

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

2016 - 2020

1. Introduction

Walsall College is passionate about equality, diversity and inclusion and strives not only to meet its statutory requirements but to embed equality and diversity into all that we do. The College's approach to equality and diversity was assessed as outstanding by Ofsted in 2008 and again in 2013.

"The promotion of equality and diversity (at Walsall College) is outstanding. Equality and diversity are actively promoted through the College and a clear culture and ethos of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance creates a friendly, harmonious and safe learning environment." (Ofsted report 2013)

- 1.1 Equality and diversity and a commitment to inclusion are embedded in our mission and values:

"Walsall College is uniquely and proudly vocational. Our greatest passion is unleashing the potential of individuals, communities and businesses; our greatest legacy is the talent of our students: **skilled, professional and enterprising.**"

- 1.2 Our mission is underpinned by the following values, which strongly demonstrate this commitment:

- Inclusion and access.
- Respect and wellbeing for the individual.
- Working positively in partnership.
- Championing Innovation and Enterprise.
- Empowerment with accountability.
- Listening and responding.

- 1.3 This Single Equality Scheme brings together our commitments to equality and diversity, and our equality ambitions and plans across the organisation. It embraces all members of our College community and its objectives demonstrate our wholehearted commitment to continued action in tackling inequality and promoting diversity. This Scheme will build on our previous equality work. We will continue with our efforts to break down barriers and challenge unfairness, and ensure opportunities and experiences which help people and communities reach their full potential.

2. Our Aims

- 2.1 The purpose of this Scheme is to set out the ways in which we will continue to meet our legal requirements under the following legislation:

Equality Act 2010

The public sector equality duty consists of a general equality duty, set out in the Equality Act 2010, and specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation. The duty covers nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership.

The general equality duty requires due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The specific duties require Public bodies to:

- publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty
- Set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act came into force in October 2000 and obliges public authorities to treat people in accordance with their rights under the European Convention of Human Rights.

- 2.2 The aim of this Single Equality Scheme is twofold:

- To develop further measures and actions that pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality for all those who share protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation.
- To promote equality so that our approach goes beyond compliance with legislation and remains embedded in our culture.

3. Our Vision

- 3.1 We are building a College community that through its leadership, recruitment, teaching and learning is free from discrimination and secure and confident in its diversity. The College is committed to ensuring that every individual student and employee is valued, supported and respected. We welcome and celebrate the unique talent and experience of each individual student and employee.

- 3.2 Effective teaching and learning require a safe environment, free from prejudice and discrimination, where the values and ethos of equality, diversity and inclusion inform all

College activity. Walsall College, therefore, has zero tolerance of approach to discrimination. These values apply equally to staff and governors, as well as students, volunteers and those with whom we do business.

- 3.3 Our Single Equality Scheme and associated policies outline how we seek to ensure that the College is free from unlawful discrimination, and strives constantly to move beyond legal compliance towards excellence and best practice in promoting and celebrating equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 3.4 Through creative and responsive teaching and learning, and a broad spectrum of extra curricula activities our students will understand better the world within which they live, and the impact of their own actions on community cohesion and wellbeing.

4. Our Commitment

- 4.1 This Scheme aims to demonstrate our commitment to go beyond compliance with legislation and towards mainstreaming equality and diversity. Our comprehensive Equality Objectives/Action Plan will ensure that our commitments are carried out. The impact of our Single Equality Scheme will be assessed via our quality assurance systems including Area Evaluation (E & D), Equality Impact Assessment, observations of teaching and learning, Self-Assessment Reports and feedback from our students, staff and partners and will be celebrated in our Annual Report on equality and diversity.
- 4.2 This Scheme has direct implications for all other College policies. We believe that delivering equality and diversity is one crucial strand of the College's approach to overall quality improvement and we place it at the very heart of everything we do. Our Equality Impact Assessment process will continue to help us to ensure that all of our major decisions and actions are thoroughly considered before implementation.
- 4.3 This Scheme will be published on the College website. Targets associated with this scheme and its objectives for each year, will be displayed prominently throughout all areas of the College, including social spaces and teaching and learning areas.
- 4.4 This Scheme relates to all members of the College, including employees, students, contractors, and visitors as appropriate.
- 4.5 We will address unequal experiences for all who share protected characteristics:
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race
 - Religion and belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy/maternity
 - Marriage and civil partnership

We will also be mindful of our actions in relation to socio economic factors.

5. Our Context

- 5.1 The Borough of Walsall has a diverse population, which varies greatly from one ward to another. The Office for National Statistics (mid 2017) states that there is a total population of **281,293**. The population is predicted to increase by 5.9% over 10 years, from **274,200** in 2014 to **290,200** in 2024. The predicted growth of Walsall's older population (65+) is higher than this at 12.4%. There has already been an 8.8% increase in births in Walsall between 2004 and 2014 and the number of reception pupils in Walsall schools has increased 11.34% between 2012 and 2017 (Walsall Insight Trends and Intelligence).

Statistics from Walsall Council's Cohesion & Integration Strategy 2017 – 2020 indicate:

- 1 in 4 residents from a minority ethnic group (just under 25%)
- There are 75 community languages spoken in Walsall
- For 7% of Walsall residents, English is not their first language
- 68% of secondary schools are classed as segregated
- The Borough has the 12th highest residential segregation in the UK
- 68% of residents in the ward of St Matthews are from a minority ethnic group compared to 3% in Pelsall.

This data evidences the need for our College to promote and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion.

Walsall is the 33rd most deprived of the 326 English local authorities reported in the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), has some neighbourhoods within its twenty wards which are amongst the 10% most deprived in England, and recently estimates that 23.7% or some 15,636 of its children live in poverty. Life expectancy is lower than the England average, with 10.1 years lower for men and 7.5 years lower for women in the most deprived wards.

The English Indices of Deprivation, produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), identify small areas of England, which are experiencing multiple aspects of deprivation. This makes them an important tool for identifying and understanding deprived areas and for targeting resources effectively. The most recent figures were released in September 2015. Figures are released at Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level – a 'neighbourhood' level geography. Summary measures of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) presented at local authority district level are also provided. The Indices of Deprivation 2015 provide a relative measure of deprivation in small areas across England. They are based on the concept that deprivation consists of more than just poverty; so while poverty is related to not having enough money to live on, deprivation refers to a much broader lack of resources and opportunities.

The indices are based on seven different aspects (or 'domains') of deprivation, which are:

- Income deprivation
- Employment deprivation
- Health deprivation and disability
- Education, skills and training deprivation
- Crime

- Barriers to housing and services
- Living environment deprivation

Walsall has above average long term unemployed and below average GCSE achievements at 5 A*-C including English and maths. Local children's poor educational attainment, and the borough's IMD ranking, places Walsall as the 12th worst in England for Education, Skills and Training. Walsall has 621 Looked after Children as of September 2018.

The overall population in Walsall equates to 281,293. Compared to England there are a higher number of children under the age of 16 (21.2% compared to 19.1% nationally). The Working Age population is lower than the national figure (61% compared to 63.1%), whilst the older population, 65+ is comparable to the England figure (17.8% compared to 17.9% nationally). Walsall has a Working Age Population of 167,500. 40,100 of these (24%) are inactive whilst 127,400 (76% are active). Of the active population, 7,500 (6%) are unemployed (4% of the total Working Age Population).

The College is mindful of the context within which it works, and its strategic ambitions and equalities targets underpin the drive to improve the life experiences and employability of the local community. Improving experiences for all students, active promotion of equality and diversity, and narrowing gaps in achievements between specific groups has been a key part of Ofsted recognition of the College as an outstanding provider. We will continue to measure the profile of our College's population and the quality of experiences across different groups and report on these.

5.2 College success rates are outstanding and work undertaken to narrow any evident gaps in success have been positive. Overall, students who have a disability and learning difficulty are often more successful than their peers who do not have a learning difficulty/disability. Our male and female students achieve at broadly the same rate. The gap between BME and White students is not material at 2.4% but is closely monitored for any trends. Our young students achieve extremely well, and against the trend within the borough. We will continue work to address any emerging performance gaps in our robust action planning and quality improvement plans.

5.3 The College is engaged with activity across the borough to improve experiences for residents. This includes shaping the curriculum to meet business needs thereby improving the local economy for all. Members of the College leadership team are involved with key committees and partnerships across the borough linked to economy, education and welfare, and development of community cohesion. We will continue our ongoing involvement in community cohesion through Prevent activity and supporting the delivery of the borough's Community Cohesion Plan. Ofsted commented

"The College is rooted in its community and works in very strong partnership with key organisations for the benefits of students to promote the regeneration and prosperity of the borough" (Ofsted report 2013).

We will provide an example to our community of high standards of equalities practice and will address discrimination directly and decisively where it arises.

6. Delivery of our Single Equality Scheme

6.1. Boundary Setting and Stakeholder Voice

We will continue with our Respect campaign and clear boundary setting with students. Our student-led teams for Anti Bullying, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) and Respect will support students to come forward with any concerns and to be supported using our zero tolerance approach to all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Fair and appropriate usage of our Positive Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy will continue to challenge inappropriate behaviour and support students to take responsibility for their actions.

Our strategies to listen to our staff, partners and our customers provide channels for all to be heard and responded to. Ofsted commented 'the College listens to, and makes very good use of students' views to improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to enrich the overall experience of College life. (Ofsted report 2013) Opportunities are provided for students to raise concerns via their Student Representative System, Principal's forum (Chat with Jat), surveys, or Complaints system. Employer and parents views are canvassed via questionnaire and strong relationships enable prompt reporting of concerns. Our on-going work with employers and students in the workforce will ensure we respond effectively to all and support the drive to develop both industry and the skills of its workforce. These approaches collectively create a culture in which all can be heard and valued and opportunities for discrimination, harassment or bullying of any kind are minimised. Ofsted note that the College works hard to ensure we understand the impact of our work in detail 'complaints, student surveys and other management information are routinely analysed by age, gender and disability to guard against any discriminatory practice' (Ofsted report 2013)

6.2. Improvement planning

We actively plan to address inequalities and to take positive action where it is legitimate to do so in order to equalise opportunities for all. Our plans will be widely published and our progress against them will be made visible, including the production of an Annual Equality and Diversity Report which formally evaluates performance against our objectives. Our main documents and processes to drive improvements are:

- Strategic Plan
 - Single Equality Scheme
 - Equality Objectives/targets
 - Self-Assessment Reports and Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) and Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) for curriculum and service areas
 - Equality Impact Assessment process
- We also work closely to support the delivery of borough wide strategy by contributing to the plans in place to improve the lives of those living, studying and working within the borough e.g. Children and Young People, Safer Walsall, Economic, Health and Wellbeing, Cohesion and Integration.

6.3 Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a practical way of examining new and existing policies and practices to determine what effect they may have on equality for those affected by the outcomes. The College has developed an impact assessment process and

an electronic template for use across the College and has a staged programme of impact assessment of all its existing policies and procedures. Consultation with key stakeholders, particularly those groups likely to be most affected is an integral part of the process. The Single Equality Scheme has been impact assessed in line with College impact assessment procedures and has involved consultation with students, staff and local partners. Ofsted noted (Ofsted report 2013) that we have 'detailed equality and diversity impact assessments and action plans'. We will continue to use our Equality Impact Assessment process to review significant plans, policies, procedures and practices at the College to drive equality forward. Our Annual Equality Report will comment on the outcomes from the Equality Impact Assessment process. Ofsted confirmed that our work to address inequalities is effective in practice.

'The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding The College has detailed equality and diversity impact assessments and action plans. Managers routinely analyse data to ensure there are no unwarranted discrepancies between the performances of different groups of students'. (Ofsted report 2013)

6.4 Teaching, Learning and Support

Our teaching, learning and support services take due regard of the needs of different groups and adapt practices in order for those needs to be met, in order to give every individual student the greatest opportunity to succeed. Where it is appropriate to do so, we will take legitimate positive action to encourage participation and to equalise success rates, and will use specialist advice from outside the organisation where our expertise in supporting different groups of students needs to be enhanced. We have invested a significant amount in staff development to ensure that staff embed equality and diversity in the curriculum. Ofsted found the 'promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning to be consistently good and often outstanding' (Ofsted report 2013).

6.5 Monitoring and Planning

Our Equality and Diversity Committee will continue to meet regularly to review progress against the Equality Action Plan and Equality and Diversity Impact Measures. The Committee consists of staff from academic and service areas, students, governors and experts from within the community and is chaired by our Principal. In addition our Equality and Diversity Operational group will meet monthly and work to ensure best operational practice. This team will also provide a point of contact for staff and students who require advice or support in relation to equality and diversity matters. Our Complaints system will be rigorous in responding to any issues related to equality and diversity and reporting any serious emerging trends to the Senior Management Team (SMT) so that an appropriate institutional approach can be guaranteed.

6.6 Partnerships

Proactive networking and collaboration within our local area will continue to increase our awareness and understanding of local need and help us to make appropriate responses. External membership of our Equality and Diversity Committee will continue to increase its rigour and ensure an appropriate breadth and knowledge base for monitoring and decision making. Ofsted commented that

'the College is an integral part of the local community and works in very strong partnership with key organisations for the benefit of students' and for the regeneration of the borough'. (Ofsted report 2013)

7. Gender

7.1 Our Commitment

Walsall College welcomes people of all genders at all levels in all College departments and curriculum areas. Our culture is strong in relation to mutual respect for ourselves and others in relation to gender status and identity. We do not tolerate gender based harassment. We will remove barriers and actively encourage inclusive participation in traditionally gender specific job roles, job levels and curriculum areas and levels, within the parameters of the law. Walsall College is a place where people will be encouraged to follow their chosen career or learning pathway regardless of gender status and identity and seek to build an environment where respect is practised and valued by all. Our Student Voice strategy will enable us to further consult with students ensuring that gender barriers are removed.

7.2 Our Context

The student gender profile at Walsall College is consistently similar between male and female students and they achieve at similar levels. We will continue to promote gender balance in some areas of the curriculum as this remains a target for on-going action. We are committed to dealing swiftly with any gender related concerns students may have and students increasingly report feeling safe at the College. We have more to do to increase confidence in disclosing transgender for both staff and students.

A key strength for the College is its workforce. The Human Resources Team were "highly commended" for the Pearson Teaching Awards for FE Team of the year (2018) which indicates outstanding human resource practice and support for staff. Walsall College has a strong track record in equality and diversity and has taken significant steps to address gender issues in our workforce. We have robust data concerning the gender of our staff, both established and temporary. Levels of female staff are higher than male which reflects the balance within the curriculum and within the FE sector. However, we are increasingly recruiting females/males into non stereotypical areas e.g. females in Motor Vehicle and ICT. We will do more to make HR data better understood within the organisation and to understand the experiences of our staff by their protected characteristics. We will revisit our current practices in light of any new legislation and ensure that we continue to address any issues identified and promote a culture of gender equality in all areas and levels of the workforce. Legislation includes:

- Equal Pay Act
- Equal Pay for temporary workers
- Equal employment rights of part time workers
- Maternity leave, parental leave
- Right to request part-time work after maternity leave
- Gender Pay Gap

7.3 Our Intended Impact

- Student recruitment which actively encourages them to access careers of their choice regardless of traditional gender under representation.

- A well-developed curriculum that positively reflects different gender contributions in the workplace and promotes them equally and effectively.
- A staffing base in which students can see role models of their own gender, irrespective of the curriculum area and the traditional stereotypes.
- A governing body with a similar gender mix to that of the College.
- Facilities that enhance and support the experience of men and women equally in using the College's services or as College employees.
- A reward and remuneration structure which prevents pay gaps between the genders.
- A robust approach to gender-based discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention and unfair behaviours directly and decisively at all levels and promotes a culture of respect.
- A fully developed approach to equality in employment and career progression based on secure evidence relating to pay, opportunities, role and position across all genders and with due regard to physiological differences.
- An approach to transgender issues that promotes understanding and welcome for those involved in any kind of change to their gender.

8. Age

8.1 Our Commitment

Walsall College is committed to equality of opportunity for our students and our staff regardless of their age. Our passion is to enable all students to access learning and be successful and use their new learning to enhance personal and professional development and life chances. We work to further narrow any age related success gaps. Our commitment to support all students to become Walsall College Graduates who are skilled, professional and enterprising will improve their potential for employment throughout their working lives.

Our recruitment methods and employee support will reflect best practice. Opportunities for staff to have a voice will help them to contribute fully to the development of the College. Excellent professional development and progression opportunities will help staff to evolve their own careers irrespective of their age. We will act firmly to eliminate any unfair behaviour arising from differences in age.

8.2 Our Context

Walsall itself has an increasingly 'dependant' population with an above average proportion of residents being made up of children and older people (Census 2011). Walsall College delivers educational experience from preschool, through its onsite Nursery provision, and from the age of 14 to 19+. However, government funding agendas clearly differentiate between the needs of young people and those over the age of 19 and this does lead to different levels of provision and support for different age groups. Barriers to access for adult students have been minimised as much as possible through effective usage of hardship funding, but support with fee costs has been limited. The College will continue to maximise opportunities available to support adults in learning and career progression.

The performance of our younger students on vocational qualifications has risen during the last three years.

The age of our staff ranges from 16 year olds on apprenticeships to those over the age of sixty. However, our staff age profile shows that we have relatively few employees under

the age of twenty-five. The College maintains its duty under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 to ensure that staff are treated fairly irrespective of age.

8.3. Our Intended Impact

Within the context of legislation and government funding and priorities, we aim to break down barriers associated with age both as a provider of education and as an employer.

We aim to ensure that:

- Our curriculum offer, facilities and support services cater for the different needs of our students.
- Achievement gaps between adults and young people are addressed and closed.
- All students are given the support they need to progress into and at work.
- Younger entrants to the workforce are given the support they need to succeed and progress.
- Older employees do not face discrimination on account of their age.
- Our HR policies support staff to balance work with family requirements.

9. Race

9.1 Our Commitment

Walsall College recognises that students and staff may have experienced discrimination because of protected characteristics at some point during their lives. We are committed to making our College a place where all are valued and respected and able to develop equally, and where all can feel confident that racism is dealt with swiftly and effectively. We will continue to promote best practice in race equality and we will identify and combat discrimination and disadvantage. We will take positive action to eliminate racism and its effects. Racial harassment will not be tolerated in any area of College life. We will continue to take positive action to encourage the recruitment of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups of students on all courses and to narrow any gaps in success that may materialise. Our curriculum and extra curricular activities will raise awareness and enable students to gain self-esteem and confidence. We will continue to seek to increase the number of staff from BME groups and encourage links with supportive professional bodies such as the Network for Black Professionals. We will work to develop role models through our Alumni, our community and our employer network and recognise the contribution they can make to students' aspirations. We will work to secure the fullest participation of BME students and staff in College life, including the College's planning and decision-making processes. Our stakeholder voice activity will help us to hear what students, staff, parents and employers from different racial groups and backgrounds tell us and act upon those views to further develop our College.

9.2 Our Context

Walsall College serves a diverse and changing community. It is characterised by social and economic disadvantage in many of its wards and school performance is below the national average. The BME population in Walsall is changing and the 2011 census tells us that the BME population has risen significantly to 23% which is higher than the national average (19.5%). Statistics from Walsall Council's Cohesion and Integration Strategy 2017 - 2020 indicate that 1 in 4 residents are from a minority ethnic group (just under 25%). On average 33% of our students and 19% of our staff are from BME communities. The College will continue to create an environment which challenges racial discrimination and promotes race equality as central to its mission.

We have positive role models for BME staff and students in our senior management team, our teachers and amongst our Governing body. Any BME success gaps which emerge will be actioned swiftly.

9.3 Our Intended Impact

In further developing and strengthening our work around race equality so that we can maximise the positive impact we have on students and staff from different racial groups, we aim to achieve the following:

- Retain the high success of BME students on all provision and ensure no significant gaps emerge.
- Increase the profile of BME staff to achieve a workforce that is representative of the local community at every level of the organisation.
- Promote good relations between different groups.

10. Disability

10.1 Our Commitment

Students with learning difficulties/disabilities are well supported and thrive at Walsall College. We are committed to the development of new and better opportunities for disabled people and aim to develop both practice and delivery options in order to ensure their success. We operate a social disability model, where the College is proactive in removing barriers to participation and success for students and employees with learning difficulty or disability. We will assist disabled staff to succeed in their employment at Walsall College.

10.2 Our Context

The Census report (2011) indicates that health in Walsall is poorer than the England/Wales average. 1:5 residents have a health condition that limits their day to day activities. There is no data available from the census related to learning difficulty. The Equalities Act 2010 has consolidated the rights of people with disabilities. We recognise that it covers a broad spectrum of requirements, including:

- Sensory impairment
- Restrictions to mobility
- Mental ill-health
- Long-term debilitating illnesses

Walsall College has a significant number of students with a learning difficulty or a disability and Ofsted reported their “care guidance and support are outstanding” (Ofsted report 2013). This is matched by consistently high success rates and high levels of student satisfaction and engagement with activity across the College. The College has maintained comprehensive data on the disabilities of students collected through the enrolment process and has had a planned response to their needs. Although opportunities are available for staff to declare disabilities we feel that some may choose not to do so. We will continue to encourage staff to disclose by increasing the opportunities they have to do so and to respond more effectively to their needs. We will work to dismantle any barriers to career progression and self fulfilment for both staff and students.

10.3 Our Intended Impact

We will:

- Through training and awareness raising campaigns support staff and students to feel confident to disclose any disability or learning difficulty, particularly 'hidden' disability issues, such as mental health and developmental disorders.
- Continue to celebrate the success of those students who have overcome disadvantage to succeed in our College.
- Focus support to ensure retention, success and satisfaction remain high for students and staff with disabilities or learning difficulties.
- Extend our forum for students with learning difficulty/disability to include staff.
- Monitor the impact of our success in improving the conditions and success of disabled staff and students within the College.
- Where appropriate, enhance students' ability to live independently by reducing their dependency on additional learning support.
- Reasonable Adjustments will be conducted for both staff and students where needed.

11. Sexual Orientation

11.1 Our Commitment

Walsall College celebrates the diversity of its staff and students and welcomes people of any sexual orientation. We adopt a zero tolerance stance to homophobia and actively challenge homophobia when it arises. Walsall College will be a place where the lesbian, gay, bisexual, community is visible, valued and its contribution to the College and wider world is recognised. We will consult our staff, students and partners to ensure that the services and support we provide meet the needs of all staff and students. Our approach is to offer staff and students the opportunity to disclose their sexuality if they wish to, and create an environment where people can feel free and safe to disclose. This decision was made following consultation with our LGBT group and Equality and Diversity Committee members.

11.2 Our Context

The College has a strong track record in equality and diversity. During the life of this Scheme we will be creating opportunities for staff and students who have enrolled or started work to disclose if they wish to. However, we have facilitated students in developing their own LGBT Team who are pro active in raising awareness within the College and provide information and support for those who require it. We need to do more to support tutors to feel more informed about sexual orientation issues through our staff development programme and to provide information links via our equality and diversity site to information and support groups.

11.3 Our Intended Impact

- A welcoming place for all and an environment where all staff and students feel confident and free to be open about their sexuality if they choose.
- A college where the rights of all students and staff are respected and recognised regardless of sexual orientation.
- A student community where all students feel comfortable, supported, actively involved in College life and whose voice is heard.

- A community of staff which is confident and able to anticipate and to respond to the needs of all colleagues and students regardless of sexual orientation.
- A zero tolerance stance on homophobia with a workforce that is trained and confident to challenge homophobia when it arises.

12. Religion and Belief

12.1 Our Commitment

Walsall College always welcomes people of all faiths and none, and will promote learning and understanding between religions. We will act firmly to eliminate any discriminatory behaviour arising from differences in belief.

Walsall College is not and never will be a place of one faith. We will work to secure respect for beliefs, faiths and religions and welcome all equally into our community. We will provide opportunities for the faithful to celebrate their beliefs. Walsall College is a place of learning and we will place firm emphasis on the primacy of education as a defining value for our community. We will use our curriculum to strengthen moral and social awareness wherever it is appropriate.

12.2 Our Context

Walsall College is sited in a diverse region, rich in different value systems and religions. The Census 2011 indicates that the majority of local people are declared as Christians of various denominations. Walsall also has the largest Muslim population in the Black Country. Other faiths are represented, but in smaller numbers. Walsall scores low on all indices of community cohesion. The law (Equality Act, 2006 and 2010 and Human Rights Act, 1998) require us to protect service users and employees against unfair treatment on the grounds of their religion. Our data in relation to religion and belief is limited but we will, continually, review ways in which we can increase confidence to disclose to enable us to effectively support curriculum and enrichment activity and create an environment where people can feel free and safe regardless of religion or belief.

12.3 Our Intended Impact

- A climate of understanding in which religious discrimination is promptly addressed if it ever arises.
- Events which celebrate a range of faiths.
- A clear and equal message of welcome for people of all faiths (or none).
- A contemplation space available for spiritual refreshment, exploration and counsel for people of any religious persuasion or none.
- A respectful and value-based curriculum that promotes social and moral development.

13. Pregnancy and Maternity

13.1 Our Commitment

Walsall College welcomes students and staff who are pregnant, are on maternity leave or who have recently given birth. We will act firmly to eliminate any discriminatory behaviour against those with this protected characteristic.

We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that those who are pregnant or have recently given birth can access the educational and employment opportunities available to them.

13.2 Our Context

Walsall College is an accredited member of the Tommy's Pregnancy at Work scheme which has been designed to assist organisations with the tools they need to provide the best level of support for pregnant employees and their managers. The scheme also provides a wealth of information, including how to best manage time and productivity, and how to ensure a smooth return to work after pregnancy.

13.3 Our Intended Impact

- A climate of understanding where pregnancy is not a barrier to learning or work
- Reasonable adjustments which remove or minimise barriers to learning and work
- Access to a variety of information packs to provide support and guidance on pregnancy, medical issues, having a healthy pregnancy and planning ahead.

14. Marriage and Civil Partnerships

14.1 Our Commitment

Walsall College celebrates the diversity of its staff and students and welcomes people of any marital status, whether single, married or in a civil partnership. We will consult our staff, students and partners to ensure that the services and support we provide meet the needs of all staff and students.

14.2 Our Context

The College has a strong track record in equality and diversity and serves a diverse and changing community. It is characterised by social and economic disadvantage in many of its wards. WE will ensure that no student or member of staff is treated less favourably because of their marital or civil partnership status.

14.3 Our Intended Impact

- A climate of mutual respect for all students and staff regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.
- A welcoming place for all and an environment where all staff and students feel confident and free to be open about their sexuality if they choose.

15. Socio-Economic

15.1 Our Commitment

There is currently no legislative duty in relation to socio-economic factors. However, Walsall College is based in a disadvantaged community and has made plain its purpose in serving the needs of this community. We are committed to understanding the nature and impact of economic disadvantage and will work to reduce the barriers faced by people in our locality through the provision of high quality teaching and learning, outstanding support and a curriculum based on the needs of industry and the community. We will continue to emphasise the development of provision designed to

attract those with lower expectations of success and prosperity and, with our partners, will explore new ways of working that make our provision more accessible to those who are disadvantaged.

15.2 Our Context

54% of our students and 34% of our staff live in Walsall. The College is heavily used by people whose residential postcode attracts funding uplifts (average 64%) to help address economic barriers to learning. Many of our students live in or on the edge of poverty and experience higher than average levels of ill-health and poor educational attainment. We believe that the College has a duty to its community to address issues relating to class and social mobility if it is to deliver its mission fully. Our College is committed to treating deprivation as a context and not an excuse for poor performance. Our emphasis is on developing Walsall College Graduates who have an advantage in the labour market through enhanced personal and professional skills and raised aspirations. This will help them to build a better future for themselves and their communities.

15.3 Our intended impact

- To have a curriculum offer and support services which encourage recruitment
- To enable students who live in areas of deprivation to do as well as their peers who do not
- To consider socio economic factors when impact assessing major plans, policies, procedures and practice.

16. The College has set the following overarching objectives to be achieved within the life of this Single Equality Scheme.

- Curriculum development which responds to the needs of students and our community.
- Delivery of targets set for curriculum and business support which are designed to promote equality and diversity or to drive equality forward.
- Foster ownership amongst the student body for the development of a set of positive behaviours which reflect the very best in all cultures, but which reaffirm the understanding of and compliance with the rule of British law and British Values.
- Professional development which continues to support staff to promote equality and diversity routinely into their daily activity.