scheme Review and Action plan, Gender Pay Review, Dignity at Work, Disability Confident Employer and AccessAble Contract Renewal.

**2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2021-22 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible person/ Department</b>	<b>Equality Category</b>	<b>Progress as at March 2021</b>
Keep staff equality monitoring data up to date	From November 2015	HR and Equality	All	Staff regularly using HR portal to update personal details.
Increase exploitation of student equality data for planning, policy development and market intelligence	Reviewed annually	Curriculum, Student Experience, MIS and Marketing	All	Curriculum teams report on the promotion of equality in Self Evaluation Reviews (SERS). Head of Sections are presented with retention and achievement data by equality category annually.
Further embedding of Equality & Diversity into the curriculum	Reviewed annually	Curriculum, Quality, Equality and Student Experience	All	Clear examples given in SERs. Identified in the new Preventative Curriculum Programme. Online E&D tutorial module for students. New equality video produce for use on social media.
Adopt ECNI Every Customer Counts recommendations including carrying out accessible business checklist/audits on all campuses	From June 2018	Equality, Student Services and Estates	Disability	Completed audits of all campuses. New accessible action plan developed and progressed including repainting accessible parking spaces, upgrading accessible toilets and reviewing hearing loop systems. Audit arranged for new temporary premises in Coleraine.
Increased promotion, education and awareness raising of Equality & Diversity groups/issues i.e. Fresher's, Student talks, Guest speakers, Awareness days/weeks	Ongoing	Equality and Student Services	All	Equality and Diversity promoted during fresher's fairs, class talks, anti-bullying week, guest speakers, staff development and awareness raising days/weeks. Equality issues highlighted via new I Wonder Wednesday live webinar.
Inclusion of positive publicity images in	Annually	Marketing and communications	All	The College has developed a bank of images to be used in printed and online

## PART A

College documentation				communications. These include learners of all ages, nationalities and those with disabilities.
Representative Officers on Student Unions with clear roles and responsibilities i.e. LGBT+ Officer, Disabled Student Officer and Women's Officer	Annually	Student Services	Sexual Orientation Disability Gender	Established officers in Students' Union elected annually. New constitution implemented in 2017/18. Improved communication/consultation with student body. Initial development of a LGBTQ+ society in Newtownabbey and Coleraine campuses.
Continue roll out of Mandatory Equality & Diversity and Safeguarding and SENDO online training modules.	Ongoing as part of induction programme for new staff.	Learning & Development	All	During 2021-22 390 staff completed the Equality and Diversity module. 709 staff completed the Safeguarding and SENDO module.
Fulfil commitments of ECNI Mental Health Charter	June 2018 and ongoing	HR and Equality	Disability	H&WB action plan - MH Awareness Week, Mindful Manager training, Managing Stress training, Time to Talk day, Zero Suicide training, Step Challenge.
Implementation of Transgender equality statement and procedure	September 2018	HR, Equality and Student Services	Gender	Sector Transgender Equality Statement developed and approved. Internal procedure for staff developed. Leaflet for transgender students developed.
Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP)	Annually	Head of Business & Service Industries	Groups under-represented in higher education	WAPP being progressed and reviewed annually.
Ensure Equality and Diversity features in College Development Plan and Operational Plans	Annually	SLT	All	Included in College Development Plan, Annual Report, SERs and HR Operational plan.
Monitor, Evaluate and Review Equality Improvement Plan	Annually in June	Equality Officer	All	Plan reviewed in June 2022.

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2021-22 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes                       No (go to Q.4)                       Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

NA

**3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

NA

**3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? (*tick all that apply*)

As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy (*please give details*):

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise (*please give details*):

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact (*please give details*):

As a result of changes to access to information and services (*please specify and give details*):

Other (*please specify and give details*):

Feedback from political representatives

**Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)**

**4** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

This requirement was fulfilled in year 1 of the Equality Scheme. All new job descriptions for internal and external posts include the reference “All staff have an obligation to comply with the statutory duties relating to section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and will be required to contribute to the implementation of the College’s Equality Scheme drawn up in accordance with this legislation.”

**5** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

A question regarding equality duties was included in the Self Evaluation Reviews during year 1 of the Equality Scheme.

**6** In the 2021-22 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs

- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2021-22 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality is referenced in the College Development Plan and is embedded throughout the College's strategic aims, vision and values. Specific targets in relation to Section 75 are integrated into the annual HR/CPD operational plan.

### Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2021-22 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

Actions ongoing:

Actions to commence:

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Please see Equality Improvement Plan at question 2.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2021-22 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

NA

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2021-22 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

### Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

All the time                       Sometimes                       Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2021-22 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

- The College continues to ensure all policies which may have an impact on equality of opportunity are subject to relevant consultation and that consultations are timely, open, inclusive and meaningful. During 2021-22 there was regular internal consultation with staff and trade unions with regards the review of policies and procedures.
- The College continues to progress the implementation of its Estates Strategy and is working with internal and external stakeholders to achieve this aim. Including survey of staff and students on opinions of existing campus buildings prior to decanting to alternative buildings, in advance of new buildings progressing.
- Curriculum teams have developed and progressed a model of staff/ student Consultative meetings. These meetings offer a platform for the student voice and promote an ethos of mutual respect.
- A consultation guidance document is available to all managers. It aims to provide clear assistance to managers who are consulting on new policies, strategies, plans or codes of practice.
- Various surveys have taken place with students and staff as detailed in Q.23 of this report.
- The College has a joint Lecturing Support Staff Consultative Forum. These groups are made up of Union and Management representatives and meet regularly throughout the year. Topics consulted upon included academic planner, implementation agreement, OD review, recruitment, new builds, hybrid working, classroom observation, responsibility allowances and estates strategy.
- The College's Student Union continues to develop and is consulted on a regular basis. Campus class rep meetings allows students the opportunity to discuss issues specific to their campus. In 2021-22 class reps were asked to give their feedback on the Colleges Matrix Standard review.
- All staff who leave the College are requested to complete a Staff Exit Questionnaire.
- The College has good engagement with a variety of statutory, private, community and voluntary groups. Examples of groups that the College engage with are, DfE, ECNI, local schools, local councils, businesses/employers, neighbourhood renewal partnerships, community organisations, NHSCT, PSNI, and Autism NI.

- The College's Equality Manager continues to be a member of Agencies Supporting Ethnic Communities and the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Equality Forum. These groups include representatives from various statutory, community and voluntary organisations representing the nine equality groups.
- The College's Business Development function and Senior Management Team continue to be members of various external committees including local council, economic development and funding groups, local business education partnerships, health trust groups, workforce development forum and various business and community networks and forums.

**12** In the 2021-22 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*):

**13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2021-22 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2021-22 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes       No       Not applicable – no commitment to review

**Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

Quarterly screening reports are published on our website as can be viewed at <http://www.nrc.ac.uk/nrc/equality/>

**15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

3
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**16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2021-22:

0	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> alone.

**17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

All policies screened during 2021-22 were screened out and listed on our website as part of the College’s commitment to publish a quarterly screening report. Policies are developed by a policy team and when appropriate feedback is sought internally from other staff and students. Where relevant policies are consulted upon with external stakeholders and the Equality Commission.

**18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

Yes                       No concerns were raised                       No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

NA



**23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

- The use of student data to inform policy development and planning, and to determine the needs of the students has been identified as an action in the Equality Improvement Plan.
- The College integrates the use and reporting of Student Equality Data into the Self Evaluation Review (SER) process, an integral element of the College planning process. To progress further use of student monitoring data for planning purposes various meetings have been held with the College's Management Information System department.
- The promotion of equality is monitored through the College's Self-Evaluation Review (SER) process. Curriculum teams are asked to report on how well the course team promote equality, diversity and good relations with their learners. Support teams are also required to explain and evaluate how well they promoted equality, diversity and good relationships with each other, with other staff, with learners and with external stakeholders. These responses are monitored by the Equality Officer on an annual basis.
- As a result of monitoring sickness absence statistics and carrying out the H&WB staff survey the College has developed a Health and Well Being action plan.
- The College carries out annual Induction and Mid/End of year surveys with its students. These surveys capture information about learning support, access to information, policies, student services, respect in the College, quality of teaching, facilities, accessibility and much more. In the 2021-22 Induction Survey 97% and in the Mid-Year Survey 96% of respondents agreed that *'I have been treated fairly and with respect since I started the College'*.
- Various evaluation data has also been gathered during 2021-22 such as training exit interviews, carers guidance feedback, workshop feedback, staff development surveys, graduation surveys, employer open days, digital insights survey, business development feedback, class rep feedback and staff meetings with students.
- The College regularly reviews its complaints procedure to ensure it is user friendly. This procedure is for anyone who is unhappy about the service or facilities provided by the College. This could be a learner/trainee or potential learner/trainee, service provider, supplier, employer, member of the public or other external stakeholders.
- The College continues to implement its customer comments/ suggestions/ questions form to allow us to make improvements and therefore reduce complaints. This form has also been made available electronically on the staff and student intranets.
- The College continuously monitors the uptake of all its courses and monitors retention, achievement and success of all students.
- Student and Staff monitoring data is reported on yearly. The information is then analysed for screening policies.

- Staff exit questionnaires are monitored. These include an assessment of equality and leaver's experiences and seek to establish the reasons why staff have decided to leave.
- Applicants for jobs continue to be monitored and reported on through completion of annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return.
- Grievance and harassment complaints made by staff are processed through the appropriate policy and monitoring data collected.
- Monitoring of any complaints received through the Section 75 non-compliance policy.

### **Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)**

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2021-22, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

One of the key elements of the work of the College's Equality Unit is to ensure the College is an organisation that recognises and respects diversity. Training has been developed to provide information on the College's legal duties and what this means in practice. Training ensures that staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge and expertise to work effectively with each other and all those who need services.

In 2021-22 390 staff completed the Equality and Diversity online module.

Throughout the year awareness raising of various equality related issues takes place through the staff and student intranets, emails, staff newsletters and social media.

Information on the College's equality scheme and annual progress reports are available on the College's website and the staff intranet.

An equality update is sent to the Senior Management Team annually.

- 25** Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Staff across the College have been offered the opportunity to engage in a range of training and development activities to enhance and develop their knowledge and skills in respect of supporting an inclusive College environment. Staff have attended the following equality related training during 2021-22:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Resilience	152

Living with stress, anxiety and worry	70
Autism (various)	54
Mental Health and Wellbeing (various)	43
Learning Differences and Disabilities	29
Employee Relations	23
LGBTQIA+	20
JAM Card	15
Wellbeing Champion Training	15
Parenting NI Session (x6 topics)	12
Handling difficult conversations	8
Epilepsy	3
Adverse Childhood Experiences	1
Equality in Sport	1
Unconscious bias in sport	1
Understanding Dyslexia	1
ADHD	1
Supporting new Afghan arrivals	1

Education support staff have attended various bespoke external training courses throughout the year such as:

- Designated Safeguarding Officer Training – Volunteer Now
- Gambling harm prevention training – YGAM
- Managing Behaviour – ASCERT
- Epilepsy and buccol midazolam training – NHSCT
- Quarantine Teens – NHSCT
- 5 Steps to Wellbeing – NHSCT
- Access Arrangement update – Communicate-Ed
- Level 2 Award in ADHD – Empower
- Level 2 Understanding Autism - Empower

The Equality Manager takes part in a broad range of events organised by the Equality Commission, Labour Relations Agency, Section 75 groups, or organisations working on their behalf. Some of the events/training attended during 2021-22 were:

- AccessAble Launch – NHSCT

- Understanding Recruitment and Criminal Records – NIACRO and BITC
- CACHE Level 2 Understanding Autism – Empower
- Section 75 Duties and Equality Assessment – ECNI
- Menopause Wellbeing at Work – Healthy Performance
- Working for Parents - Employers for Childcare
- Family and Work/life balance – Parenting NI
- International HR Day conference – Legal-Island
- Promoting equality in employment for people with disabilities – ECNI
- Impact of Covid on Children’s Mental Health – Legal-Island
- Challenging the Black Paradox conference – Black FE Leaders
- A whole college approach to supporting mental health and emotional wellbeing – LSEC
- STEM Gender Equality webinar – ECNI
- Diversity Mark Industry Peer Event with NICS
- How to build a disability inclusive workplace – AbilityNet
- Festival of Workplace Inclusion – Text Help
- RACE AT WORK Promoting equality and diversity in recruitment & selection - BITC

## **Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)**

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2021-22, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

### **Reasonable adjustments for staff**

The College continues to monitor and implement reasonable adjustments for staff, requirements for these are highlighted through recruitment/induction processes, Occupational health or welfare meetings. Examples of adjustments made in 2021-22 were phased return to work after absence, specialist IT equipment, restricted/ lighter duties and limited travel.

### **Learning support**

The College continues to monitor students with disabilities, these students have opportunities to advise the College of their support needs at interview, enrolment and throughout their course. The College offers support, advice and information for students with disabilities and/or Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, in order to ensure that students are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the academic and social life of the College. The student intranet has been updated and various leaflets have been produced to make students aware of the support and services available to them.

During this period 653 students were supported by the Education Support Department. 148 of these were referred to an educational psychologist for assessment.

The following is a breakdown of the student’s main disability/need:

- 48% learning difficulty (dyslexia/dyscalculia/dyspraxia/MLD, GLD)

- 22% Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- 10% mental ill health
- 7% medical conditions
- 5% ADHD /ADD
- 3% sensory impairments
- 3% mobility problems/physical conditions
- 2% Other

These students received extra support either on a one-to-one basis, as part of a small group or classroom support or with a variety of adjustments in the classroom.

18 students obtained Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

### **Learning Support Equipment**

During 2021-22, there were significant laptops purchased to help students with additional needs. Various other pieces of equipment and software were provided to improve students accessibility such as: receivers for student hearing aids, roger pens, audio shoes, digital voice recorders, dragon software, JAWS software update, Read and Write Gold, Video Spark, Trello, Dolphin SaySo software, livescribe pens, fidget toys, desk clamps, laptops, coloured reading rulers, coloured overlays, specialist chair, footrest, supernova software, ace software, adjustable tables, large keyboards, earphones, rollerball mice, scribe pens, portable magnifiers, laptop stand, PC headsets, FM hearing systems, PHONAK sound system, reading slopes and writing slopes.

### **Examination Support**

The College has provided examination support to 375 students during 2021-22. This support includes extra time, separate rooms, rest breaks, use of laptops, coloured overlay/glasses, word processing facility, use of scribes, readers and prompters, enlarged papers and electronic papers.

## **Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

**27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2021-22?

Insert number here:

0
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

NA

## **Section 3: Looking Forward**

**28** Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The Equality Scheme was reviewed in 2022 therefore a review will be due again in 2027.

**29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

- Communicate reviewed equality scheme with staff and consultees
- Roll out S75 Screening training to SMT/ Policy Authors
- Disability Confident Employer Level 2
- Disability and SENDO Awareness Training for staff
- Dignity at Work Training for staff
- Review and utilise Equality Monitoring Data

**30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2021-22) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

## PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

### Disability Action Plan 2019 - 2024 as at March 2022

#### 1. Public Life Measures

ACTION MEASURES	Timescales	Performance indicators / intended outcome	Progress as at March 2022
The Colleges will endeavour to influence the Department for the Economy to ensure participation of disabled people on the Governing Body of the Colleges.	When vacancies exist and on an on-going basis.	Governing Body will include members with disabilities.	Difficulty with achievement of this measure due to appointments being made externally. Sector Equality group have written to Department for Economy.
Continue to encourage the participation of disabled people on committees, student representatives on the Governing Body and groups across the Colleges.	Reviewed annually Year 1 – Year 5.	Membership of committees / groups to demonstrate participation of those with disabilities.	There has been an increase of Level 1 students represented on the Students' Union.  Students' Union Disability Officers elected annually across College campus sites.  Efforts have been made to establish a student disability forum however there was no uptake.

<b>ACTION MEASURES</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Performance indicators / intended outcome</b>	<b>Progress as at March 2022</b>
Encourage students with a disability to participate more fully in College life.	Annually as part of induction and ongoing throughout the year. Year 1 – Year 5.	Increased participation in student focus groups, student surveys, Students' Union Membership and where applicable non-curricular activities such as student's union and sporting activities etc.	<p>Various student focus groups have taken place over the year. Students with disabilities are encouraged to attend these.</p> <p>Students with disabilities have been elected to Students' Union.</p> <p>Equality Manager meets with Students' Union to help ensure any activities planned are accessible to all.</p> <p>Student Services provide differentiated information across the College ensuring accessibility.</p> <p>To ease transition to College our Education Support staff have arranged events for school SENCOs. Students are also offered transition visits and orientation videos have been produced.</p>
Increase awareness of specific barriers faced by people with a disability	Ongoing.	Increased awareness and understanding of barriers	We have participated in various awareness raising campaigns throughout the year including Autism

ACTION MEASURES	Timescales	Performance indicators / intended outcome	Progress as at March 2022
<p>including through linking in with National Awareness days or weeks.</p>		<p>faced by people with a disability.</p>	<p>Awareness Day, Down Syndrome Socks Day, World Mental Health Day, Cancer Awareness, Deaf Awareness Week and HIV awareness day.</p> <p>This year we highlighted Learning Disabilities Week to staff and provided short training videos on each difficulty.</p> <p>The College continues to be an active member of the Northern Adult Autism Advice Service where multidisciplinary advice is offered to those either seeking employment or attending a course at the College.</p> <p>Head of Student Services is a member of the NHSCT Autism Forum which navigates the Trusts activities to those on the Autistic Spectrum.</p> <p>This year the College has achieved Autism NI's Autism Impact Award.</p>

<b>ACTION MEASURES</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Performance indicators / intended outcome</b>	<b>Progress as at March 2022</b>
Promote the use of AccessAble website to encourage participation of prospective students.	Annually and on-going Year 1 – Year 5.	Benchmark usage of AccessAble webpage.	<p>The guides are promoted to both staff and students via a link to the AccessAble website on the front page of College's website.</p> <p>Literature has been placed at campus receptions.</p> <p>AccessAble were invited to meet with key College staff to discuss further promotion of the guides.</p> <p>A College student has become Northern Ireland's AccessAble champion, a social media campaign has been produced to promote this.</p>

## 1.2 Positive Attitudes

<b>ACTION MEASURES</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Performance indicators / intended outcome</b>	<b>Progress as at March 2021</b>
Create an open an inclusive workplace culture which displays respect for those with mental ill health	Ongoing	Positive engagement, increased provision of information and monitoring.	The College have trained a cohort of staff in Mental Health First Aid to support both staff and students in crisis.

ACTION MEASURES	Timescales	Performance indicators / intended outcome	Progress as at March 2021
			<p>We have developed 'Mindful Manager' and 'Mindful Colleague' training designed to practically support staff in positive mental wellbeing.</p> <p>A number of staff have attended Suicide Awareness/ASSIST training.</p> <p>The College has committed to the promotion of mental wellbeing by signing the ECNI Mental Health Charter.</p> <p>The College is registered as a Safe Place for those experiencing domestic violence and the trauma that follows.</p> <p>Safeguarding staff have completed Drug and Alcohol Responders Training allowing for brief intervention with those struggling with addiction and the negative impact on their wellbeing.</p>

ACTION MEASURES	Timescales	Performance indicators / intended outcome	Progress as at March 2021
			<p>Annually staff are asked to complete the Zero suicide alliance online training.</p> <p>A Health and Wellbeing programme for staff continues annually.</p>
Explore the scope of offering meaningful placements, work shadowing and volunteering for people with a disability	Ongoing	Develop capacity of people with a disability to find employment.	<p>We have investigated avenues of partnership working with external organisations to provide work shadowing opportunities.</p> <p>Students with a disability are supported by the Education Support team, curriculum staff and Training Support Officers into meaningful work placements and monitored to ensure safety and positive learning experiences.</p> <p>Further exploration with the Careers team and Inclusive Learning team to take place in 2022-23.</p>
Introduce training for front line staff on disability etiquette and relevant legislation dealing with	Ongoing	Increased use of services and facilities of those people with a disability.	<p>SEND0 and Equality are part of the staff Induction programme.</p> <p>Various disability related training is delivered to staff throughout the</p>

ACTION MEASURES	Timescales	Performance indicators / intended outcome	Progress as at March 2021
disability and the provision of goods, facilities and services.			<p>year including Mental Health Awareness, Evacuation Chairs, Epilepsy, Dyslexia, ASSIST, Domestic Violence, Drug &amp; Alcohol, ADHD, Autism awareness and JAM card.</p> <p>Individual teaching staff are given specific training depending on student needs.</p> <p>13 staff received Level 1 Autism Impact Award training. 9 Autism Champions completed Level 2 Understanding Autism.</p>
Consider development of a (Sectoral) Disability Advisory Group that could involve staff and students.	Three meetings per year	Contribute to the development of communications, consultation, screening of relevant policies, monitoring etc.	Group have considered and will review again in 2022-23.
Through Widening Access and Participation scheme increase number of students	Annually	Raise educational awareness, aspirations and educational attainment amongst the target group.	The College continues to support a variety of students, including those with disabilities from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to

<b>ACTION MEASURES</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Performance indicators / intended outcome</b>	<b>Progress as at March 2021</b>
with a disability entering the College			<p>participate in college life via Higher Education study.</p> <p>The Gallaher Trust is working in partnership with the College to provide a bursary for a designated student and this will cover their HE fees.</p>
Monitor and review the progress of the Disability Action Plan.	Annually August Year 1 – Year 5	Provision of update contained within Progress Report.	This plan is reviewed on an annual basis in March and amended accordingly.

