

Report A -
**Mainstreaming
Work - 2017-2021**

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Reporting 2021

Report A: Mainstreaming Work 2017 - 2021

1. The Overall Picture

This report reviews the progress made by Forth Valley College from 2017-2021 to mainstream¹ equality. Forth Valley College considers equality and inclusion an integral part of College life. In reviewing the College's overall progress in relation to mainstreaming equality, the assessment is still **very positive**.

Since 2017, the College has made significant progress in embedding equality considerations into key college strategies and plans and raising awareness of equality and inclusion through student and staff inductions, campaigns and events, curriculum subject learning and continuous professional development.

The landscape, however, has changed since 2017. There are now requirements from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) through the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) process to mainstream equality. The SFC and the Equality and Human Rights Council (EHRC) have also signed a memorandum of understanding to examine sector wide inequalities and work towards eliminating them on a national scale. Targets have also been set within the ROA itself to monitor and track progress of learners by age, gender, disability, ethnicity, SIMD area, care experienced status and other characteristics. This, in effect, has put equality front and centre of core college business.

Equality has also been part of the national conversation since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who are already marginalised and excluded have seen further disadvantage thrust upon them because of the pandemic and there is much work to be done to ensure that those groups are truly included as we rebuild and develop over the years to come.

Since 2017, key developments in mainstreaming equality at Forth Valley College have included;

- The creation of a 3-year Access and Inclusion Strategy 2017-2020 which is now in the process of being recreated for 2021 - 2024
- A Gender Action Plan 2017-2020
- The launch of the Equally Safe Campaign around Gender Based Violence (GBV) and the expectations on institutions that come along with this
- The development of the British Sign Language Action Plan
- Forth Valley College signing up to an anti-racism declaration and developing a plan to support embedding anti-racism across the organisation
- Equality Outcomes being embedded in the new Continuous Curriculum Improvement process
- The development of a partnership between Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and Forth Valley College to create a Youth Hub in Falkirk and Alloa campuses to support young people find the right positive destination for them

The rather 'cluttered' landscape of the Equality Duty and other pieces of legislation, such as the British Sign Language Scotland Act, SFC requirements as well as those of Education Scotland have challenged us to assess our efforts more creatively to include all. Fortunately, there are areas of crossover – the groups of learners listed in outcome agreements correspond to the protected characteristic groups in the Equality Act. Whilst it is important to plan and have clear actions, the requirement to produce so many different strategies and plans for different groups, runs the risk of diluting what we need to do, which is to take action to improve outcomes for particular groups. We are currently striving to streamline approaches; gather evidence of progress; measure impact; consider whether targets are met and what is left to do, for a range of plans and strategies for different groups of staff and students at the same time. While these requirements put us on the right track to mainstream equality, we still need to work on linking them; share responsibilities across the organisation, have a clear view of needs and know when progress has been made.

¹ Mainstreaming – integrating equality into the day to day working of Forth Valley College

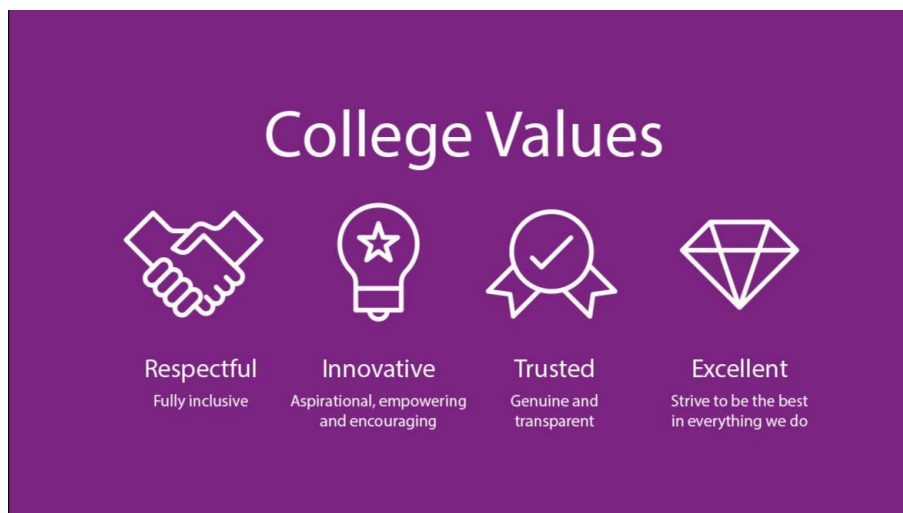
Most emerging themes from 2017 have been addressed including;

- There is evidence that EQIA process is more widely used than before; we must maintain and build on this.
- 62% of students now report being able to identify and report hate incidents. This is an increase of 9% since 2019. More work is still required to ensure that all students and staff know how to identify and report hate incidents but progress is being made and an audit into the hate incident process in 2018 recommended no major actions.
- The 3-year Gender Action Plan identified specific subject areas to pilot new approaches to increase gender diversity. While a Gender Action Plan is no longer an SFC requirement, this is still an area that requires attention and focus. Action is still required to tackle gender imbalance and gender balance is a target for SDS in specific areas like Engineering.
- The need for ongoing staff continuous professional development (CPD) on equality, diversity and inclusion topics remains a key requirement.
- The Equality Action Group (formally the Equality and Inclusion Development Group) was created in 2018 with membership from a range of cross-college staff and Forth Valley Student Association (FVSA). Sub-working groups are in operation covering a range of themes including mental health, gender based violence, curriculum, socio-economic impacts (e.g., poverty) and particular staff needs.
- Good examples of partnership working with external partners and FVSA on range of areas such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Tran and Intersex Plus (LGBTI+) activity, gender based violence, mental health support and supporting young people entering education or the work force.
- Work has started to examine the experience of Black and minority ethnic (BME) students in college however, engagement with focus groups has been low and we need to examine why.
- We still need to monitor attainment rates for disabled students and consider this in light of still-rising student disclosures around a range of needs including learning support and mental health

2. Our Strategy

2.1. Forth Valley College's Values

Forth Valley College's Values are integral to supporting the ongoing development of an inclusive culture.



2.2. Forth Valley College Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022

Forth Valley College's five year Strategic Plan outlines the overall direction of Forth Valley College. Equality is considered in the development and implementation of the whole document. As well as this, there are specific areas of the document that specifically address equality mainstreaming;

<p>We will ensure all College activities reflect the key principles of equality and diversity to achieve an inclusive organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ fully integrated equality and diversity
<p>We will embed sustainability, equalities and health and safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ deploying and evaluating innovative approaches to sustainability and energy conservation, embedding technology and reducing our carbon footprint✓ promoting a positive record for health and well being

Our strategic plan is fully aligned with the requirement to mainstream equality. The next strategic plan for 2022 to 2027 is already in development and equality and diversity will also be at the core of this plan.

2.3. Project NxGen

Project NxGen is Forth Valley College's strategic vision for enhancing learning and student experience over the next four years. This project takes a whole system approach to developing;

- Inclusive learning for all
- Sustained financial security

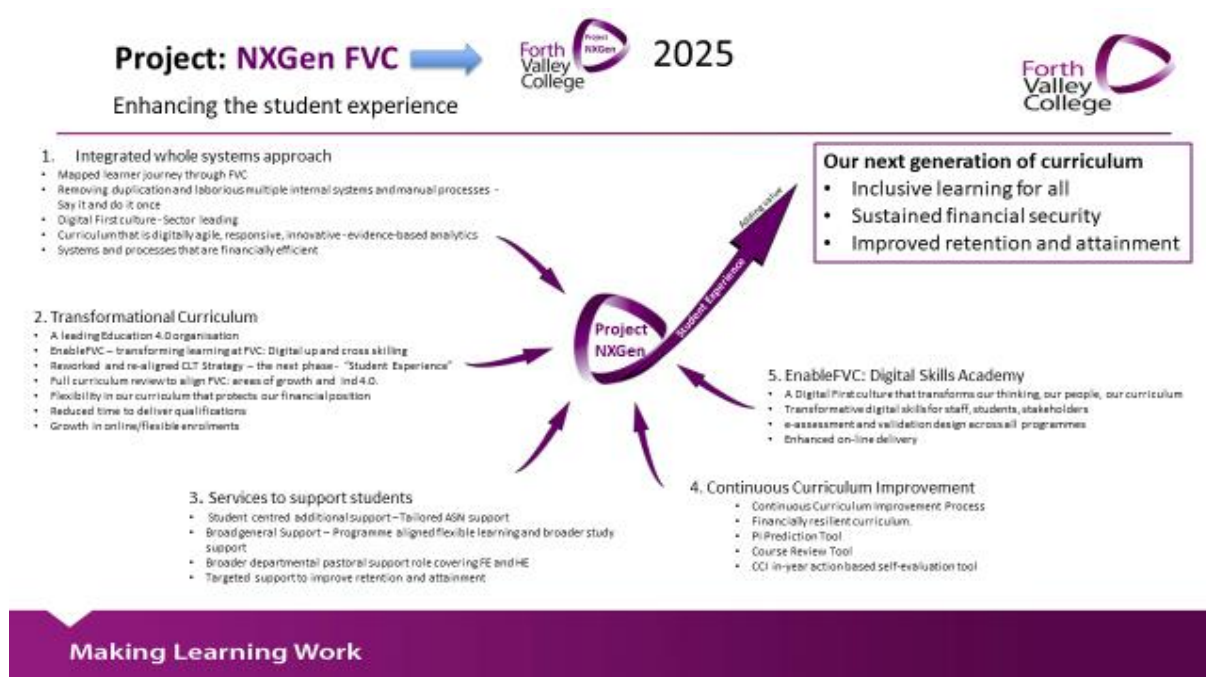
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- Improved retention and attainment

Inclusion is embedded in the heart of this project, which acknowledges that our learning and curriculum development is interwoven with society and culture. Ultimately, this project is about transformational change and aligns with Forth Valley College's strategic priorities now and will be a key focal point in our next round of strategic planning.

This project will look at;

- Creating a whole systems approach
- Transformational curriculum
- Services to support students
- Continuous curriculum improvement
- Developing the digital capacity of staff and students



3. Our People

3.1. People Strategy 2017-22

The introduction of the People Strategy 2017-22 allowed Forth Valley College to focus on the areas of development as well as to enhance opportunities for staff to meet their full potential. This is accessible to all staff via the Human Resources SharePoint site. Additionally, part of this five-year plan, is around equality;

In delivering the People Strategy we will:

- ✓ **Develop** and empower our people as a workforce for the future
- ✓ **Ensure** all college activities reflect the key principles of equality and diversity to achieve an inclusive organisation
- ✓ **Value** staff by recognising and celebrating success



At Forth Valley College, we are committed to ensuring that all staff work in an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation and that everyone can progress equally.

To achieve this objective, Forth Valley College has;

- Hosted a number of staff development days around health, wellbeing and teamwork
- Held a 'Giving Back' day celebrating volunteering, providing staff with a day per year to undertake work on good causes as a team or individual, designed to engender wellbeing and to utilise skills within the wider team
- Become a signatory of the Forces Covenant
- Become a Carers Engaged Employer and launched a Carers Support Forum
- Developed mentor options for staff at different points in their career throughout the organisation
- Introduced fully trained Mental Health Ambassadors to support staff
- Introduced multiple opportunities for leadership development to enhance succession planning
- Led the sector as a pilot college for General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registration of Lecturing Staff
- Launched a Digital Learning Academy to improve staff and students digital skills

In working to meet the aims of this objective, improved monitoring both in recruitment and with employed staff has involved adding new categories to the application process and equalities questionnaires to include:

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- Caring responsibilities
- Ex-forces, reservists and spouses

Regular updates of equalities monitoring data are taken to ensure data accuracy. Staff are asked every two years to update their equality data with this due in 2021.

Online staff development can be accessed from a variety of locations, an individual's work station, LRC, IT Lab or remotely from home. Designated time has been allocated by the college for all staff to undertake their CPD with additional paid overtime offered to part time staff who may feel the impact greater. All staff development days and events are made available to all staff across the organisation. Those who are part-time and on maternity leave are offered the opportunity to attend.

Though much has changed with on line delivery, where CPD is not available remotely or online, it is adapted to ensure consideration is given to those on maternity leave, adoption leave and those with flexible working patterns. Staff development is available to all employees regardless of contractual status or any protected characteristic. In addition, where possible, CPD is adapted to meet the individual's needs. All staff receive an induction and, it is expected that they would discuss CPD requirements with their line manager through their Performance Review and Development (PRD) meetings. Participation for lecturing staff for Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) has been agreed at a national level and open to all equally. Individual needs are discussed at a personal level to ensure that CPD is relevant to the needs of the individual.

CPD continues to remain challenging due to the vast array of training available, though options to introduce a professional standard external learning platform is underway. The College systems are not yet evolved enough to record CPD information in such a way that allows us to take a look at CPD on an organisational level. Ongoing developments and improvements of CPD recording system will mean that the College will be able to monitor the delivery and access to CPD. This will ensure that there is data available to be analysed, especially around CPD for employees with protected characteristics. Progress includes the introduction of a reflective practice section on the PRD process which allows self-evaluation of development needs to focus development on key areas specific to the individual and their own reflections, ensuring inclusive, targeted opportunity for all.

Furthermore, Forth Valley College has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and the support staff require throughout the crisis by implementing wellbeing initiatives such as Weekly Re-charge and Time4You as well as actively reflecting on the experience of forced working from home and ensuring that learning from this is embedded into our working practices moving forward.

3.2. Employee Cultural Engagement Survey

Staff are regularly surveyed to measure engagement across the organisation. The last three surveys took place in 2013, 2016 and 2019. 71% of employees responded to the 2019 survey, which was up from 54% on the previous survey in 2016. This means that we have results from a more representative cross section of staff.

There was a notable positive increase from 2016 to the statements 'I am treated with respect by my colleagues' and 'There is a mutual respect between staff at all levels of the college'. For these elements, two thirds of staff indicated a positive response.

I am treated with respect by my colleagues	
Strongly Agree	32.92%
Agree	50.62%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11.22%
Disagree	3.24%
Strongly disagree	2.00%

There is a mutual respect between staff at all levels of the College	
Strongly Agree	21.97%
Agree	46.21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	18.69%
Disagree	10.86%
Strongly disagree	2.27%

Additionally, there was an increase in the positive responses to the statement 'All staff are treated equally – irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity etc.' The positive responses to this statement increased from 75% to 78% between 2016 and 2019.

All staff are treated equally - irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, etc.	
Strongly Agree	32.58%
Agree	46.21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	14.14%
Disagree	4.80%
Strongly disagree	2.27%

Over 70% of staff agree or strongly agree that 'My manager cares for me as a person'. This is, once again, an increase on the 2016 survey.

My manager cares for me as a person	
Strongly Agree	38.73%
Agree	33.33%
Neither Agree or Disagree	21.57%
Disagree	3.43%
Strongly disagree	2.94%

3.3. Recruitment

Forth Valley College recruitment system - Myjobscotland (MJS) - meets our obligations under public sector requirements and is used by Scottish Government, Local Authorities and Emergency Services amongst other Government bodies. Forth Valley College has recorded equality information from the system over the past four years based on the protected characteristics of applicants who have provided this information.

MJS ensures a fair and transparent process of recruitment for the College by providing a system that captures equality information through the recruitment process, removing any reference to the protected characteristics. Interview panels have a gender balance where possible, and the college is a member of the Disability Confident scheme, guaranteeing an offer of interview to those with a declared disability who meet the basic role criteria.

In addition, to encourage applications, our [Why Work For Us?](#) page on MJS and our website have been updated to reflect what is on offer to prospective staff, highlighting our commitment to being a flexible and inclusive employer. Also comprehensive travel options have been added to encourage applications from those not familiar with the Forth Valley area and concerned about a daily commute.

The college is attracting a diverse number of applicants who are short listed solely on objective criteria of Skills, Knowledge and Experience related to the role applied for. Where large numbers of applicants apply, the option of assessment centres allow for a wider range of candidates to be taken through to the next stage.

Age Band	2017/18		2019/20	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
16-24	6.05%	3.17%	8.78%	3.57%
25-34	26.97%	32.54%	25.29%	23.81%
35-44	26.64%	21.43%	26.10%	22.62%
45-54	22.76%	23.81%	25.52%	27.38%
55-64	10.72%	12.70%	9.01%	13.10%
65+	0.39%	0.79%	0.69%	1.19%
Prefer Not to Say	6.47%	5.56%	4.62%	8.33%

Low levels of applications for those aged 16 to 24 is indicative of the highly specialised vacancies on offer. Forth Valley College is a living wage employer and pay is based on job evaluation results or national agreements, irrespective of age.

Gender	2017/18		2019/20	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
Female	59.28%	61.90%	65.47%	61.90%
Male	34.54%	32.54%	30.95%	29.76%
Other	0.07%	0%	0.23%	1.19%
Prefer not to say	6.11%	5.56%	3.35%	7.14%

The low levels of applications for posts and even lower numbers of successful men appointed is notable. This is mainly due to role segregation. Women have a higher representation in administrative and service roles and men in technical roles. Interview panels are required to have a gender balance where possible.

Religion	2017/18		2019/20	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
Christianity	33.88%	40.48%	34.41%	35.71%
No Religion	48.75%	43.65%	51.39%	52.38%
Other	2.70%	0%	3.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	14.67%	15.87%	11.20%	11.90%

Ethnic Origin	2017/18		2019/20	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
WHITE - Other white ethnic group	18.88%	19.05%	18.71%	14.29%
WHITE - Scottish	70.26%	74.60%	71.82%	78.57%
Other	5.33%	1.59%	6.12%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	5.33%	4.76	3.35%	7.14%

Ethnic Origin	2019/20	
	Applied	Hired
ASIAN- Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	0.35%	0.00%
ASIAN- Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	0.69%	0.00%
ASIAN- Other Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	0.23%	0.00%
ASIAN- Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	1.50%	0.00%
BLACK- African, African Scottish or African British	0.81%	0.00%
BLACK- Black, Black Scottish or Black British	0.23%	0.00%
BLACK- Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	0.23%	0.00%
MIXED OR MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUP - Mixed: White and Asian	0.23%	0.00%
MIXED OR MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUP - Mixed: White and Black African	0.12%	0.00%
MIXED OR MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUP - Other mixed background	0.23%	0.00%
OTHER ETHNIC GROUP - Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	0.58%	0.00%
OTHER ETHNIC GROUP - Other ethnic group	0.92%	0.00%
WHITE - Irish	1.62%	1.19%
WHITE - Other British	10.28%	9.52%
WHITE - Other white ethnic group	5.08%	2.38%
WHITE - Polish	1.73%	1.19%
WHITE - Scottish	71.82%	78.57%
Prefer not to say	3.35%	7.14%

Diversity of applicants shows that the mediums used are attracting a range of applicants however, it is notable the figures regarding those hired signify those candidates applying from minority ethnic groups are not meeting Forth Valley College role profile requirements. Candidates are shortlisted on skills, knowledge and experiences related to the role profile and are appointed based on competency interviews where candidates are required to demonstrate, using any past experiences (including non-work related experience) to demonstrate the level of skill or experience they have developed for a specific competency. Assessments of competency are based on the tasks to be performed and no profiling or subjective personality assessments are used.

Sexual Orientation	2017/18		2019/20	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
Gay	3.55%	2.38%	2.66%	0.00%
Heterosexual/Straight	86.05%	83.33%	89.03%	89.29%
Other	0.33%	0%	0.58%	1.19%
Prefer not to say	10.07%	14.29%	7.74%	9.52%

Disability	2017/18		2019/20	
	Applied	Hired	Applied	Hired
No	87.83%	91.27%	82.45%	79.76%
Yes	9.47%	5.56%	12.36%	8.33%
Prefer Not to Say	2.70%	3.17%	5.20%	11.90%

As an employer, we have 14.6% of staff declaring a disability once employed versus a lower disclosure rate at application stage. This highlights the need to reassure applicants of our inclusive approach to recruitment. To improve disclosure of disability, information has been made available to prospective employees that demonstrates the commitment to and support of candidates and employees.

3.4. Governance

There are a maximum of 12 non-executive posts on our Board of Management. Below outlines the evolution of our gender balance over time. The figures below are for March each year to allow for a direct comparison between years.

	Female %	Male %
2014/15		
Sector	32	68
FVC	42	58
2015/16		
Sector	32	68
FVC	50	50
2016/17		
Sector	39	61
FVC	50	50
2017/18		
Sector	39	61
FVC	54	46
2018/19		
Sector	40	60
FVC	45	55
2019/20		
Sector	43	57
FVC	50	50
2020/21		
Sector	Information not available	Information not available
FVC*	58	42

*Data as at March 2021

While the Gender Representation on Public Board (Scotland) Act 2018 made it a requirement to have at least 50% of non-executive members, Forth Valley College had sought for a number of years before that to ensure this is in place as demonstrated by the data above.

Where the gender balance had fluctuated, this has normally related to the resignation of a non-executive member or where one has reached the end of their tenure. The College and Board of Management has always sought to redress the balance in the next round of applications for non-executive membership.

Forth Valley College is committed to increasing the diversity of our Board Membership. Whilst our performance against gender targets remains strong, we are aware that there is a need to increase the diversity of Board Members to reflect Forth Valley's demographics, which shows around 3% of the population, are from an ethnic minority background. In 2019 we appointed a board member from the minority ethnic community however we are also acutely aware that there are no Board of Management members with a declared disability.

Our adverts have, for some time, expressly stated "As an organisation that strongly reflects our local communities, we are seeking a diverse range of individuals with the skills and experience to enhance the activities and accountabilities of our Board. We would especially welcome applications from women and ethnic minorities."

We advertise widely, using both online and local publications to reach a wide proportion of the Forth Valley and surrounding population. Moving forward, we will also engage with key local stakeholders and third party organisations in an effort to ensure the opportunities are highlighted to ethnic minorities and individuals with other protected characteristics such as disability.

4. Our Students

4.1. [Access and Inclusion](#)

4.1.1. Learning Support and Supported Programmes

The College Equalities and Inclusion Team provide a needs-led Learning Support service for students with additional support needs. Support is tailored to individual circumstances with the student at the centre of the process. High quality needs assessments are completed with students and the College is an accredited needs assessment centre for Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) applications. All prospective, new and current students are informed of support available and how to access it. Students are able to disclose support needs at any time during their time at College.

The department of Business & Communities (BC) provides a wide range of courses, under the banner of 'supported programmes', for disadvantaged young people in the senior phase of school who have a diverse range of support needs. This spans from supporting those with learning disabilities and/or those with social, emotional and behavioural needs.

We provide, on all three campuses, extended school link classes for young people with learning disabilities to support them in their transition from school into college or the workplace. These young people have learning support needs ranging from profound and complex needs to those with mild to moderate learning difficulties. We work closely with schools and support agencies, such as social work, to help these young people to progress.

In addition, the department provides a wide range of courses specifically targeted towards young people in the senior phase of school who have social, emotional and/or behavioural support needs. These young people are amongst the hardest to reach in our community who may have disengaged with school and/ or the wider society or currently be in a specialist school support unit. Working with a diverse range of agencies and partners, including schools, we participate in school leaver destination meetings and, where possible, individual review meetings to support the young person, their carers/families and wider agencies to support the young person's progression into college or the workplace.

4.1.2. Learner Development Workers

Learner Development Workers (LDWs) provide on course pastoral and employability support to students on Further Education programmes. LDWs are embedded in teaching departments, tailoring their support to the needs of their students and within a teaching department context. LDWs are involved in attendance monitoring, checking in with students on a regular basis, highlighting concerns to course managers and signposting students to support. In addition to this support, LDWs deliver weekly sessions on;

- Financial Capability
- Citizenship and Diversity
- Learning and Study Skills
- Career Preparation
- Health and Wellbeing

These sessions align with our responsibility to enable students to develop essential skills that they can take with them into society and work.

4.1.3. Advice and Guidance

Learner Advisors (LAs) provide advice and guidance support for potential, new and continuing students. This support includes pre-course information; funding advice and support; specific support for some priority access groups; general wellbeing support to students who are of concern and safeguarding.

4.1.4. Learning Resource Centres

Our Learning Resource Centres (LRCs) provide online and in person support to students across the college. We have LRCs in three of our campuses, which host staff and PCs which all students can make use of. Over the last four years, the LRCs have developed their service to deliver workshops to class groups and individuals around;

- Academic Writing
- CV Building
- Time Management
- Research Skills

In addition to these workshops, which benefit a wide range of students, the LRCs have developed a suite of workshops that support mental health and wellbeing, especially around using creativity and mindfulness techniques.

4.2. Group Specific Plans

4.2.1. Gender Based Violence

The College is currently developing a plan around Gender Based Violence (GBV) and is committed to the aims outlined in Equally Safe. Forth Valley College works closely with FVSA to ensure a joined up approach, as we know that both staff and students can be affected by gender based violence.

The College is currently working in partnership with Forth Valley Rape Crisis and we now host a support officer based on our Falkirk campus one day per week. As well as hosting a support worker, this partnership also aims to deliver sexual violence prevention workshops to students via the Learning Development Workers timetabled slot with non-advanced groups. In terms of 'early intervention', we have delivered Bystander training for FVSA and some class reps as well as training in tier one GBV awareness; trauma informed approaches and how to respond to disclosures trainings to key College support staff (Learning Development Facilitators, Learning Resource Assistants, Learning Development Workers, Learner Advisors, Mental Health Ambassadors).

4.2.2. Corporate Parenting

Guidance asks colleges to consider care experienced young people as if they had a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010).

The College has seen a significant increase in the numbers of students disclosing as care experienced over the last three years, from 225 for session 2015-2016 to 716 for session 2019-2020, a 300% increase. This increased disclosure rate is very positive, as it helps the College to target specific support more effectively and to engage with these students to develop a robust and meaningful corporate parenting plan.

In 2018, the College secured two years of funding from the Robertson Trust to begin a mentoring project called Time4Me. The project aims to improve retention and success rates of young people transitioning to College who face additional barriers to fulfilling their potential. The project is aimed at young people who are care experienced, have caring responsibilities and/or reside in areas of multiple deprivation. In 2019, we were awarded a further two years of funding to continue the good work and progress that the project has made to date.

4.2.3. Race Equality

We have set a target of maintaining enrolments from students who are from a BME background at 3%, which is representative of the 3% of residents within Forth Valley who are from a black or minority ethnic. There is more detailed monitoring of our enrolment, retention and success PIs for Black and Minority Ethnicity (BME) students through our Access & Inclusion strategy.

Our Principal recently signed the College up to a sectoral anti-racism declaration. Following this, we are undertaking a 'Tackling Racism on Campus' project, supported by Advanced HE. Key staff, including Leadership Management

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Team members and a Board member have attended 'Introduction to Race Equality' training and will support embedding an anti-racism agenda across the organisation.

4.3. Retention and Achievement by Characteristic

For information around specific activities relating to departments or groups, please see Reports B and C.

4.3.1. Race/Ethnicity

Over the last four years, the retention and achievement rates for students from a BME background have been lower than that of their white peers. In addition to this, the retention and achievement rates of BME students across the college have fluctuated over those four years. This may be partially due to small numbers however, further analysis is required which is planned for the next round of reporting from 2021 to 2025. When taken as a collective, all groups racialised as Black show a decline or erratic rates of achievement. Similarly, ethnic groups with an increase in achievement show similar patterns of irregularity and below average college achievement rate. The larger BME category shows an increase in achievement in 19/20 when considered as a whole group. This is more in line with the achievement of white students for that academic session however, the average retention rate over the last three sessions is still 4% lower for those from a BME background.

Race	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
BME	630	602	856	4%	3%	4%	91%	92%	96%	79%	79%	82%
White	15,989	17,218	22,253	94%	94%	95%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	82%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

Race	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
Any other background	256	239	327	41%	40%	38%	94%	97%	97%	83%	89%	90%
Other African background	10	8	11	2%	1%	1%	80%	88%	100%	67%	80%	33%
African	68	59	115	11%	10%	13%	96%	90%	97%	86%	79%	77%
Arab	23	20	19	4%	3%	2%	100%	85%	100%	90%	69%	90%
Bangladeshi	2	2	1	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%	0%	0%	
Caribbean	10	6	15	2%	1%	2%	90%	67%	80%	83%	67%	43%
Chinese	21	30	29	3%	5%	3%	90%	97%	100%	82%	63%	100%
Indian	29	34	49	5%	6%	6%	86%	94%	86%	71%	86%	70%
Mixed	59	41	59	9%	7%	7%	81%	85%	93%	66%	65%	71%
Other Asian	44	49	75	7%	8%	9%	75%	86%	93%	58%	73%	82%
Pakistani	108	114	156	17%	19%	18%	96%	90%	97%	87%	73%	83%
	630	602	856	100%	100%	100%	91%	92%	96%	79%	79%	82%

Over the last four years, there has been a number of different events at Forth Valley College and across the sector to try to engage BME students to hear about their experiences. While we have had some engagement from this group, the engagement is often from international students whose experiences can be quite different. More work is required to engage with students who are Black or from an ethnic minority and this work will be undertaken through our Race Equality Plan. We are also using external sources of information to support our work, especially the [Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged](#) report produced by the EHRC and published in 2019.

4.3.2. Trans

Trans' achievement has steadily increased from the reporting period of 2017 to 2021 and for session 19/20, this group's achievement rate rose by 6%. Trans students now achieve at an average 5% higher than their non-trans peers. Over the last four years, Forth Valley College has undertaken a great deal of work around Trans awareness and highlighting the challenges that these students face and the types of support they might need. As well as hosting

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Trans awareness events and training, the college has created a [Trans Plan](#) to support students with their journey through college and actively publicised our Hate Incident Reporting Tool to allow Trans students to alert us to transphobic behaviour on campus.

Trans	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
N	16,573	17,737	23,048	97%	97%	99%	93%	94%	96%	85%	82%	82%
Y	46	83	61	0%	0%	0%	91%	95%	95%	85%	86%	91%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

Trans people still face discrimination throughout society however, at Forth Valley College, we are proud of the work that has gone into supporting our Trans students and will continue to enhance the support for this group. In addition, we will use this model and the success that has come with it to support other groups.

4.3.3. Sexual Orientation

In general, the retention and achievement rates for those who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB) are consistent. However, heterosexual students or those who 'prefer not to say' still have higher retention and achievement rates than their LGB peers. Bisexual students achievement rates have lowered over the last three years and gay women are achieving at consistently lower rates than the college average. FVSA have undertaken a significant amount of work to support LGBTI+ students at Forth Valley College; creating support groups and running awareness events. Some departments have undertaken work around this group too. However, the trends suggest that more work needs to be undertaken, on a cross college basis, to identify the issues or barriers lesbian and bisexual students are facing and to consider what action is required to reduce the attainment gap.

Sexual Orientation	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
Bisexual	449	410	707	3%	2%	3%	89%	89%	94%	76%	71%	71%
Gay Man	125	128	177	1%	1%	1%	85%	93%	94%	70%	80%	75%
Gay Woman/Lesbian	95	85	154	1%	0%	1%	78%	86%	94%	61%	69%	62%
Heterosexual	11,685	10,887	13,598	69%	59%	58%	93%	92%	95%	84%	81%	82%
Other	67	61	83	0%	0%	0%	90%	90%	95%	75%	73%	85%
Prefer not to say	4,198	6,249	8,390	25%	34%	36%	95%	98%	98%	89%	89%	86%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

4.3.4. Religion

In terms of religion, it is important to note that the largest groups in these categories are *None* and *Prefer Not to Say*. In particular, there was an increase in Buddhist achievement and a decrease in achievement for Roman Catholics and Sikhs. Buddhist and Sikh retention and achievement rates are difficult to analyse because of very low numbers. Roman Catholic students however are a different case. There are higher numbers of Catholic students. We are aware that those who wear religious dress or jewellery often face discrimination in society. We are also aware that race and religion often intersect. More qualitative data is needed to explore the 'story' behind these numbers and if and how religion and achievement are related.

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Religion	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
Any other religion or belief	135	95	119	1%	1%	1%	87%	86%	97%	76%	70%	77%
Buddhist	99	33	33	1%	0%	0%	76%	82%	97%	64%	67%	75%
Christian/Protestant	821	1,068	1,127	5%	6%	5%	95%	95%	96%	88%	82%	85%
Hindu	28	22	21	0%	0%	0%	79%	86%	86%	64%	71%	67%
Jewish	3	1	3	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Muslim	150	158	198	1%	1%	1%	95%	87%	97%	81%	72%	79%
None	9,659	9,109	11,579	57%	50%	50%	92%	92%	95%	83%	80%	80%
Other Christian	1,074	686	724	6%	4%	3%	95%	94%	97%	87%	85%	88%
Prefer not to say	3,941	5,777	8,151	23%	31%	35%	96%	98%	98%	89%	90%	87%
Roman Catholic	698	862	1,139	4%	5%	5%	93%	93%	94%	85%	85%	79%
Sikh	11	9	15	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	87%	100%	100%	71%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

4.3.5. Gender

Our numbers over the last four years tell us that women, those who identify as *other* and *prefer not to say* have consistently achieved at lower rates than those who identify as men. Though we have seen progress in enrolments from women, particularly in STEM subjects, there still seems to be a prevailing trend that indicates there is further work to be done. Interestingly, the number of those declaring *other* as a gender option do not correlate with achievement rates for those who have specifically indicated they are Trans. These students may be interpreted as distinct to those who declare their Tran status and perhaps seek support versus those who may not be ready to disclose this information even on anonymised forms. As indicated in our GAP, we aim to take a holistic approach to gender equality by not only promoting women into STEM and men into Care and Beauty but also tackling gender based violence, ensuring we have all genders represented in subject areas and creating gender balance across our board and leadership teams. This includes supporting Trans students and recognising that they may have specific needs.

Gender	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
Female	8,046	8,287	11,780	47%	45%	50%	93%	93%	96%	84%	79%	79%
Male	8,873	9,958	11,407	52%	54%	49%	94%	95%	97%	85%	85%	86%
Other	27	27	47	0%	0%	0%	93%	93%	91%	82%	83%	67%
Prefer not to say	77	75	121	0%	0%	1%	90%	91%	90%	73%	81%	70%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

Over the next four years, there will be a focus on Gender Based Violence through our Gender Based Violence Plan. This plan not only aims to reduce the risk of sexual harassment and violence on campus but also to support all of our students to understand the systemic issues that exist within our society. This work will, hopefully, contribute to increase women's retention and achievement rates.

4.3.6. Age

Historically, the lowest achieving age group is the under 16s. However, in 2019/20, there was a 12% jump in the attainment rate by this group. As school leavers may often be disaffected or disengaged by formal education, we have prioritised links with schools and our supported programmes work extensively with partners to ensure a smooth transition. Similarly the Learning Support team has also improved how Additional Support Need information is exchanged between school and college to ensure the right support is offered from the onset. However, our

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investment in increased school partnerships particularly in terms of Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) seem to have benefited under 16s. In 2018/19, the number of schools pupils on FAs increased by 87% and, in 2019/20, this increased again by 35%. The surge was due to a larger selection of apprenticeships offered across curriculum areas and increased engagement with local authorities. It is important to note as well that over a third of those that participated in the FAs programmes went on to continue their education at college in 2020/21. We will continue to monitor how our partnership work, foundation apprenticeship programmes and transition exchange function in order to maintain this improvement as well as apply learning to other areas.

Age	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
<16	1,035	1,983	2,016	6%	11%	9%	93%	97%	97%	64%	61%	77%
16-19	5,854	5,248	8,882	34%	29%	38%	91%	91%	95%	82%	78%	79%
20-24	3,256	2,912	4,038	19%	16%	17%	94%	93%	96%	86%	83%	83%
25-29	1,610	1,698	2,031	9%	9%	9%	94%	94%	96%	86%	85%	82%
30-34	1,185	1,272	1,549	7%	7%	7%	94%	94%	97%	86%	86%	85%
35-39	912	1,105	1,232	5%	6%	5%	95%	95%	97%	88%	88%	88%
40-44	726	898	940	4%	5%	4%	96%	97%	97%	91%	89%	90%
45-59	1,645	2,221	1,968	10%	12%	8%	97%	98%	98%	92%	93%	90%
60+	396	483	453	2%	3%	2%	96%	98%	97%	91%	90%	91%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

4.3.7. Disability

The retention and achievement rates of students with disabilities has fluctuated over the four years and these rates are lower than the retention and achievement rates of students without a disability. The difference in achievement rates between these groups is around 7%. People with disabilities or long term health conditions make up around 20% of the whole population and 12% of our student population have disclosed that they have a disability. People with disabilities face additional barriers to accessing work and education and FVC has robust services to support our students with disabilities. Over the next four years, we will look to analyse what impact these services are having on the outcomes of our disabled students. We need to enhance our reporting to understand what services this group are accessing, if any; what impact these services have and what gaps exist within our services. Our new student support system, Triple S, will help us map the student journey and provide us with qualitative information that will help us to interpret our quantitative data. Feedback through surveys and focus groups tell us that our support is working for the students who engage with our services but we need to link this up with our data and target areas for improvement.

Disability	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
Disabled	2,595	2,064	2,453	15%	11%	11%	91%	88%	94%	82%	75%	75%
No disability	14,024	15,756	20,656	82%	86%	88%	94%	95%	96%	85%	84%	84%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

4.3.8. Care Experience

Care experienced students have achieved at lower than the college average over the last 3 years. In 2018/19 we launched the Time4Me programme which provided mentors young carers and care-experienced young people. Participants in the Time4Me programme have improved retention rates, 75% progression rate within college and 90% overall satisfaction rate. Qualitative data reveals that this programme has contributed to a positive overall college experience. We look forward to applying and mainstreaming the learning from the programme across the organisation.

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Care Experienced	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
N	16,114	17,389	22,325	95%	95%	96%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%
Y	505	431	784	3%	2%	3%	87%	83%	92%	71%	65%	71%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

4.3.9. Carers

The COVID-19 pandemic has proved a real challenge for those students with caring responsibilities. Looking after those who are shielding, while potentially also looking after children at home and attending college remotely has had a negative impact on this group. This group already faced additional barriers before the pandemic but feedback from 19/20 told us that attending college in person was much easier for this group, both in terms of their mental health and their caring responsibilities. We have developed strong links with carers' charities through the Time4Me project and we will continue to build on the relationships with these organisations. It has been identified that more work needs to be done to make staff aware of what 'caring' is and what impact this has on our students. We will look to develop a Carers Plan over the next reporting cycle that links in with work we are doing for other groups and considers what support this group needs.

Carer	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	SR 17/18	SR 18/19	SR 19/20	Achieved 17/18	Achieved 18/19	Achieved 19/20
N	16,546	18,013	22,699	97%	98%	97%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%
Y	477	334	656	3%	2%	3%	91%	86%	96%	81%	67%	80%
Overall - Summary	17,023	18,347	23,355	100%	100%	100%	93%	94%	96%	85%	83%	83%

5. Considerations and Conclusions

Forth Valley College is proud of the work that it is doing to support our staff and students and we have robust plans in place to continue enhancing the work that we are undertaking. Like wider society, there is much work to be done around working towards eliminating inequalities and this has been acknowledged at both a strategic and operational level. Through our strategic planning and Project NxGen, we will look to embed our inclusion work further so that our business needs and equality duty responsibilities are truly aligned. A diverse and supported workforce and student population will only enhance the experience and outcomes of all who interact with Forth Valley College.

The overall reflection of our progress has helped us identify the following main points for future action:

- We have made good progress around mainstreaming equality however, we still have work to do.
- Our strategic direction is clear and we need to work to further weave equality mainstreaming into our strategic priorities so that it is further embedded and aligned with the needs of the business
- Project NxGen will be a key catalyst for embedding equality work by developing a whole system, inclusive approach to development work; developing inclusive support for all students and embedding reviews of the outcomes of those who share protected characteristics into our Continuous Curriculum Improvement process
- We need to improve our intelligence from our staff and students. We have a great deal of quantitative data but we need the qualitative information to provide the narratives.
- Work is required on reporting mechanisms so that we can better understand the experiences of our staff and students.
- Many plans need created to support specific groups; we need to find a way to work all of these plans together, to embed a culture of equality and to prevent groups having to compete.

The Equality and Human Rights Council have highlighted that, across the public sector, equality outcomes have been too broad. For the next reporting cycle (2021 to 2025), they are looking for more specific, measurable outcomes.