

Equality Mainstreaming Report

April 2019



Opening Doors | Fair Access for All

Author: Jenny Stalker, Head of Quality and Learner Services
Date: April 2019
Review Date: April 2021

Contents

Introduction	1
Mainstreaming the general duty into all functions.....	2
Developing Strategy and Policy.....	2
Progress made to achieve Equalities Outcomes	3
The positive impacts of staff surveys:	4
Developing Staff Knowledge and Raising Awareness.....	4
The positive impacts of this significant investment in staff learning and development are:.....	6
LGBT Youth Charter.....	6
Positive impacts of commitment to the LGBT charter:.....	7
Positive impacts of commitment to the BSL National Plan:.....	7
Supporting student mental health and wellbeing.....	7
Positive impacts of engagement in mental health and wellbeing:.....	8
Positive impacts of estates developments:	9
Gender balance in staffing	10
Gender pay gap information	11
Gender balance on courses	11
Board of Governance.....	12
Board Gender Split.....	12
Board Diversity Initiatives	12
Positive impacts of work to pursue a gender balance:.....	12
Procurement practice	12
Conclusion.....	13

Introduction

At West Lothian College we are fully committed to embracing equality, diversity and inclusive practices in all aspects of College life and work. We continue to aspire to achieve more than just the minimum legislative compliance required.

West Lothian College is committed to establishing and maintaining a culture of equal rights and equality of opportunity. We are committed to ensuring that all staff, students and users of the College are treated equally, and with respect, regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, disability, gender and gender reassignment, age and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

We value diversity and aim to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment of any form, including gender based violence, in all our activities. Additionally the College is committed to mainstreaming all equality activities to ensure equalities are embedded in our day to day work.

The College has established four equalities objectives which are reported on through the College Equalities Mainstreaming Report and Equalities Action Plan:

Outcome 1	West Lothian College is fair and respectful to its staff and reflects and values cultural diversity.
Outcome 2	The West Lothian College learning and support experience is fair and equitable for all students and reflects cultural diversity.
Outcome 3	At West Lothian College the environment, estates and resources are designed to remove barriers to people using the College, provide equality of opportunity and reflect cultural diversity.
Outcome 4	West Lothian College will pursue a gender balance for staff and students through relevant strategies, policies, procedures and working practices

West Lothian College is meeting its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and its general and specific public sector equality duties under the April 2011 amendment to the Act through a commitment to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in employment and in the provision of services to learners.

We oppose all unlawful or unfair forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or background, for example being care experienced or having care responsibilities, living in an area identified as an area of multiple deprivations, having criminal convictions, trade union membership or any other unjustifiable grounds.

The College regularly surveys staff and students to gather feedback on individual experiences and to monitor overall satisfaction rates in respect of equalities. We use this feedback to inform continuous improvements to internal policies and procedures and to service delivery.

The College has embraced Government drivers to widen access and inclusion for all learners and is taking this work forward through an Equalities Action Plan and Gender Action Plan which is monitored and reviewed against targets on an annual basis.

Mainstreaming the general duty into all functions

West Lothian College is committed to mainstreaming the general duty 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, considering the need to:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
 - Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low
- Foster good relations between people from different protected characteristic groups, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

The Equalities Action Plan is monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis through the Equalities Committee. The Equalities Committee is made up of a cross college group of staff and includes representation from the Student Association.

Since taking up her appointment in August 2018, the incoming Principal has demonstrated her commitment to Equalities by leading on mainstreaming. The college management team was the first group of staff to participate in LGBT training which sent out a clear message to staff about the importance of this work as well as working towards achievement of our LGBT charter.

The Principal has engaged with staff and students across the college to gather and share views on all aspects of college life and work, including equalities mainstreaming. This knowledge has been collated and translated into action points within the Outcome Agreement and in other plans including the Equalities and Gender action plans.

While the college has made good progress towards achieving action plan targets, we recognise that there is still much work to be done. A review of the college management structure will commence in May 2019 with a view to establishing improved operating practices

Developing Strategy and Policy

West Lothian College develops strategies and action plans as required to meet its legislative duties and to drive progress on the general duties. We are currently in the process of developing the Outcome Agreement for 2018-21 which includes

targets for a number of protected characteristic groups. Progress on achievement of Outcome Agreement targets are monitored and reviewed quarterly and reported to the Scottish Funding Council.

The Equalities Action Plan has matured over the last two years to include new developments for a BSL Action Plan; Gender Action Plan and Gender Based Violence Action Plan.

The College carries out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) on new documents to ensure there is no negative impact on groups with one or more protected characteristic. While this process has been consistently and robustly carried out, the process confined EIA sign off to those staff closest to developing the strategy which was a potential conflict of interest. We wanted to bring wider thinking about possible negative impacts resulting from a strategy and it was agreed that strategies and policies be brought to the Equalities Committee for consideration and sign off. The Equalities Committee now conducts an EIA on all new, or up for review, strategies and policies and provides the originators with feedback.

Additionally, the college is currently engaged in an EIA development project being conducted by AdvanceHE. We want to further develop our EIA documentation to encourage staff engagement in the EIA process. The outcomes from this project will be used to achieve this.

The College Outcome Agreement reflects our commitment to progress equalities outcomes and to meet Government targets for specific groups.

Progress made to achieve Equalities Outcomes

Outcome 1: West Lothian College is fair and respectful to its staff and reflects and values cultural diversity

Understanding the Staff Experience

The College includes Equalities training as part of the staff induction process. Our aim is to promote awareness and understanding of equalities from day one of employment.

The college introduced a Staff Experience Committee in 2018 to engage with staff with a view to improving motivation and staff engagement. One of the aspects of this work, which was initially started by our HR team in 2017, is to conduct an annual Staff Experience Survey which includes a measure on whether staff feel respected and fairly treated.

Results from the March 2017 and 2018 surveys told us that over 95% of staff had not experienced discrimination from students, colleagues or their manager. While this is very encouraging, the college has taken positive steps to address the few instances where staff had felt discriminated against.

In addition, the Equalities Committee carried out a separate survey which presented us with some very open and honest views across the staff group which were not reflected in the main staff survey. We will use these responses to develop plans for further staff development.

Management training has been delivered on the following topics:

- Absence Management
- Performance Management
- Workplace Investigations
- Managing Stress, Promoting Wellbeing

In all of the above training the requirements of the Equality Act were emphasised so that managers are alert to discrimination, avoid discrimination and can better manage situations where discrimination is alleged.

In addition the support tools of the Employee Assistance Programme and counselling have been widely publicised to support all staff.

The next survey goes live on 11 March 2019.

The positive impacts of staff surveys:

- Increased understanding of the real experiences and concerns of staff across the college
- Deeper understanding of where unconscious bias still exists
- Improved triangulation of evidence to support robust evaluation of equalities work

Developing Staff Knowledge and Raising Awareness

In March 2018, the college embarked on rolling out a programme of Unconscious Bias training for staff in partnership with Equate. The purpose of this was to give staff a baseline understanding of the potential negative impacts of biased behaviour and communication. 117 staff have participated in this training.

Evaluation feedback from this was positive and highlighted that staff wanted to follow this up with further training to help build productive relationships with students and colleagues. We have followed this through in subsequent staff development events.

For the second year, the college delivered an Equalities week in December 2018 promoting equalities across the college and mainstreaming the general duties and each year the programme has grown in engagement across the college.

The programme of activities for the week included a range of experiences and training events all focused on engaging staff to raise awareness and promote understanding of the issues that can be experienced by protected characteristic groups, including:

- LGBT Youth Charter training for staff

- Transgender Awareness in the Workplace on line training
- Don't Diss my Disability on line training video developed by the Project Search students
- Sensory awareness training
- Banter in the workplace on line training
- Equalities learning bites on line training
- Poetry reading and shared personal story telling with ESOL students
- Hosting the Ann Frank Trust Exhibition across the week for access by staff and students
- Celebrating Diversity menu options in college restaurant
- Lighting up the college with the rainbow flag

The week's events were widely publicised on the college website and through social media, raising the college's profile as an open and inclusive organisation.

Equalities awareness was further promoted during the whole staff development week in February 2019 when we included further opportunities for staff to engage with the LGBT Youth Charter training and to participate in workshops to raise awareness on mental health issues. The week's programme of events included Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Awareness, Self Harm and Mental Health Awareness training.



We have developed an internal Staff Learning Academy which promotes a range of equalities related training for staff including Disability Etiquette; Transgender Awareness and Banter in the Workplace. These e-learning materials are available to all staff through our virtual learning environment.

The positive impacts of this significant investment in staff learning and development are:

- Deeper understanding of problems and issues experienced by people with one or more protected characteristic
- Increased understanding of the positive impact we can all make to remove barriers for people with one or more protected characteristic and to enable equal opportunities for success
- Deeper understanding of the importance of modelling positive behaviours

Outcome 2: The West Lothian College learning and support experience is fair and equitable for all students and reflects cultural diversity

Unconscious bias training was designed to help staff be more aware of bias when planning, designing and delivering learning and teaching. The college has worked with Equate to conduct a review of course admissions material available to prospective students through the website to remove biased language or images.

This work raised questions for the college about messages we were promoting. While the college has successfully attracted more women into STEM subjects we also need to attract men into STEM subject areas and mature adult returners, who we are insufficiently represented in some of our promotional materials. We are currently taking action to address this for publication of the next college prospectus.

LGBT Youth Charter

In partnership with the Student Association, we are working towards achievement of the LGBT Youth Charter in 2019-20. The Student Association has committed to the LGBT Charter of Rights and have developed an inclusive calendar of events celebrating protected characteristic groups throughout the year. The charter supports organisations to be as inclusive as possible through the review of policies, practices and resources and to encourage training to raise awareness of LGBT issues experienced by staff and students. The full college management team has participated in this training, as have 50% of our staff group, and we intend to roll the training out to all staff in 2019-20.

This has had the positive impact of raising awareness among students and promoting the college as an inclusive learning organisation. Part of this work has involved an independent audit of our campus to highlight areas where we are not demonstrating our inclusivity.

The college has been hosting the West Lothian PRIDE rally since 2017 and is working with PRIDE organisers to support the July 2019 rally.

The BSL Action Plan is available through the college website in written and signed versions. The plan was developed in consultation with Deaf Action and with the wider community. The college is currently supporting two BSL students through courses and is using feedback from these students to further inform our work in this

area. We have engaged two interpreters to work with the students to participate in lectures and other college initiatives and events.

Positive impacts of commitment to the LGBT charter:

- College publications are far more inclusive and present the college well as inclusive for all
- The college is more visible as an LGBT inclusive organisation
- Working with LGBT Youth/Catalyst has successfully engaged students in LGBT activities and is spreading positive messages about the student experience for our LGBT communities

Positive impacts of commitment to the BSL National Plan:

- There is greater understanding about the needs and issues experienced by BSL users
- The college has improved support systems for BSL users as a direct result of working with BSL students

Supporting student mental health and wellbeing

The college has been building awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and developing staff and student resilience with regard to managing these issues over the last two years. The Support for Learning Team has been expanded significantly over the last two years to provide additional, flexible support for students presenting for learning or guidance support.

This team is highly skilled in dealing with students who present with significant mental health challenges or safeguarding concerns and they provide regular one-to-one support and specialist support. The team is critical to supporting students who have health difficulties such as depression and anxiety and work closely with academic staff and the Student Association to ensure all students are given the best possible chance of achieving success. The team also works closely with a range of external support organisations such as SAMH, Who Cares Scotland, and Penumbra as well as with local GPs, police and social work. In addition to this team, the college provides access to a Chaplaincy Service and access to a counselling service for students who need to be referred until longer term support is put in place.

In November 2017, a college-wide Mental Health and Physical Wellbeing Fair took place involving a range of exhibitors, stalls and events available to staff and students.

Suicide awareness training took place in February 2018 with a view to providing staff with a toolkit of resources to support students who may have suicidal thoughts. This training was specifically targeted towards male students who are statistically a higher risk group.

The Student Association has engaged with Therapets in April 2018 and 2019 to support students to reduce stress levels in the lead up to examinations.

The college recognises the increase in reported cases of students experiencing mental health issues and the impact this is having on chances of success. The college has set itself a target to become an ACE-aware, trauma informed college in 2019-20 and we have introduced staff to training to understand what ACEs are and what this means for their professional role. The college's Children's Hearing Scotland Learning Academy (CHSLA) develops Children Hearing panellists nationally. Our CHSLA staff have a deeper understanding of ACEs and are supporting the roll out of training to the wider college staff in February 2019.

The Student Association offers Mental Health First Aid training to fifty students each year. In addition to training for students, the college has rolled out mental health awareness training for staff and has established a staff experience group to identify opportunities to improve staff working practices and staff mental health. A range of activities have been made available to staff including weekly boxercise and seated yoga, both of which have recently been opened up to students as well as staff.

The college has recently developed its Healthy Environment, Active Life (HEAL) Strategy for 2019-21, in conjunction with the Student Association Mental Health Agreement, following consultation with staff. Having achieved Healthy Working Lives Bronze award we aim to achieve silver accreditation for Healthy Working Lives in the near future. In addition, the Student Association is working towards five stars Healthy Body, Healthy Mind award and has rolled out their successful RECHARGE initiative to support students with mental health problems.

Positive impacts of engagement in mental health and wellbeing:

- There is improved understanding and tolerance when staff and students experience mental health concerns
- The college has improved staff and student engagement in our work on mental health and wellbeing to better inform and improve working practices
- Staff and students are being better supported and are able to contribute fully to work and study

Outcome 3: At West Lothian College the environment, estates and resources are designed to remove barriers to people using the College, provide equality of opportunity and reflect cultural diversity.

The college estate is regularly reviewed to ensure we offer an inclusive learning and working environment to meet the needs of groups or individuals with one or more protected characteristics. These reviews include the overall environment, buildings and resources to ensure equal access for all users of the College.

The college is proud that it is a step free access campus. It has good wheelchair access when manoeuvring, lifts in every building, hearing loops and coloured and raised treads on stairs for visually impaired users. Additional disabled car parking spaces were provided through a review of car parking facilities. We have consulted with the Student Association and external partners to continuously improve the estate and address emerging needs. Disabled toilets are

now All Gender Toilets in recognition of the fact that gender is not necessarily binary for some and to enable all individuals to use restrooms without fear of stigma.

As part of the BSL Action Plan, the college supports students with hearing loss by recruiting interpreters to enable students to participate fully in lectures and wider college activities. We have two BSL users currently studying at Higher National Certificate level in 2018-19 and both students are progressing to successful completion of their course.

The College fully supports the Student Association structure of Student Association Development Officer, full time sabbatical President and full time Vice President and student ambassadors. Student Association officers are trained to provide an additional support for students experiencing personal difficulties and are instrumental in bringing student issues to college management.

In 2018-19, the college has worked closely with the Student Association to support students presenting with financial issues which, in an increasing number of cases, is leading to homelessness and food poverty. In response to this and in addition to the hardship funding already provided, we are providing a 30 pence breakfast option and free lunch time soup for all students. This ensures that all students in hardship do not need to identify themselves and can benefit from this facility without fear of stigma.

In 2018-19, the college has rolled out the Scottish Government Period Poverty campaign and is providing access to free sanitary products for students. This facility has been available since October 2017 due to a pilot introduced by our Student Association and can be accessed by menstruating students. The aim is to remove any stigma of asking for support and eliminating period poverty.

The college has recently consulted with the Student Association and college staff to conduct a review of the estate with the aim of improving accommodation and access to front facing student services, including support for learning, for all students. This review is part of a wider review of access and inclusion planning.

Digital resources available to support students has recently been reviewed and additional resources have been put in place for students with additional learning needs. These resources include ipads; reading pens; braille readers; Dyscalculia software and MindGenius software as well as Oxford Graded Readers to support ESOL students.

The consultation is complete and plans have been drawn up with a deadline for completion of summer 2019.

Positive impacts of estates developments:

- The college environment is more inclusive
- Accessibility has been improved for staff and students
- Digital learning support tools for students are enhanced

Outcome 4: West Lothian College will pursue a gender balance for staff and students through relevant strategies, policies, procedures and working practices

The college Outcome Agreement and Gender Action Plan reflect actions to progress an improved gender balance in our staffing profile and on identified courses. We use data analysis to monitor gender balance on all courses and review performance on retention and attainment. Human Resources recruitment statistics are analysed to assess gender balance in job applications and to work to recruit higher numbers of female staff into traditionally male dominated roles and male staff into traditionally female dominated roles.

We are engaging with the Equally Safe in Higher Education toolkit and are taking actions to work towards a zero tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination including gender based violence.

Gender balance in staffing

The college staffing profile is currently 32.36% male: 67.64% female.

Following analysis of our equality monitoring data, it was identified that there was a higher proportion of female (65.52%) applicants than male applicants (31.03%). This data showed that our adverts were perhaps not gender neutral. Advice was sought from Equate who advised us on the language that we should use and in some cases avoid to attract applicants from all genders. These changes were made and we are beginning to see an increase in applications from all genders. In particular, we have now attracted more applications from males for Childcare positions. Following recruitment, a male Lecturer in Childhood Practice was appointed in 2018 and we have appointed two female lecturers in Computing in 2018. We hope to see similar upward trends in attracting males into traditionally female dominated roles and females into traditionally male dominated roles.

It is also hoped that we will attract more applications from disabled people as a result of publicising our status as a Disability Confident Employer. Candidates who identify as having a disability will be guaranteed an interview.

With regards to attracting applications from people covered by the other protected characteristics, application numbers are as expected. This is based on local Census Survey data that was published in 2011. We will continue to monitor progress. Should these figures indicate that we are not attracting talent in those areas we will explore how we can do this better in the future.

Gender pay gap information

	Males	Females	Gap	Last Report	Change from last report
Mean	£21.60	£17.84	17.41%	16.00%	1.41% increase
Median	£23.34	£14.46	38.00%	36.00%	2.00% decrease

There has been an increase in our Mean Pay Gap. There is a larger proportion of male lecturing staff (56% of total male population) to female lecturing staff (25% of total female population) and recent significant pay increases for lecturing staff received through national bargaining harmonisation has led to this gap widening.

Figures are correct as at 31 January 2019. Further harmonisation for lecturing staff from 1 April 2019 may potentially widen this gap further.

Gender balance on courses

We have progressed work with Equate to carry out gender neutral language checks on our marketing and admissions materials. This work was to eliminate unconscious bias from the language we use to advertise courses and to ensure that no gender is discouraged from making a course application.

The overall gender balance on college courses has been in the region of 37.5% males and 62.5% females for the last three years and we know that we have a challenge ahead to achieve a more even ratio of full time female to male students on courses, particularly at FE level.

For 2019 courses, female applicants are, to date, 63.37% as compared to 36.21% for male applicants which already shows a similar profile shaping up for the next academic year. Statistics for subject areas are also showing a similar trend with continuing higher numbers of male applicants in STEM courses and higher numbers of female applicants to courses such as Childcare and Beauty and Hairdressing.

The college is leading on the West Lothian Regional STEM Hub and we are working in partnership with local organisations to attract more women onto courses in construction, computing and engineering. We have successfully recruited to three Women into STEM courses in 2017, 2018 and 2019 with evidence of positive student destinations from all three courses and we want to continue this work in other subject areas.

The college is also engaged in the Scottish Funding Council's Men in Early Years Project, looking to recruit males onto childcare courses.

Board of Governance

Board Gender Split

We currently have 18 board members. The principal (female), Student Association members (2x female) and staff members (1 x male and 1 x female) are all automatic posts. Our chair is male and, of the other board members, we have 4 female members and 8 male members.

Male (10)	Chair 1 x staff member 8 x members
Female (8)	Principal 2 x Student Association members 1 x staff member 4 x members

Board Diversity Initiatives

We are committed to the Scottish Government's legislation to have a 50:50 gender balance in all public sector board rooms by 2020 and have a plan to achieve this which was tabled at the last board meeting in December 2018.

We are currently recruiting for new board members and have been working with Changing the Chemistry to ensure that our advert and job description would appeal to a more diverse range of candidates. In addition, we hosted a Board Open Evening at the College on 29 January, which was open to anyone interested in engaging with board members or finding out more about what goes on in the board. Changing the Chemistry was presented at the event and the aim was to demystify the boardroom and give attendees the opportunity to ask any question about the work of the board and the type of board member we are looking for.

Positive impacts of work to pursue a gender balance:

- The college is actively considering the wording and presentation of documentation to reduce unconscious bias
- Recruitment to Board and staff positions is being evaluated, with due regard to employment law practice, with a view to redressing gender imbalances wherever possible
- We are gathering positive case studies to present to students which highlight positive career and employment opportunities

Procurement practice

The College uses the APUC procurement system to ensure that resources are purchased through approved suppliers. College procurement policy ensures that purchases are made from ethical suppliers and take cognisance of impact on groups with protected characteristics while achieving best value for money.

The College incorporates a number of measures within tender documents to work towards our public sector equality duties. We include the APUC Supply Chain Code of Conduct which addresses the following areas within supply chains.

- Social Compliance
- Ethical Compliance and Economic Development
- Environmental Compliance

The college actively encourages the living wage and promotes community benefits where appropriate within tenders. The college engages with a large number of local SMEs and encourages SMEs and supported businesses to bid for contracts.”

Conclusion

The College is confident that we have made progress to mainstream equalities in all aspects of college life and work and to establish a zero tolerance approach to discrimination of any kind.

There is still work to be done specifically:

- to roll out and embed a zero tolerance approach to discrimination of any kind
- to address gender imbalances for staff and students
- to establish a gender based violence implementation plan

These specific actions will be addressed through the equalities action plan.