



# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

## **Annual Report**

**1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024**

College objectives 2024/25

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## **Foreword**

This report complements the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and recognises our legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to the protected characteristics of sex, gender reassignment, disability, race, age, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

The College is committed to.

- Creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere that is welcoming and supportive.
- Zero tolerance of discrimination or harassment.
- Making sure individual needs are met, so everyone can achieve to the best of their ability.
- Improving what we do to enhance the opportunities we provide.

The College contributes to social, economic and environmental well-being, changing lives for the better by enabling people of all abilities to fulfil their potential in work and their learning to enhance our communities through high quality professional and technical education.

As an employer and learning organisation we will conduct our business by following the values of ASPIRE.

- **Accountability**  
Accept responsibility for our actions, decisions and policies and their impact on staff, stakeholders and the environment.
- **Safeguarding**  
Maintain a safe and inclusive environment in which students can learn, achieve and progress
- **Partnerships**  
Work with those who share our vision and values
- **Inclusion**  
Foster an environment that ensures equality of opportunity enabling all to reach their full potential.
- **Respect**  
Treat everyone with respect, fostering trust, openness and honesty.
- **Excellence**  
Achieve and maintain high standards in everything we do.

This report provides an overview of data **and** reporting progress made against our objectives for 2023/24, pulling together examples of good practice.

## **Progress on objectives for 2023/24**

### **1) Sign up to Disabled Student Commitment**

The purpose of the Disabled Student Commitment (the Commitment) is to secure an enhanced and improved experience for disabled students within higher education. The Disabled Students' Commission (DSC) calls upon higher education providers (HEPs), Government, funders, agencies, regulators and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (henceforth referred to as other organisations) to adopt and promote the Commitment.

The commitment does not seek to replicate or replace legal duties but asks organisations to do more by focusing on how they can improve the disabled student experience.

Signing up to the commitment encourages the College to look holistically at our practices and policies, influencing their fulfilment our commitment to disabled students. The commitment will allow us to an insight into shaping the direction of disabled student support in higher education and the implementation of the Disabled Student Commitment across College. The College has an action plan with which to move forward. The action plan is reviewed and monitored by the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing Steering Group.

### **2) Monitor the Access and Participation Plan to ensure recommendations made by the OFS requesting variations to their 2023-24 APPs are included.**

The Access and Participation Plan sets out how we will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. The focus of the plan is to eliminate gaps in equality of opportunity throughout the student lifecycle focusing on specific groups of students. Data and evaluation of performance identified the following target groups of students the plan is focusing on improving outcomes for:

Gender and low participation neighbourhoods' groups with a focus on narrowing the gap between these groups of students

Students' performance and outcomes from low participation neighbourhoods

A focus on mature students who are choosing to study part time as data shows they are less likely to progress to highly skilled employment.

Overall success rates for our students are very good. However, we still can further improve with the above groups of students.

We measure what we have achieved through strong evidence-based activities and evaluate for impact on both the aims and objectives. This has enabled New College Durham to understand the overall impact and critically review our targeted focus on underrepresented groups and the cost effectiveness of activities identified within the Access and Participation Plan, across the student lifecycle.

The Access and Participation Plan Working Group monitors and reports on this progress through the formal HE Committees. The corporation board will oversee implementation of actions to ensure ongoing progress against yearly milestones are met in our access and participation plan.

### **3) Fully embed Alternative Assessment Plan & Reasonable Adjustments**

Introducing the Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) was to ensure that disabled students throughout Higher Education (HE) were getting consistent support across all areas. Also to cut down on the amount of sharing a student had to do regarding their disability/difficulty and the collation of evidence. The governments Disability Passport was used to form the bases of the RAP.

It was deemed that the RAP should gather information on a student's disabilities and difficulties, how they could be supported in the classroom, exams and assignments and placements. The HE Access Advisers will conduct meetings with students, then lecturers and then all three of them to ensure that this gives the students and the lecturers the chance to talk about the best support strategies to enable the disabled student to progress through the course without any barriers.

Moving forward students in level 6 who have completed a RAP we are looking to support these students to complete the Disability Passport when progressing from university to employment. This will hopefully help our disabled students gain employment with the correct support.

Alternative Assessment Plans will be the focus for 2024/25 to give more support to disabled students.

### **4) Work towards Gold for Better Health at Work Award.**

The College achieved Gold Better Health at Work Award in September 2024. We automatically progressed to continuing excellence. Due to the scrutiny of continuing excellence it involves independent assessment of the broader College workforce through a focus group meeting. Our portfolio has been submitted and the early feedback has been positive. However, until the focus group has taken place, which is planned for November we won't know the outcome of achievement. This academic year we will still be going through the verification process for continuing excellence and then will automatically move to maintaining excellence.

### **5) Ensure more students are supported to access bursary support and funding.**

#### *Vulnerable students*

Has supported 114 students, an increase from 76 in 2022/23. Access Fund has worked with Safeguarding and Social Workers/Foster Carers to ensure the support students need is relevant and purposeful for their study. The increase in students been due to the number of 16-18 unaccompanied male students in the care of the Local Authority requiring support. Access Fund has worked with Safeguarding and Social Workers/Foster Carers to ensure the support students need is relevant and purposeful for their study.

#### *16-18 students*

Academic year 2023/24 has seen changes to the financial support that was given to students through the increase in household income threshold from £32,000 to £60,000. Due to the increase in household income, 1142 students have applied for bursary support, this an increase from 462 students in academic year 2022/23.

In recognition of the fact that we want students to be ready to learn, this academic year we allowed students to utilise bursary funding to pay for meals whilst in College to the value of £5 as well as supporting students who are currently on free College meals.

#### *19+*

139 students have been supported through our 19+ scheme which is a slight deduction in the support given in 2022/23 where 155 students applied for support. The support given has been for travel to College and access to meals. We have seen an increase in our 19+ students which has been due to the intake of Ukraine students this academic year. The threshold for support for 19+ students has been kept at £32,000 as the volume of students requiring support is high compared to the allocated pot of funding.

#### HE

105 students received financial support through the HE bursary fund in 2022/23. This year the request dropped to 74. Overall student numbers of HE provision dropped this academic year, this will have an impact on the number of students who apply for support.

## **The College as an employer**

The Public Sector Equality Duty, as mandated by the Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies, including educational institutions, to consider and address the needs of individuals across all 'protected characteristics'

The College has an outstanding reputation for the quality and scope of provision and is committed to promoting widening participation through raising aspirations and achievement and eliminating barriers to engagement. Detailed below are some of the key changes that have taken place this academic year which have impacted on staff and examples of activities that staff have engaged in and the work that has been undertaken.

The College seeks to recruit the best person for the job and that we can retain and develop high quality staff. The platform of recruitment within FE has been difficult for several years, we recognise that our staff need to be ensured that we embrace equality of opportunity and promote diversity and inclusion and take seriously our responsibility to ensure clear processes for responding to instances of discrimination, harassment, bullying or other unacceptable behaviour, taking swift and decisive action where necessary. Our annual report monitors our progress in the following areas:

1. Staff profile and data (including Governors).
2. Recruitment, promotion and retention.
4. Staff Development.
5. Grievances, Complaints and Harassment/Discrimination allegations.

### **Staff profile and data (including Governors)**

Annual data and statistics are gathered to allow the College to continually review policies and practices in line with government guidelines, policy and law. Updates are reported to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing Steering Group who ensure that we are advancing equality and diversity and fostering good relations.

#### **Number of staff**

665 staff employed (679 in 2022/23).

548 staff employed are permanent (538 - 2022/23).

33 staff are employed on a fixed term contract (20 in 2022/23).

84 supply pool (121 - 2022/23).

At present we don't collate data for staff who have been employed through external agency, this will be collected for 2024/25.

#### **Gender**

We currently have 428 (64%) female staff and 237 (36%) males. DfE workforce data for 2022/23 (published in May 2024) identified overall breakdown as 65% female, 34% male, with again 0.1% identifying in another way and 0.2% preferring not to say which is representative of our workforce.

#### **Age**

The median age of our overall workforce remains the same as 2022/23 at 46 years old. This is representative of general FE workforce. The oldest member of our workforce is 81 and the youngest 20. DfE workforce data for 2022/23 reported that the median age of staff is 46.

## **Ethnicity**

The College continues to foster good relations between different racial and/or ethnic groups, national origins, or nationalities. All staff and students are encouraged to declare their race/ethnicity. We continue to develop our support and curriculum structures to ensure that they are representative of the College community.

We recognise that we have a diverse workforce which ensures that we can meet the needs of the communities we work with. The staff population is 89% White British (91% in 2022/23. In the 2021 census 96.8% of people identified their ethnic group within the White British category (residents in County Durham), compared with 98.2% in 2011 which shows that there is a more diverse mix within our communities. Asian or Asian British reported within our staff data at 1.4% which is consistent with the data from the census in County Durham (1.5%).

The recently published DfE workforce data for 2022/23 reported that 14% of overall FE staff were from ethnic minority background, what is important to consider is that our workforce is representative of our community, students and the curriculum we offer.

## **Disability**

We have worked with DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) to review the Disability Confident Leader assessment, although there was no requirement to submit a full assessment, we do have an annual check-up. Due to the vast range of support services that we have in College for staff and students (i.e., Occupational Health and Disability Advisors) the DWP are confident that we are meeting our obligations. 6% (4.1% in 2022/23) of our workforce have stated that they have a disability. Human Resources, Occupational Health and Health and Safety work closely with staff and managers to ensure any support required is put in place. In comparison reported data in the DfE workforce data report stated 7.3% of the further education workforce identified as having a disability, which is up from 6.5% in 2021/22.

## **Governors' Diversity Monitoring Data**

Data related to our board of Governors as of October 2023 is stated below.

### **Sex**

We currently have 14 Governors, 8 male, 6 female and 4 vacancies.

33% female

45% male

22% vacant

### **Age**

The average age has reduced from 47 on 25 October 2023 to 46.

### **Race/Ethnicity**

11 out of 14 have declared themselves as White British. Three did not respond.

### **Disability**

Currently 10 out of 14 have declared that they do not have a disability, one declared physical impairment and three did not provide a response to this question.



## **Recruitment, Promotion and Retention**

Recruitment and Selection within the FE section this academic year has again been a challenge. AoC (Association of Colleges) reported that 1 in 5 respondents stated recruitment challenges as their main concern across the academic year 2023/24 this is a trend for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running. We have certainly seen and experienced the impact of this.

The College will continue to explore ways in which recruitment can be promoted including recruitment cafes investing in staff development to upskill the current workforce and supporting people in industry with experience to make the transition into education.

We are supporting more people to make the transition into education from industry than we have done before. It has been identified that a more robust induction and mentorship program for staff new to has been developed with allocated remission time through our “New staff/Lecturer development programme”.

The recruitment and retention of staff has been a concern, although we are now seeing a more positive increase in applicants for roles with appropriate experience and skills.

### **Recruitment Activity**

We recognise that in some are of the College, recruitment of staff has at times been challenging. This situation is not unique to New College Durham, and indeed spans across the FE/Education sector. We appreciate that at times this has impacted on staff workloads whilst recruitment activity has been ongoing.

As a College though we have been responding with the introduction of several recruitment and selection strategies, that puts us in a positive place to attract talent.

Some strategies include:

- Application of strong pay awards making our salaries very competitive. Indeed, the top of our teaching payscale is well above that offered by other local Colleges.
- Introduction of Recruitment and Retention Payments for hard-to-fill pots (subject to approval by SLT).
- Widened our wellbeing offer for staff (i.e. reduced gym membership).
- Increased teaching capacity across many curriculum areas.
- Continued investment in the upskilling of staff.
- Capping student numbers in areas where recruitment challenges exist.
- Supported staff to embrace hybrid working through the purchase of more IT equipment.
- Working with providers that have staff nearing retirement and wanting to put something back into the education system through the sing of their skills/knowledge.

We recognise that further challenges in the recruitment of staff may exist moving forward, with competition for staff coming from other Colleges and Universities, as well as industry. However, we are committed to responding appropriately and positively to these challenges and promoting the College in the best light and the positive reputation that we have both locally and regionally, is a great tool for attracting new staff to the College.

## **Staff Development**

### **Policy changes**

Legislation, best practice and employee expectations change regularly. Since 6th April 2024, flexible working, carer's leave, paternity leave, and protection against redundancy legislation, have all been updated. Human Resources delivered employment law updates to managers in May. We continue to monitor any legislative changes.

It is essential that our policies are kept up-to-date and relevant but ensuring that our policies reflect current legislation and inclusion is best practice.

In response to the changes to the Equality Act in October 2024, the College has delivered training to managers on Sexual harassment in the workplace, which has been received well. This training will be rolled out throughout the summer term in readiness for October 2024.

### **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing Steering Group**

This academic year the group has provided a formal setting for staff representatives to take a lead in ensuring we are exemplary as an employer and as a regulator in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. Steering group members work closely with our staff and students and have been selected to reflect the range of directorates and levels of responsibility across College. The group is established with the full endorsement and support of the Board and Executive Leadership team of New College Durham.

The group is responsible for:

- overseeing the implementation of our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy
- managing and monitoring the delivery of our associated action plans
- providing assurance to the executive leadership team

### **AOC Mental Health Charter**

In March 2024 we committed to the new AoC Mental Health Charter which has set a great foundation to ensure mental health and wellbeing is a priority issue for leaders and governors in Colleges. The new Mental Health Charter framework has the following themes

- Leadership and ethos
- Support for students
- Workplace wellbeing
- Evidence and impact

It is identified that the pressures on College services are exponentially higher than ever, and the charter has been updated to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. The College will use this framework alongside the criteria for the Inclusive Employer Standard to develop a robust action plan.

### **Staff Survey**

In January 2024 we released our annual staff survey. The survey results were positive and there were no concerns raised relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Staff recognised that we have made progress on our journey in responding to ways in which we can do things better and acknowledged the changes that have been made. It was evident from the survey results that staff could see improvements. The survey also helps us to identify how we can continue to improve, and we value all suggestions that are made. The staff survey is a valuable tool to help us to identify any key or repetitive

themes across the College.

**Key strengths noted are.**

- Staff support for students.
- Hybrid working.
- Dedication of the workforce.
- The inclusive environment in which staff work and students learn.
- Continued investment in working and learning spaces.

**Staff training**

The College promotes regular engagement with EDI in staff development days and workshop sessions. Staff are encouraged to give further prominence to naturally occurring opportunities to raise EDI issues within lessons and lesson planning. Staff are also encouraged to challenge inappropriate language and behaviour in the classroom and within College. All new staff received an induction session with our Training and Development Manager. The following is an example of the training that has been offered.

**For managers**

Mental Health for managers  
Employment law changes  
Stress Awareness for Managers  
Sexual harassment in the workplace

**For all staff**

Miss Menopause  
Autism Acceptance Workshop  
Difficult behaviours in the classroom: through a dysregulated lens  
Prevent Awareness  
ADHD and mental health  
Techniques to Build Mental, Emotional and Personality Strength in Learners  
The Teenage Brain and Managing Anxieties in the Classroom  
Awareness of the impact of gambling on mental health and wellbeing  
Understanding PTSD and trauma  
Neurodiversity what it means to us!

Staff have valued the range of workshops that have tackled some key themes that we have been dealing with in College this academic year.

**Better Health at Work Award**

We achieved Gold in September 2024. Feedback from the Pioneering Care Partnership, NHS and TUC was incredibly positive. Our assessor commented

*“New College Durham have had another fantastic year of Health, Wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion activity. They have continued to deliver and raise awareness of physical activity, mental health and wellbeing, financial wellbeing, whilst making effective use of external agencies to provide a variation of engaging activities.”*

As we have progressed through continuing excellence have been mentoring two external organisations Beamish Museum and the Carnforth Partnership. Through this mentoring it will allow us to share lessons that we have learned but also to ensure that we are continually looking at ways we can improve by sharing good practice externally.

As explained on page 4 feedback on objectives for 2023/24, there will be a cross over between completing our assessment for continuing excellence and starting our journey towards maintaining excellence in 2024/25.

## **Grievances, Complaints and Harassment/Discrimination allegations**

New College Durham recognises the importance of establishing a formal procedure under which its employees can raise grievances, complaints or discrimination allegations on issues which cannot be dealt with under any other established College procedures.

The purpose of such a procedure is therefore to:

- Foster good relations by creating a procedure for grievances to be raised and addressed.
- Give employees the confidence that the College will take grievances seriously.
- Ensure that grievances are handled expeditiously, and that confidentiality is maintained throughout the procedure to protect, as far as possible, the parties involved.
- Guard against victimisation.

The College will not tolerate harassment, bullying and/or victimisation and will take all reasonable efforts to ensure that every member of staff works in an environment where they are not harassed, bullied or victimised and have the right to raise concerns and have them addressed if this should occur.

All employees are required to:

- Contribute to a positive, supportive working environment.
- Refrain from actions which may be reasonably concluded to be either Bullying, Harassment or Victimisation.
- Cease unreasonable behaviour\* which makes someone feel uncomfortable or causes offence.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 the College have not had any grievance submissions.

Complaints would be dealt with via the College's complaints procedure and would only progress to HR should a policy need to be utilised.

There have been two submissions under harassment/bullying, one submission was withdrawn after submission due to a party leaving employment. The other case was fully investigated, finding there to be insufficient evidence to support the allegations that had been raised.

## **Support for students 2023/24**

Staff support for students throughout this academic year has been outstanding. Staff have gone above and beyond to ensure that all our students have had a positive learning experience. Some examples of the support and activities from across College are stated below.

Recognising the economic challenges and opportunities of the North East, the College holds a prime position to effect real and lasting change for individuals, businesses and the region. We have developed a strategy and operational plan, taking proactive steps to boost skills development through employer engagement and collaboration for all.

Much of the work the College undertakes is to increase access to, and participation in, education for individuals needing to find their way into work, including adults, under-represented groups and those in deprived economic areas.

### **Learning Support working in partnership with ESOL**

The Learning Support Department works closely with the ESOL team to ensure that all students, regardless of their age or background, receive the necessary support to develop their English skills and integrate into the College environment. This collaboration ensures that support services are accessible to a diverse group of learners, promoting equal opportunities for academic success. By integrating with the ESOL department, the Learning Support Department provides tailored assistance to students with additional learning needs, creating a more inclusive educational experience.

Through collaborative efforts with the ESOL team, the Learning Support Department enhances its understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds. This is evident in their approach to providing culturally sensitive support. Their support for students from diverse backgrounds, demonstrates their commitment to respecting and valuing diversity within the student population.

The strong collaborative spirit between the Learning Support Department and other departments, such as ESOL, exemplifies a commitment to inclusivity. This collaboration ensures that resources and expertise are shared, providing comprehensive support to students.

### **Mechanical, Electrical and Built Environment**

At HE level, students have been completing posters on EDI within Construction and Engineering. To embed and promote this further, we awarded small prizes (amazon vouchers) to the top 3 designs, we felt this created a competition for the students and meant they applied more research and effort to the topic area. Some excellent posters were produced.

Women in Construction and Engineering – discussed in classes, guest speakers arranged such as Believe Housing (Lyndsey Darby, Stacey Nichol), Esri GIS Software (Isabel Clouting), and Dyer Engineering (Maxine Henry) to inspire learners and raise awareness of women across sector.

## **HE and International Studies**

The College is strongly committed to widening participation, successfully recruiting students from categories such as Access to Higher Education courses and individuals already employed in the social care sector. The BA (Hons) Social Work programme recruit several students from the lower socio-economic groups. Several of the students have identified specific learning needs (such as dyslexia), and it is noted by the validation panels that it's a credit to the academic team, and the learning support services at the College, that these students have been well supported to achieve success in their degree.

## **Health, Care, Life Sciences, Early Years and Education**

Level 2 Early Year students - Unit 6 explored continuous provision in EY settings. Students were tasked with creating models of areas found within nursery from recycled materials. This highlighted differences of ability, creativity, access and availability of resources and support from parents. These highlighted the lack of identity and opportunities to promote diversity. For example, books were English, traditional tales/classics and authors. They mostly represented white British children where images were included. Only one included an example of textures and lighting to promote sensory development, giving reference to Neurodiversity.

## **Sixth Form, ELC, Sport and Uniformed Services**

On the FdA Policing the Community with Criminology programme the aim of the programme is to encourage and facilitate access for individuals from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of prior qualifications and/or experience. The programme also reflects contemporary criminal justice issues such as Values, Standards and Inclusion, Equal opportunities and Diversity, Lifestyle Management within the policing and wider criminal justice system and Principles of Managing Teams in policing and the wider criminal justice system.

We believe working with other organisations rather than independently yields greater results. Forging partnerships with national and regional businesses, other educational institutions, and regional bodies, benefits students, employees, employers, and the economy.

Identifying and addressing both current and future skill needs, supporting employers in finding skilled staff, upskilling existing employees, and positively impact regional economic development.

## **Key Objectives for 2024/25**

The key objectives for the next academic year developed with due cognisance of NCD Strategic Priorities and Plan, key strategies (e.g., Curriculum Strategy, Employer Engagement Strategy and Student Engagement Strategy) and supplemented key outcomes from:

- SAR
- Quality Improvement Plan
- Access and Participation Plan
- Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
- Team meetings

The key strategic objectives for the next academic year are to:

### **1. Achieve Inclusive Employer Standard**

The framework will be used to conduct an assessment to look holistically at our practices and policies and will create a clear action plan to move forward with, due to the cohort engagement we will not be signing up to the standard until March 2025 and will receive the results in May 2025. It is expected that we will at the least achieve committed to if not bronze, this is assessed at an independent panel.

### **2. Achieve continuing excellence and progress to maintain excellence – Better Health at Work.**

We continue to develop our offer of support to staff and students through strong partnership working with not only Pioneering Care Partnership but external organisations, this has been a 4-year journey to this point and continues to demonstrate to our staff and students our commitment to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all.

### **3. Develop and fully embed Alternative Assessment Plans.**

Further to the piece of work that has been completed on reasonable adjustment plan, it is important that the College continues to provide timely adjustments for HE students (disclosed that they have a disability) and how a student support plan can be used more effectively to enable a student to complete their studies. Ensuring that alternative assessment is fully embedded across curriculum will be a key focus for 2024/25.

### **4. Develop disability specific support in preparation for employment and the recruitment process.**

Ensuring that the College takes a proactive and inclusive approach to supporting disabled people and people with long-term health conditions into the workforce will support our students to recognise the value and unique skills, experiences and perspectives of disabled people and can help to reduce the barriers they face in society.

For further information on the objectives are stated in Appendix A – action plan. The action plan complements the College Operational Plan, Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Staff and the Human Resources Strategy specifically relating to culture and wellbeing, workforce planning and leadership.



## **Conclusion**

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) goes beyond simply meeting any legal obligation, inclusion is a core value which is set and shaped by staff and Governors.

The College looks and feels vastly different to 5 years ago and so does the platform of equality, diversity and inclusion.

There is a stronger focus through the Public Sector Equality Duty for the College to publish what we do, and we need to ensure that any standards or processes we work towards are supporting the mission, vision and values of the College and are reflective of our current and future workforce.

Business benefits of having a robust policy, annual report and action plan includes.

- A whole organisational culture.
- Helps the College be clear on our goals and priorities.
- Provides evidence for budgets, legal obligations, and bids/tenders.
- Allows us to annually review internal processes/systems.
- Demonstrates to our staff, students and partners that the College is committed to positive inclusive and diversity practice.

Staff and students continue to ensure that the College remains a place where learning and working exists in an environment that advances equality of opportunity, celebrates diversity, and allows everyone to achieve their fullest potential. Examples of how this has been achieved are included within this report.

New College Durham remains committed to the development of positive policies and practices to promote equal opportunities and support an appropriate learning and work-life balance.

The report demonstrates the vibrant environment at New College Durham and our commitment to.

- *Changing lives for the better enabling people of **all abilities** to fulfil their potential.*
- *Celebrating achievement in learning for people of **all abilities**.*
- *Fulfilling our commitment to equality and diversity and the rights of others.*

The College will continue to explore ways the existing workforce can be developed to ensure that we have a competent and qualified workforce of the future.

## **Appendix A - Key Objectives for 2024/25**

	Objective	Impact measure	Timescale	Key Responsibility	Actions for 2024/25
1	Achieve Inclusive Employer Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand our organisational culture and current position and give us a thorough action plan to move forward with.</li> <li>Refocus a whole organisation approach to ID.</li> <li>Provide evidence for budgets, legal obligations, and bids/tenders.</li> <li>Allow us to review internal processes/systems.</li> <li>Shows to our staff, students and partners that we are committed to positive ID practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit expression of interest March 2025.</li> <li>Submit portfolio of evidence May 2025.</li> <li>Feedback and result July 2025</li> </ul>	<p>Training and Development Manager</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing Steering Group.</p> <p>Human Resources.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership team to endorse a new framework that outlines criteria for employers to evaluate their D&amp;I practices for effectiveness and value for money.</p> <p>Complete self-assessment against criteria.</p> <p>Ensure that the EDI and HWB group receive regular feedback as to progress made.</p> <p>Compile action plan for 2025/26.</p>
2	Achieve Continuing Excellence and progress to Maintaining Excellence – Better Health at Work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the assessment to ensure that we are clear on our goals and priorities for this next academic year.</li> <li>Utilise external funding or free activities to promote wellbeing in the workplace and to help ensure that our staff have the knowledge base and support to better themselves and our students.</li> <li>Act as mentors for external organisations to promote our good practice but also to learn from others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit portfolio of evidence May 2024.</li> <li>Assessment of submission September 2024.</li> <li>Award notification November 2024.</li> </ul>	<p>Training and Development Manager</p> <p>Occupational Health.</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing Steering Group.</p> <p>Learning and Development Coordinator.</p>	<p>Mentor two external organisations to share good practice.</p> <p>External assessment by Pioneering Care Partnership to review our practice for continuing excellence once approved automatically progress to maintaining excellence.</p> <p>Evaluate activities, events and support given to staff and students to ensure that it is fit for purpose and relevant to our staff workforce and student body.</p>
3	Develop and fully embed Alternative Assessment Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collects evidence for principle 5 of the Disabled Student Commitment.</li> <li>Monitored and actioned as part of the Disabled Student Commitment task and finish group.</li> <li>Reviewed through the EDI HWB steering group.</li> <li>To be fully embedded within curriculum practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on progress to be given November 2024 to be given to EDI HWB Steering Group.</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Student &amp; Support Engagement</p> <p>SENCO ALS Co-ordinator</p> <p>Academic Registry</p> <p>Access Advisors</p>	<p>Work with curriculum teams to consider best practice when designing alternative assessment.</p> <p>Have a plan in place at the beginning of the academic year which would be monitored as the year progresses.</p> <p>Clearly linked to mitigation received thereafter would be ad-hoc.</p>

4	Develop disability specific support in preparation for employment and the recruitment process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placements across FE and HE have the same rigour and similar paperwork processes.</li> <li>• All have a 'bank' or 'carousel' of placement providers who are vetted.</li> <li>• All use the H&amp;S Learner Worker Agreement and create a placement pack with a tripartite agreement of some form which is signed by the student, placement provider and College.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff teaching and supporting a disabled student understand the student's support requirements prior to the commencement of a placement.</li> <li>• Placement providers are aware of and implement a disabled student's access and support requirements prior to the commencement of the placement.</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Student &amp; Support Engagement</p> <p>Curriculum Teams</p> <p>Work placement</p> <p>Monitored EDI HWB Steering Group</p> <p>Academic Registry (overview)</p>	Develop a strategy to look at how relationships built with employers include recognition of opportunities for disabled students and graduates.
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