The background is a solid red color with several overlapping, semi-transparent, curved shapes in various shades of red and orange, creating a dynamic, layered effect.

Mainstreaming Equality and Equality Outcomes 2021 – 2025 **Progress Report**

February 2024

In this progress report:

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Introduction

Ayrshire College recognises the diversity of its students, staff, the community it serves and those it wishes to attract. Ensuring that equality is at the heart of everything we do, we take into account the effects of intersectionality and factors such as the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, the effects of adverse childhood experiences and deprivation. We continually strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination and support an inclusive culture that extends beyond the College's boundaries.

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update on how the College continues to build upon its many strengths and achievements as highlighted in the April 2023 Mainstreaming Equality 2021 – 2023 and Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 Report.

The April report sets out the College's progress in meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED was created under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in Scotland. All public sector bodies, including the College, are legally obliged to meet the general equality duty.

In addition to the general duty, specific duties require the College to publish a report on the progress it has made on integrating the general equality duty into the exercise of its functions to better perform that duty.

In January 2023, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published a set of National Equality Outcomes (NEOs) for colleges and universities to consider which will be fully aligned with the College's own Equality Outcomes by April 2025.

We continue to work towards achieving the four College Equality Outcomes which we published for the reporting period 2021-2025, to ensure that we improve the learning and employment experience for those beset by inequality based on protected characteristic(s). This report offers a summary of progress towards delivering on our Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 and on mainstreaming Equality across the College.



Our People

It is important that our workforce reflects the diversity of our local communities therefore, improving workforce diversity continues to be a key priority. By improving diversity, we benefit from a more creative and innovative workforce, encouraging everyone to use their diverse perspectives and talents, contributing to the success of the College.

Improving workforce diversity

In April 2023, the College reported that previously identified challenges regarding its workforce diversity had persisted.

These include:

- **An ageing workforce with the highest representation continuing to be from the 41-55 age group and the lowest representation from the 16-25 age group**
- **A low representation from minority groups in relation to; disability; ethnicity; religion or belief; and sexual orientation**
- **A clustering of male and female staff in traditionally gendered occupations and roles**

Whilst these challenges persist, the College is committed to tackling these and has demonstrated an improvement in terms of attracting increasingly diverse candidates at application stage, with the current workforce diversity closely mirroring, or exceeding for some protected characteristics, our public sector counterparts in Ayrshire and the Further Education sector in Scotland.

The College made a commitment to tackle this priority by examining the employee journey, looking at staff recruitment, staff development and the exit process, embedding equality-based questions in the exit interview.

Whilst actions outlined in Equality Outcome 2 have a student focus, it is acknowledged that by achieving these, there will be an impact on workforce diversity in that striving to create gender balance within all courses, will reflect positively in the workforce of the future.

10 MONTHS IN NUMBERS

765
Total Staff

60%
Work Full time

8.4%
part-time staff are male

1.3%
staff aged 16-26 years
maintaining the increase reported in April 2023

7%
staff with a disability or long-term health condition
maintaining the increase reported in April 2023

10.3%
disabled or long-term
health applicants

3.6%
Reduced number of Prefer not to say for
Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual applicants

4.9%
BAME applicants

4.4%
non-Christian faith applicants

Steps Being Taken to Improve Workforce Diversity

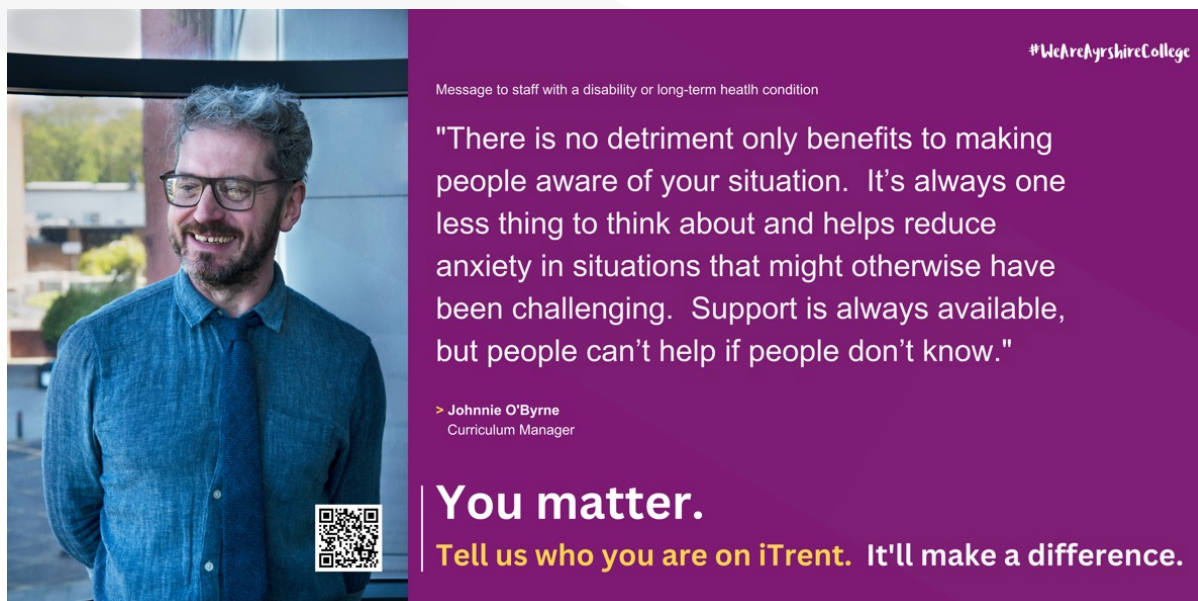
The College recognises that a series of sustained, inter-related actions are required to bring about its ambitions with regards to workforce diversity.

#WeAreAyrshireCollege

We Are Ayrshire College is an ongoing College initiative to celebrate the diversity of the College's students and staff to promote inclusion. 'If I can see me, I can be me' underpins this initiative which aims to share the stories and experiences of students and staff – these are being shared on the College's website with the big ambition in academic year 2023-2024 to launch a series of staff photo posters around campuses with a QR code linking to the website.

[Click here to redirect to the website page](#)

'By improving diversity we benefit from a more creative and innovative workforce, encouraging everyone to use their diverse perspectives and talents which contributes to the success of the College'



#WeAreAyrshireCollege

Message to staff with a disability or long-term health condition

"There is no detriment only benefits to making people aware of your situation. It's always one less thing to think about and helps reduce anxiety in situations that might otherwise have been challenging. Support is always available, but people can't help if people don't know."

> Johnnie O'Byrne
Curriculum Manager

You matter.

Tell us who you are on iTrent. It'll make a difference.

Hiring Manager Toolkit

The Hiring Manager Toolkit was launched in January 2021 as a training tool to support College line managers in carrying out their role and functions within the recruitment cycle. The training sets out guidance on vacancy request, advertising, shortlisting, selection, offer and pre-employment (onboarding). Specific focus is given to legal and discrimination issues to ensure that line managers have a detailed understanding of their duties and responsibilities.

The toolkit also includes unconscious bias e-learning to enable managers to recognise and challenge their own bias and assumptions, particularly within the context of recruitment and selection.

Since it was introduced, 90 staff members have completed the Hiring Managers Toolkit.



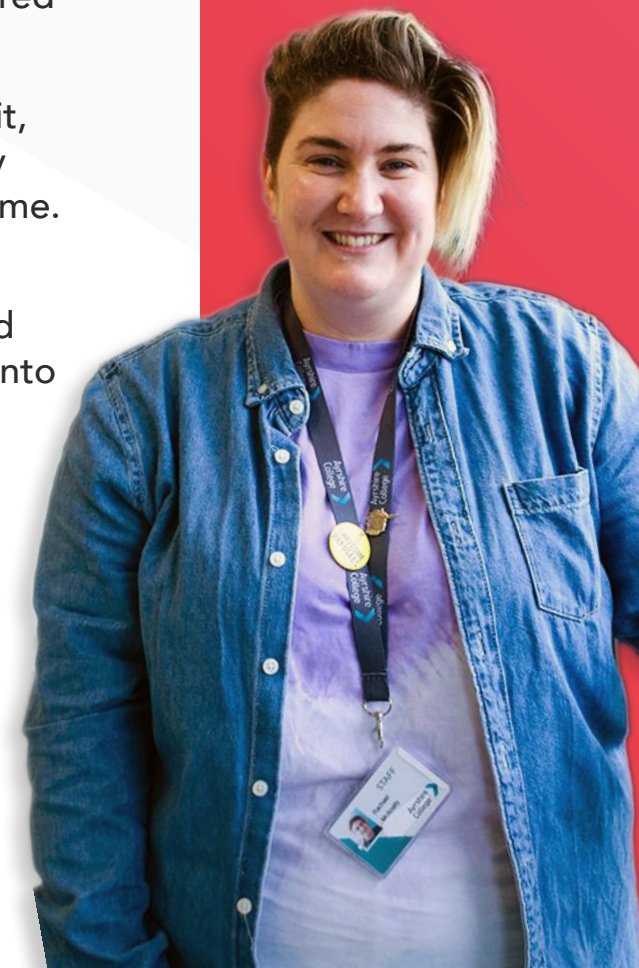
Growing Leaders Framework (Aspire)

In 2022 the Aspire programme was introduced as part of the Growing Leaders Framework to enable the aspirations of the Ayrshire College Statement of Ambition 2030 and Refresh and Renew Plan 2021-24. The aim of the programme is to develop the skill set of staff who aspire to succeed in leadership roles across the College.

The programme adopts a pioneering and unique learning process, providing opportunities for our people to exercise leadership in a strategic context. Without this practical exposure to management, those aspiring to be in more senior roles couldn't demonstrate the required capability.

The programmes focus includes leadership capabilities, manager resources, mentor toolkit, candidate resources, tailored workshops, project briefs/toolkit, with equality and diversity being delivered as a workshop topic as well as being embedded throughout the programme.

The first cohort of Aspire Candidates completed the programme in 2023. There were 10 candidates with a 7/3 female/male split. 5 of 10 candidates (4 female/1 male) have moved into promoted Team Leader roles and 2 (females) out of the 5 have subsequently moved into management positions.



SUSE Scotland Assessment

The Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE) is the national representative body for supported employment providers, supporting workplaces in ensuring that disabled people and those with long term health conditions, have the opportunity of a working life. The College is working with SUSE Scotland to conduct a user experience employer assessment for accessibility. The assessment will take place in March 2024 and will consider both the physical environment and key college processes, including the recruitment cycle.



Scottish Union of Supported Employment

Progress Being Made

The College is making progress towards improving its workforce diversity, attracting applications from a more diverse pool of candidates and there is a steady increase in staff members who are declaring a disability.

This work needs to be approached with the acknowledgement that inequality spreads beyond the key protected characteristics and is further exacerbated by income, wealth, living standards, health, education, labour market participation and life chances.

As an employer, Ayrshire College is committed to advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We are committed to having a work environment where all employees are treated as individuals and with dignity and respect.

Moving forward, the College will continue to monitor the challenges relating to age, disability, race and sexual orientation with the aim of future actions being informed by this information.



● Equal Pay

In April 2023, the College reported a gender pay gap between male and female staff as follows:

- a mean gender pay gap of 11.59% (full-time) and 11.70% (part-time)
- a median gender gap of 26.77% (full-time) and 16.07% (part-time)

In our 2023 report, we reaffirmed our commitment to the principle that pay should be awarded equitably and fairly to all staff, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, while acknowledging the further exacerbating factors of intersectionality and persistent societal inequality.

We acknowledge that occupational segregation exists within the College and are committed to eradicating pay bias. As well as demonstrating this commitment primarily in our Strategic Ambitions and through our Equality Outcomes, we have set out priority actions to address this to improve our current gender pay gap.

“The gender pay gap is complex and is symptomatic of gender inequality. It is for this reason the College has long taken a whole-college approach to gender equality.”

The College is committed to investing in its people. This is achieved through the implementation of the Growing Leaders Framework, the offering of funded accreditation, and by supporting opportunities to work flexibly wherever possible.

Evolve Leadership Development Programme

In March 2023 we consulted with staff on our future College requirement. One of the key focus areas identified was to embed outstanding leadership at every level of the organisation. Leadership that is positively impactful and building upon the examples of good practice to realise our potential as a high-performing organisation.

Evidence supports that clearly defined leadership competencies, underpinned by a comprehensive programme of development, is central to helping to achieving this.

We developed the Ayrshire College Leadership Competency Framework and associated Evolve Leadership Development Programme. The Evolve Leadership Programme is for established leaders and managers and sits within our Growing Leaders Academy, alongside our Aspire Growing Leaders Programme for emerging leaders. The programme is designed around 3 new leadership competences; Engages and Inspires Others, Grows People and Teams and Embraces Collaboration. As with the Aspire programme for budding leaders, equality and diversity are themes which are embedded into the programme and in addition to this, there is a workshop dedicated to Equality Impact Assessment.



Flexible Working Requests

Between April 2023 and January 2024, mirroring the previous reporting period, the College received nine flexible working requests. Of these requests, none were withdrawn and nine were approved. All requests were made by female college staff with 44% of these related to childcare/dependents/caring responsibilities.



● Mainstreaming Equality

To mainstream equality is to embed equality into the everyday functions, activities and processes of the College to ensure that we can demonstrate that we are meeting the three needs of the general duty under our Public Sector Equality Duty:

- **Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010**
- **Advancing equality opportunity between people from different protected characteristic group**
- **Fostering good relations between people from different protected characteristic groups, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups**

In this way, equality becomes part of the fabric of 'who we are' as an organisation; the value placed on inclusion and diversity is more than just words and instead is a way of being, with equality rooted in our day-to-day work.

Mainstreaming equality enables the College to continue to improve the experience of students and staff and contribute meaningfully to the inclusion and wellbeing of the communities it serves.



In April 2023 we assessed the College to be making good progress in mainstreaming equality and continue to strengthen our efforts for the betterment of our students and staff across all protected characteristics. We continue to work towards the six mainstreaming focus areas we set ourselves in 2021:

- 1. Strategic vision, approach and governance arrangements**
- 2. Curriculum content and/or design**
- 3. Raising awareness**
- 4. Supporting student success**
- 5. Supporting staff success**
- 6. Partnership working**

At that time the College also introduced mainstreaming themes to further progress and monitor specific equality needs. The College's three mainstreaming themes are:

- **Equally Safe – Gender Based Violence (GBV)**
- **Student participation in the feedback process**
- **Female staff progression**

[Click here to view the progress reported at that time, in mainstreaming equality against the three focus areas and the College's themes.](#)

Progress Being Made to Mainstream Equality

[Click here to view the Statement of Ambition 2023](#)

The College positioned equality and inclusion as a key ambition in its Statement of Ambition 2030 and as a strategic objective in its Refresh and Renew Plan 2021-2024. The College has implemented its new College Operating and Enhancement Plan (COEP) and Team Operating and Enhancement Plan (TOEP) process to enable continued success, through which teams are asked to align and map their objectives to the current College Equality Outcomes.

In addition to this strategic commitment to equality and inclusion, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) takes on the role of Equality Champion during meetings, and the Values, Inclusion, Equality and Wellbeing Group (VIEW) steering group oversees five operational sub-groups.

A review of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process has been carried out, with a focus on streamlining the process using digital tools to further support and embed the practice at all management levels. EQIA's are completed for all Board and Committee papers, where required, as well as for all policy, decisions and changes across the College, in accordance with our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. . EqIA training will be rolled out through the Evolve programme and an e-learning module will be available through the staff learning portal.

The College now has a dedicated counselling room on each campus and students and staff also have access to a contemplation/wellbeing/prayer room.

Following on from the launch of the Menopause Policy, the College has established a Menopause Action group which facilitates a Menopause Support Group for Staff and Menopause Champions who are trained to support and signpost students and staff.

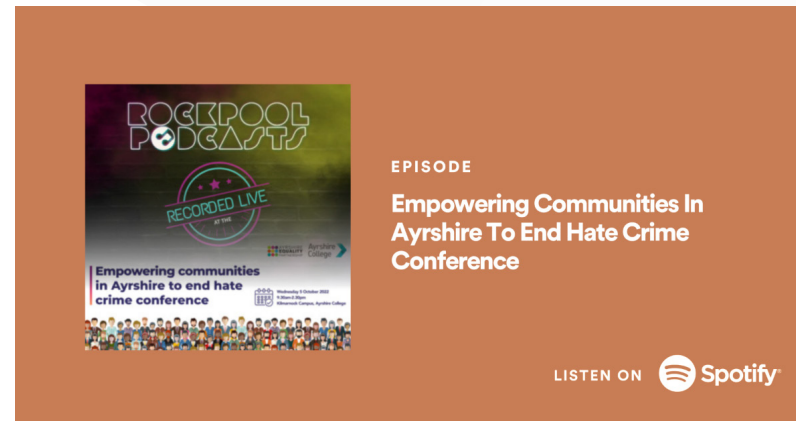
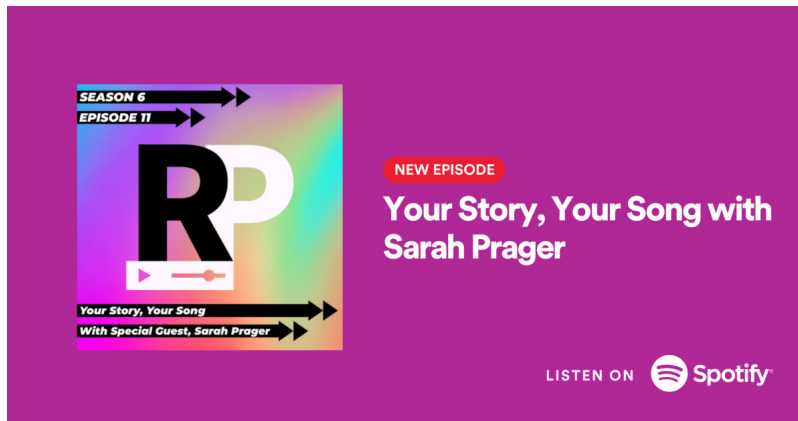
Curriculum Content and/or Design

In April 2023, the College shared several key highlights and examples of good practice to emphasise ways in which equality is being embedded in curriculum content and/or design, moving the College further towards realising a key College ambition.

Ongoing success of award-winning initiatives such as 'Passing Positivity' and 'Rockpool Podcasts' as well as partnership initiatives with Ayrshire Sportsability and Connecting Communities are examples of how the College is exploring new ways to deliver learning and teaching which fosters inclusion and equality of opportunity.

The Ayrshire College Foundation funded innovative Essential Radio was highlighted for its aims of supporting students' essential skills, including oral presentation, literacy development, ICT, numeracy skills through real-life, practical experience.

'Essential Radio is embedded within Curriculum delivery and enriches the learning and teaching experience for students'



Supporting Staff Success

The inclusion and wellbeing of staff remains a college priority. Staff are continuing to engage positively with available support such as MCL Medics, employee assistance service, the Menopause Support Group, Staff Wellbeing Teams Page, as well as various Wellbeing initiatives throughout the year such as walking challenges and the BRIT Challenge.

Following a hybrid working pilot from March 2022 to June 2023, and an extensive staff consultation, staff have been supported with the transition to hybrid working, where appropriate. The approach to hybrid working recognises that there are many benefits to working in this way, where roles permit.

The Equality Matters section of the Staff Learning Portal is continuing to enable staff to enhance and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across all the protected characteristics, as well as other key topics of importance, such as sexual harassment, domestic abuse and allyship. The College introduced a 'Commitment to LGBT+ Inclusion' digital badge and lanyard pin badge for those who complete the e-learning modules in relation to gender reassignment and sexual orientation with 81 members of staff receiving this through the completion of the LGBT Youth Scotland E-Learning Module.



Good practice example:

Ayrshire Equality Network LGBT+ Conversation Café Events

In June 2023, the Ayrshire Equality Network, led by Ayrshire College, delivered a series of LGBT+ Conversation Cafes. There was a conversation café hosted in each local authority area with cafes taking place in Irvine Royal Academy, Ayrshire College Kilmarnock Campus and UWS Ayr Campus. A total of 63 people took part in the cafes, this number was made up of members of the LGBT+ community, allies and service providers.

The purpose of the cafes was to consult with the LGBT+ Community and its allies on a set of discussion questions regarding the LGBT+ experience in relation to LGBT+ support in Ayrshire, health and wellbeing, and safety.

Participants reported that safety was an issue and whilst there are clubs available, many LGBT+ people are reluctant to go out after dark to travel to these for fear of their safety. The Ayrshire Equality network is looking at data collected with the view to developing a set of joint actions to support the strengthening and accessibility of LGBT+ networks with the aim of reducing isolation by improving access to LGBT+ services and social opportunities.



Good practice example:

Gender Leadership Secondary School Pan Ayrshire Event

Ayrshire College is committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity, no matter their gender, to pursue a course and career of their choice.

In June 2023, we invited our local secondary schools to help us with this by challenging the gender stereotypes that still exist and influence young people's decisions about their subject choices and career progression.

We invited 60 children from each secondary school in Ayrshire (1152 in total) to attend a two-day taster event, where the pupils had the opportunity to take part in a range of curriculum activities that showcased the opportunities available at the College.

Prior to their visit, the College provided schools with a class activity that focused on removing stereotypical career pathway assumptions dependent on individual gender identity. This session included examples and student testimonial videos from across the College to break down misconceptions relating to gender roles.

Students were then timetabled to attend sessions across the following curriculum areas; care, computing, creative, early years, hairdressing and beauty, hospitality, science and engineering, sport and trades ensuring that all students got the opportunity to participate in areas where there is a traditional gender imbalance.



Staff member quotes:

'Several pupils have been commenting on how they are now thinking about certain courses and careers based on this visit.'

'Pupils got a good look around the College, meet staff and experience aspects of college life. It was a good opportunity to help students engage with the curriculum.'

'It was good to see pupils engage with unexpected subject areas.'

Pupil quotes:

'It was fun to explore different things in science and I liked wearing the coat and glasses.'

'We learned life-saving techniques in health, which was good.'

'The lecturers were so positive, giving us high fives and great feedback when we did something well.'

Following its success, the College is continuing with this initiative, and an event is being planned for June 2024. A follow-up will be conducted with the pupils who took part in the previous year to reinforce the message and monitor the project's impact.

Good practice example:

Beyond the Surface Showcase

The College's Hair, Beauty, Complementary Therapies and Make-Up Artistry department is looking beyond the surface to highlight the regulated qualifications colleges offer and to help break down gender stereotypes within the beauty industry to encourage more males and non-binary people into an industry which has a long history of gender imbalance. The event also focuses on how we involve our industry partners in qualification design.

Beyond the Surface is an annual Ayrshire College event showcasing pathways to the industry in hair, barbering, spa, beauty, complementary therapies, and make-up artistry.

Participation is invited from prospective students, progressing students and secondary school pupils considering a career in the industry.

Following on from a department review of curriculum resources to ensure they are inclusive and do not reinforce gender stereotypes, the event further breaks down stereotypes by including representation and examples from across all genders.

There are keynote speakers from all our industries, along with a marketplace featuring stalls of employers, suppliers, past students, and internal students encompassing try-a-skill activity and promoting recruitment opportunities with an opportunity for all approaches.

Following on from a successful event in 2023, the next event is taking place in March 2024.



Good practice example:

16 Days of Action – Not That Guy

Ayrshire College in partnership with Ayrshire College Student Association and our Police Scotland Liaison Officer delivered a programme of events throughout the 16 Days of Action, which is a campaign to raise awareness of, and call an end to, violence against women and girls. In celebration of our new Willie Mackie Skills Hub, we enlisted the help of the level 4 joinery and plumbing students at Kilwinning to produce wooden placards to be used in the East Ayrshire Reclaim the Night March, hosted at our Kilmarnock Campus on Tuesday 5 December 2023.

The trades area has a persistent gender imbalance, and while there has been small but steady inroads into tackling this, there are still predominantly more males studying trades courses. In addition, students within trades are less likely to get involved in College initiatives regarding gender-based violence, however, they have a critical role in helping the College tackle this gender imbalance to make a career in trades more attractive to females by creating a welcoming environment where sexual harassment and micro-aggressions are not tolerated.

The That Guy initiative encourages males to call out their friends when their behaviour or banter crosses the line into sexual harassment, to tell their friends 'Don't be that guy'.



Good practice example: **Connecting Communities**

Connecting Communities is a fully inclusive and sustainable partnership that has been developed between the local government, local employers and Ayrshire College. The Connecting Communities Initiative has been recognised politically in both the Scottish Parliament and in the House of Commons in Westminster where the impact has received cross-party support, as well as receiving a Green Gown and CDN Award.



In March 2022, the College Development Network (CDN) Research and Enhancement Centre published evidence from a two-year national sector inquiry into the role of colleges in addressing the poverty crisis in Scotland. Much of what was learned derived from the outstanding work delivered at our college in terms of addressing how colleges can tackle the tangible barriers faced by our communities around food poverty, digital poverty, fuel poverty, and period poverty. Working with our communities brings a rich educational experience to our staff, students and employers. On any given day our students enjoy a full range of experience working with children from pre-school age to hosting our Older Adult Group, designed to improve mental and physical health. In addition to the daily offering of community outreach, we also host the largest festival of sport for people with additional support needs in the south of Scotland.

Not only does this invigorate our community it provides a range of immeasurable benefits for our students. Connecting Communities links with the Building Better Futures project that has been implemented by the College to develop the skills that people require to lead healthy, productive and successful lives. Our impact on the community is significant as we are responding to the Scottish and UK Governments Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, amongst other national policies. Our Connecting Communities initiative redefines the College as a safe space that provides not only national qualifications but additionally ensures that we are promoting fair access for all.

As well as promoting wellbeing through the delivery of healthy eating and physical activity sessions for families, the initiative encompasses the Mental Health United male-only football-focused mental health support group. Currently this group has 30 members between the ages of 17 and 28.

The Connecting Communities initiative was recently recognised at the prestigious Green Gown Awards, receiving the award for Benefiting Society and also winning the Health and Wellbeing award at the College Development Networks award ceremony in November.

Equality Outcomes

In April 2021 the College published its set of four Equality Outcomes. Equality outcomes are a means by which an identified, evidenced equality need is being addressed. The Equality Outcomes are used to tackle the most significant and persistent inequalities being experienced and they provide the opportunity to make a difference to the lives and experiences of those most beset by inequality on the basis of their protected characteristic(s).

When we set our outcomes, we were aware that these must reflect the journey that the College had already started with its previous equality outcomes and therefore, seek to build on our progress and achieve real change by 2025.

In January 2023, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) entered into a strategic partnership to enhance leadership and oversight in tackling persistent inequalities in the tertiary system. A set of National Equality Outcomes (NEOs) were developed with the expectation that educational institutions in Scotland contribute to these as part of their Public Sector Equality Duty. The College has aligned the NEOs to the Colleges Equality Outcomes (CEOs) 2021-2025 and will work towards these alongside the CEOs to take another significant step forward in our aim to provide a culture within which there is opportunity for all and where we recognise, respect and celebrate diversity.

Changes Being Made to Achieve our Equality Outcomes

As reported in the [April 2023 Mainstreaming Equality 2021-2023 and Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 report](#), the College has been progressing actions across the College's four equality outcomes.

When measuring progress, it is important to remember that any change in supporting and enhancing inclusion and equality is achieved against a backdrop of persistent societal and cultural injustices. Our aspirations must be measured and steady, with the knowledge that impact will take time. The key priority for the College is to create an environment where impactful change can happen.



Equality Outcome 1

Students and Staff with protected characteristics most likely to experience hate, report that they feel safe while engaged in study or work

Aligned to National Equality outcomes:

- Disabled staff and students report feeling safe in the tertiary system.
- Trans staff and students report feeling safe to be themselves in the tertiary system
- Staff and students feel supported and safe and are confident that complaints of harassment or bias on the grounds of race will be dealt with appropriately because complaint procedures are fit for purpose and offer effective redress.
- Students and staff report that they have confidence in institutional reporting mechanisms because they are fit for purpose
- Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual staff and students report that they feel safe being 'out' at university and college
- Institutions should have regard to attainment levels by racial group and ensure that their curriculum is diverse and antiracist.

We have:

- Delivered 37 mandatory Hate Crime student workshops to 479 students since April 2023.
- Delivered 3, I AM ME Disability Hate Crime workshops to 44 students as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week.
- Raised awareness of Hate Crime through Hate Crime Awareness week marketplace events, including pledge signing and Hate Crime drop-ins on each campus.
- Developed mechanisms to support our status as a Keep Safe space: training staff and awareness-raising
- Promote the Equality Matters e-learning modules across all protected characteristics and continue to develop the Equality Matters section on the Staff Learning portal.
- Increased the number of Student Executive Officers with an equality-related role with the introduction of the Equality and Transgender Students Officers
- Delivered equalities training to the Student Executive Committee
- Relunched the Report & Support reporting tool with a suite of new marketing materials. This tool enables students and staff to report college incidents related to hate crime and GBV.



Equality Outcome 2

Curriculum areas with a male or female student gender imbalance greater than a 75:25 ratio have improved.

Aligned to National Equality Outcome:

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

We have:

- Set annual priority actions through Team Operation and Enhancement Plans and align these to the College Operation and Enhancement Plan.
- Re-established the Gender Leadership Group with a view of tackling gender imbalance in those curriculum areas affected and deliver preventative work to address curriculum areas or individual courses within, do not move towards a significant gender imbalance.
- Delivered the Gender Leadership Schools Event which involved 1152, S1 school pupils from across Ayrshire's secondary schools took part in a two-day event with a specific focus on challenging stereotypical career pathway assumptions dependent on individual gender identity.
- Delivered the Below the Surface event, promoting career pathways in Hair, beauty therapy, complementary therapy, barbering and makeup artistry with a focus on making these as accessible as possible to non-traditional applicants.

Equality Outcome 3

The rates of retention and attainment of male students with a mental health condition have improved.

Aligned to National Equality Outcomes:

- The success and retention rates of college and university students who declare a mental health condition will improve.
- Men (staff and students) know how to access mental health support (recognising intersectionality within that group)



We have:

- Delivered 19 Cocaine Awareness workshops to 222 students in the STEM curriculum area since April 2023 in conjunction with Suicide Prevention input to educate regarding the link between substance use to suicide amongst young males.
- Ongoing delivery of mandatory substance use workshops to all level 4 students which emphasise risk and harm, accompanied by a package of support.
- Support materials for lecturers to be able to share with students following class input around suicide, including student and staff support within the College and links to external support agencies.
- Delivery of 18 Hope for Tomorrow workshops to 187 students since April 2023 to discuss suicide and break down the stigma of talking about suicide. These sessions are targeted at densely male-populated classes.
- Re-establishment of the S-Word Working group, including students and staff from across the College with a refresh of the 'S' Word action plan to deliver a programme to break down the stigma of suicide
- Promoting wellbeing group held a Winter Wellbeing Festival
- The development of staff e-learning modules on the topic of mental health and wellbeing in development
- The introduction of male mental health drop-ins hosted by the Student Association's Men's Officer who is a qualified Men Matter Scotland support worker, further reinforcing the work of the Student Association's, 'Wear it on Your Sleeve' male-only peer support group for students and staff.
- Re-launch of the Mental Health United men's group at Kilmarnock Campus. hosted by the sports curriculum area and volunteers from the Samaritans. Open to students and staff and the wider community.

Equality Outcome 4

The recruitment and disclosure rates of staff with a disability have improved.

National Equality Outcome

- Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase the representation of disabled staff in the workforce and in the College.



We have:

- Under the [#WeAreAyrshireCollege](#) campaign designed a series of postcards and promotional materials for staff to encourage them to disclose if they have a disability.
- Positive About Disability Group tested the College application process to enable an understanding of the potential barriers and applicant with a disability may face, including exploring giving candidates interview questions in advance.
- The establishment of a staff advisory forum Teams group, to develop and support a structured support network. Feedback from this exercise regarding the need for greater awareness raising will inform the group moving forward.
- The Student Association established an Accessibility Student Group, supported by the Disabled Students Officers. This group aims to create a student network that can feedback on their user experience, raise awareness and support students.
- Through the Equality Matters section in the staff e-learning portal, line managers can access a range of modules related to disability, including managing employees with a disability.
- The Aspire Growing Leaders programme, now in its second year, includes a specific workshop focusing on Equality and Diversity, which was led and delivered by the Equality and Diversity Performance Lead.
- This Aspire programme also includes an HR workshop focusing on recruitment and supporting candidates to understand unconscious bias with particular relevance to those applicants who declare a disability at the application stage.
- The introduction of the Evolve Growing Leaders programme which is delivered to staff members already in a leadership role.
- Exploring the introduction of an employee journal which will be utilised to support staff returning to work from long-term sick leave, where they have a long-term health condition or disability.

Of Course You Can

www.ayrshire.ac.uk