Walsall College

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Annual Report

2021 - 22

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Bringing talent to life...

OUR COMMITMENT

As we continue to transition through the 2020s, our vision to provide students with an excellent learning experience, education and skills development to support them into higher levels of study and jobs, is more than ever a priority for our college community. The forever changing landscape of further education and the expectations within it, require our mission to be driven by a desire to continue to build on our successes and commitment to our wider community.

"Walsall College is uniquely and proudly vocational, delivering technical, professional and community education. 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."

Our experience of COVID-19, both from an education establishment, teaching and learning and personal perspective, continues to have a lasting and significant influence in a variety of ways, not least upon our drive to continue to build on our success, but also to prioritise our shared values. These shared values are ever more important in facilitating this journey and ultimately, our commitment and actions to ensure that the student is at the heart of everything we do for example:

- Our intent to ensure that our student community has a legal right to teaching that does not discriminate them on the grounds of the protected characteristics;
- That students who require support to access education are supported through reasonable adjustment and support mechanisms;
- That we adopt, apply and embed our mission to 'bring talent to life' through the variety of vocational, technical, professional and community education;
- That we drive to implement our shared values – passion, integrity, innovation, equity, collaboration and sustainability.

In addition to our commitment to implement our vision and promote and embed our shared values we have developed our Corporate Strategy 2021-2024. This strategy, whilst aiming to support people into higher levels of study and jobs, reflects our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The College embodies **Positive Communities** and **British Values** and this is recognised by those with whom we work. Students, staff and visitors to the College recognise the inclusive nature of the College ethos and understand our expectations for equality, diversity and inclusivity.

Equality and diversity and a commitment to inclusion are embedded in our **mission:** *"Walsall College is uniquely and proudly vocational, delivering technical, professional and community education. 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".* Our **vision** is accessible to all

- students, regardless of their sex, race, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status or age. We will provide them: "an excellent learning experience, education and skills development to support them into higher levels of study and jobs".
- Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion continues to be evident in the **shared values** outlined within our Corporate Strategy:

Our Shared Values

Passion

The student is at the heart of everything we do. We create and deliver opportunities for prosperity to students, employers and our communities.

Integrity

We value professionalism, dedication, quality and excellence in our staff. We practice and promote respect, wellbeing and empowerment for the individual.

Innovation

We are committed to the needs of the modern economy and champion innovation, creativity and enterprise.

Equity

We are committed to creating an environment where we focus purposefully on diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) in our college community and society.

Collaboration

We develop strategic partnerships with employers and wider stakeholders to ensure we lead and shape the education and skills landscape. We work positively with and value our partners.

Sustainability

We promote personal development and build confidence and ambition in our staff and students. We manage our resources responsibly for the benefit of our college community.

◢ Walsall College

Our Mission

Walsall College is uniquely and proudly vocational, delivering technical, professional and community education. 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.

Our 7 Strategic Pledges

We are committed to 7 Strategic Pledges, which outlines our intent to ensure Walsall College is at the forefront of providing innovative, high quality education and skills for a modern Britain.

1 Work with an employer and business connection in every curriculum area to endorse and enhance provision and provide a line of sight to work.

2 Build a culture that celebrates and prioritises excellence and innovation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

3 Develop the maths, English and digital skills of all our students in order to prepare them for the world of work by embedding skills seamlessly into every programme.

4 Become a truly innovative digital college.

5 Proactively engage to upskill the regional workforce by helping people learn throughout their lives.

6 Create a high quality and seamless experience for all stakeholders, which is sustainable and accelerates the way to a greener future.

7 Promote rapid progression between levels and settings with an aim to increase numbers at Levels 3, 4 and 5.

Working with over

1000

Employers

Links with partners locally, regionally and nationally are strong and interactions with businesses have become a prominent focus for the College

89%

of the curriculum offer aligned with local skills priorities.

The College has continued to successfully grow its 16-19 provision and on the 1st April 2018 acquired the Walsall Adult Community College, expanding adult widening participation across

30 COMMUNITY VENUES

Walsall College is passionate to ensure that it meets the demands of the changing world. In particular, we think about the changing economy and the climate emergency the world is facing and the need to collectively act and address this. Our college ultimately needs to play a pivotal role both as educators and system leaders to affect change to the scale which will be required and the opportunities that this will provide for the college and local community, as well as supporting the national skills recovery.

We work with over 1,000 employers, universities, schools and local, regional and national partners and work proactively with businesses to ensure our curriculum is fit for the future.

Students who choose to study with us receive a holistic education that supports their personal development, confidence, health and wellbeing and prepares them for their next steps into work or higher levels of study in a local, national or global context.

Our Adult and Community Learning offer enables us to deliver an educational solution for the borough of Walsall, giving local residents the opportunity to progress from Entry Level courses right through to Degree Level.

This has meant our adult provision is stronger than ever before and our widening participation, intergenerational learning and community cohesion work is more effective.
We offer education through 30 community venues across the Borough.

We continue to encourage students and staff to disclose information in relation to protected characteristics to enable us to more effectively understand our community and to target activity where required. There is a guide to inform both staff and students called, 'Why do we need to know your personal information?' and this is available via our website or as a hard copy document. Work will continue to increase disclosure of protected characteristics and this remains embedded in our equality objectives.

Walsall College is passionate about helping students to achieve positive outcomes whether that is to get back into work, start a new career or climb the career ladder. To support this, we offer a broad and varied curriculum from entry level through to higher education, top-up degrees and professional level qualifications, all of which are designed to give our students the skills employers want and need.

Population

Whilst we have seen some improvements in the overall local and regional economy when compared to previous years, the context remains extremely challenging, with a clear need for Walsall College to continue to provide opportunities for high quality education and training which will not only ultimately improve the local and regional prosperity, but also the prospects of residents in terms of lifestyles, health and wellbeing and social mobility. Walsall is a net importer of people both nationally and globally and, therefore, the Borough of Walsall has a diverse population, which varies greatly from one ward to another.

Walsall has an estimated population of 286,700 (ONS 2020 Mid-Year Estimates), comprised of approximately 21.7% children under 15 (62,300), 60.8% working-aged 16-64 (174,300), and 17.5% 65+ over (50,100) giving a dependency ratio of 0.64 dependents to every 1 working age adult. In terms of density this equates to around 2,757 people per square kilometre. The population has seen a 7.45% increase over the past decade, from 266,800 in 2010: most of this increase has been under 16s, increasing by 12.2% and over 65s growing by 10.2%, contrasted to a working age (16-64 years) increase of around 5.1% (2020 and 2010 ONS Mid-Year Estimates).

The mid-year 2020 estimates include the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic which saw population growth relatively decelerate due to COVID-19 mortality and reduced population movement via internal and external migration. As a consequence, it is estimated Walsall's population grew by 1200 (0.43%) from 2019-2020, in contrast to the previous year (2018-19) growth of 2,100 (0.74%). Against a five-year average (0.83% per year), 2020 saw the rate of population growth roughly halve.

Walsall is expected to see continued and consistent population growth, projected to **increase by 7%** to an estimated **304,400 by 2030** and further by 13% to an estimated 320,400 by 2040 (2020 ONS, 2018-based projections). The largest increases are expected within older age groups; the population over 65 years of age will increase their share of the population from approximately 18% to 20% by 2040 (around a 1% decline in population share for both children and working-age adults). There has already been an 8.8% increase in births in Walsall between 2004 and 2014, and the number of Walsall of reception pupils in Walsall schools has increased 11.34% between 2012 and 2017.

Walsall's economy has an annual output of £4.77 billion and provides around 120,000 jobs. The local economy supports a steadily increasing population of over a quarter of a million, with three in every five people being of working age. However, only two thirds of working age residents are in employment and for those in work, earnings are below the national average.

Walsall is expected to see continued and consistent population growth, projected to increase by 7% to an estimated 304,400 by 2030, and further by 13% to an estimated 320,400 by 2040 (2020 ONS, 2018-based projections).

Total Population (2020) – Source ONS Population estimates – local authority by five-year age band

Gender	Walsall Numbers	West Midlands	Great Britain
All people	286,700	5,691,900	65,185,700
Males	141,000	2,956,900	32,211,600
Females	145,800	3,005,000	32,974,200

Population aged 16-64 (2020) – Source: ONS Population estimates – local authority based by five-year age band

Gender	Walsall Numbers	West Midlands	Great Britain
All people aged 16-64	174,300 (60.8%)	61.7%	63.4%
Males aged 16-64	86,600 (61.4%)	62.4%	63.1%
Females aged 16-64	87,700 (60.2%)	61.0%	61.7%

Walsall Council's local integration strategy, Walsall for All (2020) indicates:

- 1 in 4 residents from a minority ethnic group (just under 25%);
- 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 (Walsall.gov 2019);
- 68% of residents in the Palfrey ward are from an ethnic minority group compared to 4% in Pelsall.

Walsall for All is a long-term strategy for creating strong and integrated communities in Walsall. It recognises the numerous strengths as well as our challenges, and sets out the steps to break down barriers to integration. Walsall College very much supports this strategy and works in partnership with our communities to promote and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion.

Health

The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2021
The 2011 Census results show that overall health is poorer in Walsall than in England and Wales. One in five residents have a limiting health condition, 10.4% are limited a lot, and a further 10.3% limited a little. 77.3% of residents say that their health is good or very good – lower than the 81.2% nationally – with 7.3% experiencing bad or very bad health (5.6%) nationally.
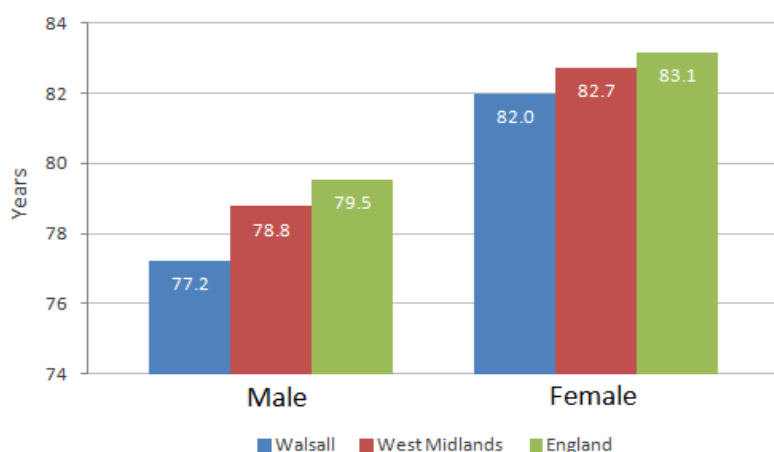
Even prior to the pandemic, there were entrenched and persistent health inequalities in our region. On average people in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) have a shorter life expectancy than England overall, and spend more of their lives in poor health. Women live for 82.2 years on average (England 83.2) and spend 22 years in poor health, men live for 78.0 years on average (England 79.6) and spend 18 years in poor health.

This is due to largely above national rates of premature deaths from preventable causes (cardiovascular disease, cancer, liver disease and respiratory disease) as well as higher infant mortality rates (child and adult) and physical inactivity as well as lower cancer screening cover.

Premature deaths from preventable causes in turn correspond to wider determinants of health, or the 'causes of the causes'. Most areas in the WMCA have a greater level of socioeconomic deprivation than the national average, with approximately a quarter of children living in low income households. Gross Disposal Household Income (GDHI) per person in 2017 was £16,479 compared with £19,514 in the UK as a whole.

The lives of many people in the WMCA are hard, and unhealthy behaviours are often coping mechanisms for people who live in challenging circumstances, or reflect the limitations of the environments they live in. Often people want to make positive changes to improve their health, such as being more active or giving up smoking, but are not supported to do so and feel powerless to make positive change.

In line with national findings, the pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing health inequalities. The WMCA has a higher rate of cases overall than the region as a whole, with Birmingham and Sandwell most affected; rates are also high in Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The highest rates of COVID-19 related deaths are in more deprived areas and areas with a greater proportion of residents from BAME communities.

Lockdown and social distancing measures have had direct impacts on wellbeing and on health behaviours. Anxiety has increased significantly in the West Midlands region, with almost half of people surveyed (47.9%) reporting high levels of anxiety compared to a 2019 average of 21.9%. On average, people reporting feeling 'often lonely' ranged from 4.9% to 6.5% over this period; and was generally higher for younger people.

Although the pathways are complex and multi-faceted, the fundamental link between health and wealth is still clear. Ultimately, where people are already marginalised and excluded, they are likely to be left further behind as we respond to and recover from COVID-19 unless we actively work to address this.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation

The English Indices of Deprivation (IMD), produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), provide a relative measure of deprivation in small areas of England. They are based on the concept that deprivation consists of more than poverty; so, whilst 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 domains (or aspects) of deprivation. They are distinct domains, each with their own score and ranks – and people may be counted as deprived in one or more of the domains depending on the types of deprivation that they experience. There are 39 separate indicators in total and each one is based on the most recently available time point. In addition to these seven domain-level indices, there are two supplementary indices; the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI).

1. Income deprivation (weighted 22.5%)
2. Employment deprivation (weighted 22.5%)
3. Education deprivation (weighted 13.5%)
4. Health deprivation (weighted 13.5%)
5. Crime (weighted 9.3%)
6. Barriers to housing and services (weighted 9.3%)
7. Living environment deprivation (weighted 9.3%)

Based on the rank of its average score, Walsall is the 25th most deprived local authority district out of 317. This puts it well within the most deprived 8% of areas in England and is a worsening position since 2015 when it was at 11% and in all previous releases of the indices over the past 15 years. However, this does not necessarily mean that Walsall is more or less deprived that in was previously in absolute terms, not does it describe how the number of people experiencing deprivation has changed. What it shows is that the borough is now relatively more deprived when compared with other local authorities based on Deprivation in Walsall: Summary Report 2019).

Domain	Average LSOA Score	% of LSOAs in most deprived 10%
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	25	22 (26%)
Income deprivation	16	11 (32%)
Affecting children (IDACI)	17	15 (29%)
Affecting older people (IDAOPI)	35	24 (24%)
Employment Deprivation	38	44 (20%)
Education, skills and training deprivation	53	65 (14%)
Health deprivation and disability	53	65 (14%)
Crime	93	113 (6%)
Barriers to housing and services	234	250# (0%) (all Las with no LSOAs in the most deprived 10% share a rank of 250)
Living environment deprivation	68	146 (5%)

Walsall is an area of high economic and social deprivation with low skills and a low-income economy, which is evident in the average salary statistics. Full-time workers resident in Walsall earn a gross weekly pay of £548.20 compared to £581.80 West Midlands compared to £613.10 Great Britain.

Female full-time workers resident in Walsall earn an average of £491.20 gross per week compared to £550.80 (WM) and £587 (GB). This is £100 less per week compared to male workers and there is a similar trend for part-time hourly paid workers. As at November 2021 6.8% of people are claiming out-of-work benefits compared to 5.7% (WM) and 4.6% (GB). The percentage of 18 to 21-year-olds claiming out-of-work benefit is the highest of all age groups at 10.8%, higher than 7.1% (WM) and 5.8% (GB) (Walsall Labour Market Profile 2020-21).

Neighbourhood-level deprivation

Within Walsall, there is considerable variation in the levels of deprivation experienced in neighbourhoods across the borough. There are pockets of extreme deprivation in some areas and over a quarter of neighbourhoods (44 of 167) are amongst the most deprived 10% in England. This is more than the 34 highly deprived neighbourhoods in 2015 and the 41 in 2010.

These highly deprived LSOAs are located primarily in Blakenall, Birchalls, Leamore, Pleck, St Matthew's and Bloxwich East and West wards. Darlaston and Willenhall South also have very widespread multiple deprivation. Walsall has 6 LOSAs that are within the least deprived 10% nationally, only half as many as 2015 (12). A further 14 are in the 20% least deprived.

These areas of relatively low deprivation are predominantly located in the east of borough, in Streetly and Aldridge. However, there are also pockets of very low deprivation adjacent to areas of extremely high deprivation. This is most striking in Bloxwich West, where the Turnberry Estate is significantly less deprived than its surrounding neighbourhoods, and there are LSOAs in the most and least deprived in England adjacent to one another. Conversely, parts of Aldridge, such as the Redhouse Industrial Estate, are much more deprived than the surrounding ward.

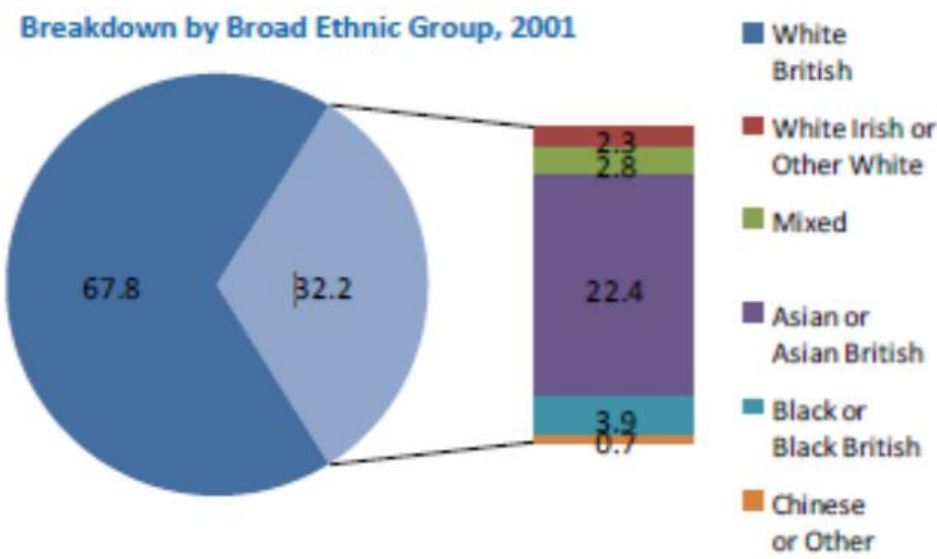## Economic Summary for St. Matthews (The College's ward)

This ward makes up 5.8% of the area of Walsall borough, it has a population density of 28.1 people per hectare (similar with borough average of 27.3). The ward has a high proportion of social rented (35.80%) properties compared to the borough (24.1%).

- 69.7% of working age people in St. Matthew's ward were economically active.
- This was much lower than the Walsall value of 74.0% and the national value of 76.8% (2011)*.
- The largest occupation group in the ward was Professional (18.4%) followed Elementary
- Occupations (13.3%) (2011)*.
- Of working age ward residents, 19.8% had no formal qualifications. Walsall's value was 24.3%, and 15.0% nationally (2011)*.
- In May 2019, 6.8% of working aged residents (aged 16-64) were unemployed and seeking work. This equated to 747 people and was above the Walsall average of 5.0%. Unemployment Claimants (aged 16-64), May 2019.

Sources: 2011 Census, ONS (% based on residents aged 16-64); Alternative Claimant Count, DWP (May 2019) * This is the most recent data available at ward level

	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate	NVQ L4+	No Qualifications
Dudley	72.6%	4.7%	24.7%	16.4%
Sandwell	70.7%	5.3%	22.2%	20.3%
Walsall	70.6%	6.7%	27.6%	12.3%
Wolverhampton	67.2%	7.0%	24.9%	17.3%
Black Country	70.4%	5.8%	24.7%	16.7%
West Midlands	73.9%	4.9%	34.1%	10.2%
England	76.0%	4.0%	40.0%	7.5%

Ethnicity - for St. Matthews (the College's ward)

Breakdown by Broad Ethnic Group, 2001

Legend:
- White British
- White Irish or Other White — 2.3
- Mixed — 2.8
- Asian or Asian British — 22.4
- Black or Black British — 3.9
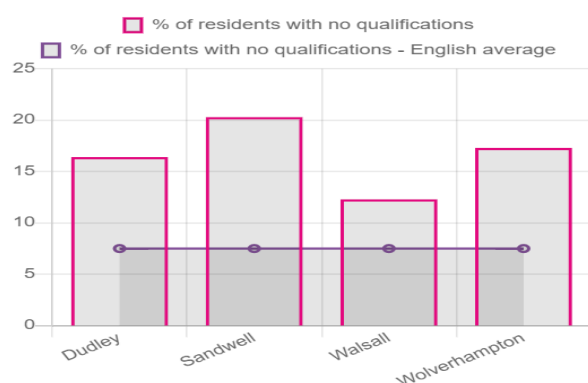- Chinese or Other — 0.7

Pie: 67.8 / 32.2

Asian is the largest minority group at 29.8% (much less than Walsall average of 15.2%). Of the Asian minority group, Pakistani is the most prolific at 12.1%
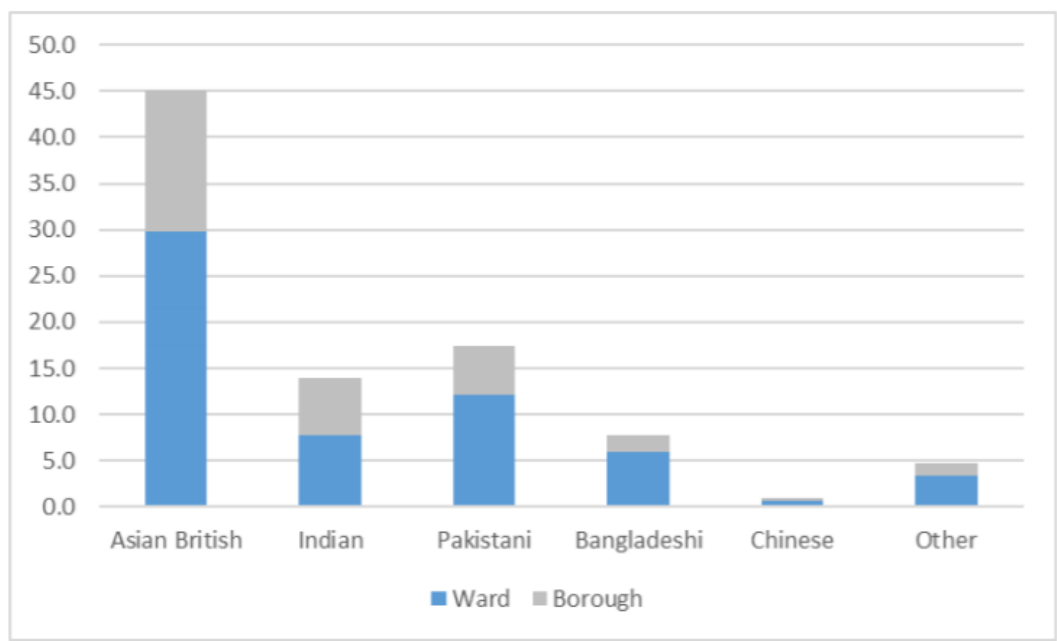
Source:

Qualification Profile – Walsall residents with no qualifications

Source: https://www.activeblackcountry.co.uk/insight-hub/data/workforce/labour-market-profile-2019/

Progression to Further Education

The average Attainment 8 score per pupil is 0.7 percentage points higher than 2018 but still 2.9 percentage points below the national average (46.7), whilst the average Progress 8 score has increased from -0.18 to -0.1

	Progress 8	Attainment 8
Dudley	-0.17	43.9
Sandwell	-0.19	42.2
Walsall	-0.11	44.0
Wolverhampton	-0.01	45.1
West Midlands	-0.06	45.6
England	-0.03	46.8

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-4-performance-2019-revised

Progression to Higher Education

The College has an important role to play in improving the skills level for residents within Walsall. The proportion of people holding a **Level 4 and above qualification** in Walsall has improved in recent years from 24.3% in 2015 to 27.6%, but this is still 12.7% lower than the 40.3% total for GB.

Similarly, the percentage of people with no qualification has fallen from 16.7% in 2015 to 9.2% but remains higher than in the West Midlands (8.3%) and Great Britain as a whole (6.4%).

Walsall College attracts people from all walks of life and socio-economic backgrounds. We have a diverse student population which demonstrates the impact of our inclusive approach to education. The data in this report relates to all students. The local community who we serve has a diverse and changing population and some people in our communities' experience disadvantage and deprivation due to social and economic hardship. During 2018/19, the majority of our students (63.8%) of came from areas across the borough of considerable and extreme levels of deprivation, this increasing to 67.1% for 2020/21. The College passionately believes that any potential disadvantage should not be an absolute barrier to success and that the work we do to support our students and our community is having a positive impact on their lives and opportunities. A key strength of the College is in raising aspirations and encouraging students to be the best they can be - the work we do does make a difference. The data below outlines where our home students come from, and provides information related to their protected characteristics. The report contains information related to recruitment of staff and students by the protected characteristics of religion and belief, sexuality, pregnancy and maternity, marriage/civil partnerships.

Ethnicity Profile – College Students

The College community in 2020/21 comprised of 37% of students from a minority ethnic background which is an increase of 2.2% on the previous two-year position and above the regional figure of 25%. When looking only at those students starting of qualifications designed for young people, it is additionally pleasing to note an almost perfect 50-50 split.

Some areas within the borough have seen major changes in their ethnic composition over a relatively short period of time which means that minority ethnic groups are highly concentrated in certain parts of the borough. Some wards have experienced much greater change than the borough average and the College works closely with the Walsall Community Cohesion and Engagement Team to promote Positive Communities and minimise negative impact which could, potentially, occur because of these rapid changes.

Where do our students come from?

We are Walsall's College and, as such, recruit high numbers of students from our local area as well as students from a wider geographic area. 67.1% of our students reside in postcodes which are within the most deprived areas of the borough. This is an increase of 3.3% in comparison to 2019 (63.8%). The College had 72 students in 2020/21, compared to 51 students in 2019/20 (an additional 21 students) who were Looked After Children (LAC). Our Ward (St. Matthews) consists of areas within the 10% most deprived (towards the Town Centre) and two within the 40% least deprived.
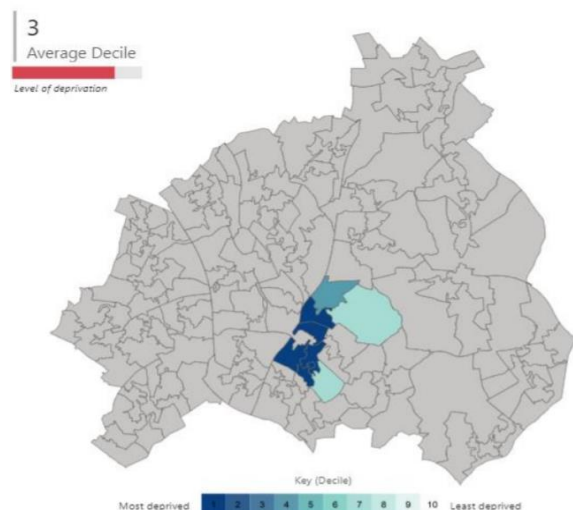
Source: Walsall Council - Ward Walk Profile: St. Matthew's January 2020 Version – FINAL

Our Students: 'Bringing Talent to Life'

Rais Howett - Studied: Achieving Together and Level 1 Engineering
Progression: Apprenticeship with the RAF

Rais first came to Walsall College through the Achieving Together programme. This supports Year 10 and 11 students struggling to succeed in a mainstream education environment. After completing the programme along with GCSE English and maths, he moved on to his engineering qualification after showing an interest in the practical sides of maths, physics and IT.

"College has been a good learning curve for me," said Rais. "It's changed me as a person. I'm more self-disciplined and feel I can build trust with others. I've found I can talk to anyone here about anything."He added: "The college is great at helping learners in lots of ways such as career guidance, confidence-boosting or any personal issues."

Sam Wrighton - Studied: Skills for Working Life
Progression: Apprenticeship in Property Maintenance

After Sam Wrighton excelled on his supported internship at Hillary Primary School in Walsall, he was offered a role with the caretaking team. He has been working there for almost 18 months. This is while studying a Level 2 apprenticeship in property maintenance. Sam's enjoyment of his role built up from his supported internship, which the Walsall College team arranged for him to do. They were also there guiding him throughout his programme.

"I feel lucky that the college gave me opportunities to work in different places," said Sam. This is something I'd recommend other SEND students also do if they can. That way they can find work that suits them best."

The work experience Sam was encouraged to complete at college included volunteering with Walsall Canal and River Trust and at The Light Cinema in Walsall.

Afsana Arif - Studied: Connecting Communities Programme, ESOL and Entry Level 3 IT
Progression: Care Worker

Having spent the last decade improving her English, developing employability skills and bringing up her son, Afsana Arif has achieved her ultimate goal of starting a career in care. The 36-year-old is a domiciliary care worker with Care Avenue based in Wolverhampton.

"I had never had a job and only a basic education," said Pakistan-born Afsana. "Even so, I wanted to work. I was happy to do what was needed to make a better future for myself and my family.

"Through the college, I was able to learn new skills and meet different people. I still see my college friends now."

Garry Southwick - Studied: Pre-employment course with WHG and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust
Progression: Support services assistant role with Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

Garry hadn't expected to be starting a new career with the NHS at the age of 66. He had worked for over five decades as an engineer within the steelmaking and forging industries. However, he was forced to bring his career to an end when his former employer went into administration and the pandemic struck.

Garry completed a two-week employability course coordinated by the NHS, WHG and Walsall College. Since starting his role, Garry has been enjoying his new work routine and career.

"I don't think my age has held me back from wanting to work and being motivated by what I do," said Garry. "There is a new sense of pride in what I do each day."

Donna Baggott and Grace Dore - Studied: HNC & HND Photography
Progression: Level 6 BA Hons Visual Communication

Photography students, Donna Baggott and Grace Dore helped Birmingham and Solihull's current Bench Chairman settle into his role at Birmingham Magistrates Court by taking his official portrait.

Donna's photograph of magistrate, David G Warner JP is displayed at the court alongside portraits of former chairs from the last hundred years. A second photograph by Grace also hangs in Mr Warner's office.

"It was an enjoyable experience," said Donna, "one which has strengthened my career portfolio."
Grace said: "Having come into photography later on in life, I haven't always believed in myself or my abilities. For my work to have been chosen by the Bench Chair means I can just enjoy the moment and not doubt myself."

External Agencies

The college promotes and values the partnership working with a range of external agencies. These relationships support the areas of all aspects of our college community. In particular we are a key partner with Walsall for All – who work in partnership with several organisations to deliver projects as part of their vision to improve social mixing and break down barriers to integration in different ways. The priorities include connecting across communities, that young people learn and grow together, confidence and aspiration to fulfil their potential, that everyone has the fair opportunity to contribute to Walsall through meaningful work or volunteering and to have well-integrated communities where everyone has good housing and plays a positive part in making Walsall a good place to live.

Alongside of the collaboration with Walsall for All, we support the work of community organisations in both operational and strategic ways and we achieve this by having representation on a range of partnership boards. This includes the Adult and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships, the All Age Exploitation Sub Group, Safer Walsall Partnership, Violence Reduction Unit, PQA Adults and Children Join Subgroup, the Walsall Channel Panel and The PREVENT Delivery Group. There is representation at the Safer Student Black Country Group, and Locality Partnership and Practice Groups.

There are a number of initiatives in place and having a positive impact on the retention of our most at-risk students and we have been using the National Tutor (catch-up) Fund (NTF) to support some of these interventions. We have also created additional posts to deploy as additional support for this agenda, (contacting those with lack of attendance) and holding small group and one-to-one mentoring sessions for vulnerable students.

Working with Walsall Council we have have agreed that starting this January, a Council Impact Advisor will be based at the College full-time to support students who have left their previous provision without a positive destination and to support those who have dropped out of provision.

We are very much part of the Colleges West Midlands and WMCA NEET Intervention Partnership Strategic Group which has an aim to reduce NEETs by average of 10% across the West Midlands between by July 2022.

We are also active members of the newly formed Walsall Post-16 Steering Group as chaired by Walsall Children's Services, which has a mandate amongst other things, to reduce NEETs via cross-organisation collaboration and a shared offer.

We are working with the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit in our commitment in supporting students most at risk, and new initiatives will compliment and add value to current interventions as listed.

Schools

We continue to develop our work with school partnerships and provide opportunities for education at the College from the age of 14 onwards.

Students (and Parents/Wards)

Putting our students at the heart of what we do is integral to our success. We, pro-actively, seek the views of our students, our staff and those who access our College or use our services. There are at least seven ways in which our stakeholders can make their voice heard, including student feedback weeks, Chat with Jat, Student Voice Committee, College surveys, elected Students' Union Reps and an elected Student Governor. This supports our ongoing drive for inclusion and excellence and is underpinned with a range of information and celebratory activities.

Student Voice

The Student Engagement Team co-ordinates the election of the Student Union at the start of each academic year who work alongside the team to promote different events across the year. We have seen the development of the LGBTQ+ group who meet weekly together, the opening of the Student Union lounge at lunchtimes for vulnerable students who need a quiet space and competitions to promote mental health and wellbeing.

The team works closely with the Head of Personal Development to ensure that enrichment activities and engagement and Student Voice all link together. This means that the student experience is supported through curriculum as well as additional activities to ensure that students receive a wide exposure to local and national issues.

These are some of the activities that the student voice/engagement team has delivered over the past year:

- Student Representative meetings;
- Student Voice Committee meetings;
- Student Conference;
- Chat with Jat;
- Students' Union team elected;
- Student Governor positions filled;
- Health and Safety Committee representation;
- Unite against bullying Padlet.

Promoted external opportunities:

- UK Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 Online Ceremony reflection and conversation - 27 January;
- Time to talk day - online activities to start a conversation about mental health and end the stigma - 4 February;
- Metropolitan Police and NHS partners online sessions to celebrate LGBTQ+ History month with a chance to put questions to experts. The sessions aim to not only empower the community but break down obstacles – February;
- Cabinet office commissioned research with student electoral registration – required Level 6 students online focus group - March;
- WASUP and EnTRESS present: Stopping the Plastic Tide - How Can We Solve the Plastics Problem? - 4 March;
- Hate Crime Workshop and Q&A to Crown Prosecution Service - 17 March;
- Census day survey - 21st March;
- National Day of Reflection online talks and conversations - 23 March;
- Sandwell Young People's Services recruitment of young people to develop and lead on their Just Youth website;
- Promotion of signing up to the 'Walsall for All' Pledge;
- KIC Walsall Youth Ambassador programme – recruitment of young people who are passionate about youth voice in their community and want to make a difference;
- Health Watch Walsall Survey – to share experiences and thoughts on mental health support services in Walsall;
- Youth Ignite Empowerment Conference online interactive session to develop new tools, knowledge and insight of how to improve, engage and empower the lives of young people;
- West Midlands Young Combined Authority Community recruitment – to share your views and influence your region;
- A&A Services promotion of LGBTQ+ Group to discuss issues and gain tools to improve health and wellbeing.

Students consistently report high levels of satisfaction with the College and are particularly complimentary about the great atmosphere, approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, safety and wellbeing and the support they receive from staff. They comment, regularly, on the welcoming atmosphere and the fact that they can be themselves. When asked to identify what they liked about being a student at Walsall College, comments included:

- You are doing well in promoting awareness such as mental health;
- Walsall College is an outstanding college where it pushes students to meet their full potential and encourages young people to face new challenges and have a positive outlook towards their goals;
- Walsall College is good at providing individual support;
- The college has helped me so much, not just with the work but also mentally.

In addition, our students' feedback through teaching, learning and induction surveys and their comments include;

- 96% of HE students and 96.2% of FE students reported in their induction survey that they know what to do if they have concerns regarding harassment or discrimination;
- 94% of HE students and 95.4% of FE students reported in their induction survey that they understand what is meant by British Values and the PREVENT Strategy;
- 94% of HE students reported in their Induction Survey that they understand how the Freedom of Speech Policy impacts themselves, the college and others by promoting a safe culture of tolerance and respect, and an open environment to discuss and learn;
- 97.8% of Workplace Learners reported in their start of programme survey that they were aware of policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, equality and diversity, PREVENT and British Values.

Our students' report that they feel treated with fairness and respect regardless of any protected characteristic. Staff continue to be pro-active in challenging any inappropriate behaviour and help students to understand and promote positive behaviours and British Values.

Our approach to the 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' campaign has been strengthened further this academic year with a reset of our behaviour expectations across curriculum and business support teams. It continues to provide the focus for behaviours across the College community and supports positive student/staff interaction. Our approach creates a culture in which all can be heard and valued and opportunities for discrimination, harassment or bullying of any kind are minimised.

We work hard to ensure that students have access to learning experiences and content embedded in the curriculum as well as extra-curricular opportunities which promote inclusion, recognise and value diversity and which, ultimately, embody Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare. True inclusion can only be successful if all those involved work in partnership. This includes our students, parents, employers, staff, service providers and communities themselves and we strive to develop external relationships which enhance the student experience and from which we gain mutual benefit.

College Governance and Oversight

Walsall College Governors continue to work passionately to support and maintain an inclusive organisation. This support means that our student college community can learn, work and thrive and that they all have wide and varied opportunity to reach their full potential. We have seen an increase in the number of Governors who are local residents and have a local interest in their own community, whether this is from a personal or professional viewpoint. This means that this contribution adds value to our commitment to understand the presenting needs within the local community and how we can best do this.

The current profile of the Governor Committee is 19% BAME (3 of the 16 Governors) and 56% female (9 of the 16 Governors) and 44% male (7 of the 16 Governors).

The delivery of the Student Voice Committee meeting at various points across the academic year is an important platform for Governors to understand student experience. We strive to ensure that our students are at the heart of everything we do in college and this opportunity to feedback about their experience means that the Governors can take account of student feedback and use it to make improvements that support inclusion and drive equality forward.

A named Governor for EDI sits on the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee** which is chaired by the Principal and Chief Executive. The committee considers matters pertinent to staff as well as students. The committee includes representation from the College's Human Resource Team. Through management reports, this committee advises on decisions and changes which it wishes Corporation to consider and approve. The committee deliberates on any appropriate 'action against discrimination'. Voluntary consideration to help people with a protected characteristic ('positive action') is legal if people with a protected characteristic:

- are at a disadvantage;
- have particular needs;
- are under-represented in an activity or type of work.

College Governors have fully endorsed our **Codes of Practice and policy regarding Freedom of Expression,** which is a fundamental right under both British and European law and is protected by Article 20 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The college has a duty to promote the fundamental British Values of:

- Democracy;
- The rule of law;
- Individual liberty;
- Mutual respect;
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

Every individual and body of persons concerned in the governance of the College is required to take such steps as are reasonably practicable (including where appropriate the initiation of disciplinary measures) to secure compliance with the code of practice.

Quality Assurance for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The College actively seeks to address inequalities through our quality systems and robust monitoring of data. We also, actively, listen and respond to student feedback as and when concerns are raised. Our main strategies and policies to increase awareness and drive improvements are:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report (published on our website);
- Corporate Strategy;
- Freedom of Speech Policy;
- 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 (EIA) process.

Our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy** ensures that our objectives, which continue to drive equality forward, are agreed, disseminated and brought together centrally. Whilst Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is no longer a legal requirement we continue to review and monitor our key policies affecting students and staff to ensure that EDI remains at the forefront across all aspects of College business. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which underpins College activity is reviewed and approved, annually, by Corporation. Equality policy and practice is monitored by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee which is chaired by the Principal. Equality, Diversity and inclusion, at an operational level, is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Team and relevant managers.

The **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Group** aim to promote and protect the interests of students/staff across many of our activities, continuing to adapt to reflect the new environment in which we are all now living and working and will work to support our ambition for change, setting out:

- what we intend to do to achieve intended changes;
- the targets we set to drive this;
- the investment we aim to make to deliver our ambitions;
- how we will evaluate whether our actions are effective.

As part of the focus for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group we have collectively identified **"The Way Forward"** and in particular, the development of a clear framework to assist in identifying key objectives to progress our EDI agenda. We recognise that Equality Diversity and Inclusion cannot be a one-off or set of initiatives; neither is it something that can be 'completed' such as a project or a destination. Promoting these initiatives as on-going commitments and ensuring that the wider college community embraces them is a constant work in progress. There is also a priority and importance to ensure that they are maintained and nurtured to guarantee effectiveness. Initially to identify "The Way Forward" we explored our understanding of our workforce drivers outlined below:

- attract, grow, mobilise and retain a diverse, informed and progressive workforce by optimising collaboration within and between teams;
- maximise employee engagement and performance by valuing and empowering everyone;
- embrace and harness diverse thinking to generate innovation, excellence and sustainability.

As part of this identification we highlighted our aims and requirements:

- connect and align EDI initiatives around a common framework;
- being open and transparent about our progress with EDI, sharing information from experience including our mistakes;
- actively consider EDI in practical ways in all that we do so others can readily see the difference it makes;
- develop executive focus and visibility on our approach to EDI;
- increase consistency of approach between divisions and locations;
- drive the development and advancement of a more inclusive culture;
- accelerate development of diverse talent and future leaders.

"The Way Forward" via 'The Five Cs"

1. Culture;
2. Continued Professional Development;
3. Curriculum;
4. Connected;
5. Challenge.

Culture

To enable us to achieve our aims and requirements as a clear way forward we identified **The Five C's,** the first being Culture. Our culture espouses that each person is unique. It means embracing the range of human differences, including people's beliefs, abilities, preferences, backgrounds, values and identities. Our principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are nurtured across all activities so that all our stakeholders can thrive together. EDI is more than matters of ethnicity, and we will continue to develop the students' understanding of the wider protected characteristics and also how they can help promote and celebrate the things we have in common. We have identified the actions to help achieve this commitment:

- Our recruitment processes will proactively address imbalances in the diversity of leadership at all levels;
- A new commitment to managers training will enable managers to understand the business case for equality, diversity and inclusion and the role of managers in creating inclusive cultures;
- Our key EDI objectives are wider than addressing gaps in student retention and attainment;
- We will evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogy and curriculum practice in promoting race equality, alongside strategies to address attainment gaps;
- We will continue to monitor the outcomes from the Learning Walks, related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;
- We will use data on BAME leaders, managers and Governors against the profile of college student populations and local demographic;
- We will set high expectations for EDI activities, challenging the gaps and celebrating diversity to include all aspects of wider protected characteristics;
- We will collaborate with other FE colleges to share best practice in EDI and the advancement of racial literacy and justice across all modes of learning.

Continued Professional Development

Our passion to drive forward continued professional development for our staff community is a priority for equality and diversity. The implementation since September 2021 of a new workforce and development leadership programme includes as a central component, the consideration of racial equality, and for teacher training the inclusion of anti-racist pedagogy. The DisabledGo's EDI Training course continues to be well established and a mandatory aspect of staff training. The package has been reinvigorated via material authored by EDI experts to update on all aspects of protected characteristics, discrimination, victimisation, and unfair treatment within a professional environment. The training is renewable each three years to ensure general awareness is strong. We have identified the following actions to help us achieve this:

- Embedding consideration of race equality in curricula will be a core part of a 'whole institution' approach to race equality and addressing the BAME retention and achievement gaps (whilst not losing sight of the wider protected characteristics);
- Through our active partnership with Walsall MBC's Community, Equality and Cohesion work, the College has now met with their recommended EDI training provider in Brian Fitzgerald (Consultation and Equalities Officer) and staff training is scheduled through the 'Equally Yours' training programme;
- Training will link to the Walsall College Managers Programme;
- The programme recognises that diversity and inclusion can present a challenging topic for conversation for some staff. Tackling these issues transparently within is crucial to gain the trust of staff and then students alike. Being bold, frank and open about our steps will be the first step towards change.

Curriculum

Through our investment in a Head of Personal Development and in working closely with the Head of Student Services, we have begun to further strengthen our curriculum. We aim to reflect contemporary British values, incorporating the importance of colonial history and its influence on society, historically and now; the impact of racism on black and white communities; the contributions made by black people to society. We are bold and want to ensure and achieve an anti-racist Curriculum through a spirit of encouraging and embracing a plurality of voices and narratives and a broadening of our curricula horizons to include many words, terms, and lived experiences that will naturally emerge. We have identified the following actions:

- We will increase awareness of the inclusive support available for our apprentices to and to further promote enrichments opportunities as appropriate;
- We will continue to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through student engagement, personal development, enrichments and tutorial activity;
- Our revised Tutorial Programme will utilise the best resources from the Blended Learning Consortium, to bring to life discussions with students regarding EDI;
- We will continue to improve the students' understanding of Prevent and British Values through our induction process and the delivery of subjects through tutorial and awareness sessions supported by external partners and speakers.

Connected

Being connected is how we will bring our strands of EDI activity together, to see this as a holistic commitment permeating through all strands of College life. Connected is also how we will involve others in these activities and make sure this is transparent and accessible across all use groups. Being connected will drive fair and positive treatment of all students, staff and communities and we aim to achieve this aim by the following actions:

- We will continue to monitor and share analysis of EDI data so that all staff and students feel connected not only to this shared data source, but to strengthen engagement and 'buy-in' to face the challenges where more work needs to be done (and to further promote inclusivity at the College);

- Our resources and publicity and promotional material will actively seek to reflect the diversity in the College and our communities.;
- We will annually publish our student performance, staff and governor profile data by ethnicity and wider protected characteristics, including our actions to address identified gaps in our EDI key objectives.

Challenge

In delivering excellence through inclusion, we are committed to raising student aspirations and self-esteem, celebrate diversity and embedding confidence that any discrimination in any form will not be tolerated. The commitment to student engagement goes beyond the college level, it also means promoting opportunities for students to develop the values, knowledge and skills needed to become informed, critical and active citizens in a democracy. To ensure that we meet this challenge we need to embed all of the above elements of the framework so that they become a consistent and constant work-in-progress and nurtured to guarantee effectiveness. We aim to do this by:

- Embedding our Ready Respectful Safe Campaign so that it becomes an effective framework for our student community;
- Support our staff by providing continued professional development and in particular, how to hold potentially difficult conversations that stretch and challenge our own perceptions, values and belief system regarding equality, diversity and inclusion;
- By embedding a diverse and broad curriculum offer to provide opportunities for all our student community;
- Enabling our students to play their part as informed and critical citizens and aiding them to acquire the habit of democracy and practice skills of participation, deliberation, advocacy, critical judgement and leadership which are the building blocks of any vibrant democratic society.

Achieving Levelling-up

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion needs to be considered not only in the micro view at regional, local and College level, but also should include the impact of the macro perspective, which this report offers. Arguably ambitions held at micro-level will never truly be fully realised unless national concerns are addressed. The November 2020 report; Achieving Levelling-up. The Structures and Processes Needed (LIPSIT Report, November 2020, available at https://lipsit.ac.uk/project-outputs/), refers to economic convergence between the regions more specifically, convergence upwards. In essence the research suggests the nature of the changes required, and points outs how Whitehall exercises control through funding competitions which lead to poor resource allocation, waste time, and create an adversarial atmosphere. The report states that the problem is not just inequality between regions, it is also inequality between areas within regions and the existence of pockets of deprivation.

Place matters. Many people are rooted to their local area because of its civic identity and their social and family connections: over 40% of workers have only ever worked in the same local area as they were born. But there are parts of the country where people feel left-behind, that they are not getting fair access to jobs, wages and skills opportunities, and that their local priorities are not being delivered on by Government. Levelling-up is about improving everyday life for people in those places. It is about ensuring people can be proud of their local community, rather than feeling as though they need to leave it in order to reach their potential.

The College's Senior Management Team work closely with not only local and regional stakeholders, but also takes up seat at a national level, working directly with DfE, Ofqual and Ofsted for example, primarily to share our expertise and success in the sector and to influence to changes we feel would benefit education and training and therefore ultimately our students and their prospects.

Home Truths: Undoing racism and delivering real diversity in the charity sector

Home Truths is not a report that asks if there is a problem with 'race' equity in the charity sector. It has long been known that there is an under-representation of BAME people working in the sector, and that under-representation is worse in senior leadership roles. This report seeks to reframe the 'diversity debate' saying that racism is a significant and unresolved issue in the charity sector just as it is in the rest of society.

The experiences of BAME people are explored in the report published June 2020, Home Truths: Undoing racism and delivering real diversity in the charity sector, is the final report in the year-long Making Diversity Count project. https://www.acevo.org.uk/reports/home-truths/

Whilst focusing on the charity sector, the findings of this report contains potentially uncomfortable home truths for many white leaders who do not understand how racism manifests in their own organisations and actions, or how policies and procedures seen as the 'norm' within the sector, can actually marginalise BAME people.

Our commitment to teaching

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 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. Inclusive teaching practice is an approach we adopt to our teaching that recognises the diversity of students, enabling all students to access course content, fully participate in learning activities and demonstrate their knowledge and strengths at assessment. Our inclusive practice is embedded into our curriculum and values the diversity of the student body as a resource that enhances the learning experience.

Reflecting on teaching practice

Staff have been asked to consider how to increase the effectiveness of their teaching practice by reflecting on diversity, being aware of how their own background and identity are expressed in course design and teaching style and understanding their reactions to particular individuals and communities to recognise affinities and prejudices and consider how they affect students' experiences of their course.

By explaining cultural references and using accessible language, staff are asked to illustrate points with examples that reflect the diversity of our students, recognising how the dynamics of relations between different groups have impacted on their subject field. Staff are asked to acknowledge which voices/issues are not represented in their subject areas which will more likely engage and motivate all students.

By using a variety of teaching and assessment methods (essays, examinations, website and blog-based assignments, individual and group projects, presentations, etc.) each student will have the opportunity to enhance their strengths and challenge their less developed learning skills. The student response to each activity enables staff to identify whether some methods work better for particular groups of students and to pinpoint any barriers to learning that might need to be addressed. Staff understand what reasonable adjustments disabled students need in order to facilitate their learning, and adapt to teaching methods appropriately.

2020/21 Achievement Rates

Much of the 2020/21 achievement data consists of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). For every subject, exam boards required the College to submit a grade for each student, based on a range of evidence which demonstrates the standard at which they had performed over the course of study. This judgement was based on the evidence of a student's performance on the subject content which they had been taught, whether in the classroom or via remote learning. There were also however a smaller proportion of qualifications where assessments had to be adapted and or delayed due to the pandemic. For our Higher Education provision for example, there remained the need to gather and submit actual student work in order to qualify the grades submitted. Apprenticeships were able to continue to use formative assessments however some End Point Assessment (EPA) opportunities were delayed and some students were placed on furlough, impacting on timely achievement.

Whilst 2020/21 achievement data is important to consider, we should be mindful that much of the following results have been reached through TAGs and via exam board moderation rather than 'actual' attainment. That said, the results are incredibly important for this generation of students and this analysis will help us to focus our energy at curriculum level, where specific EDI gaps will receive management and leadership attention and intervention, aiming to address and improve gaps for the 2021/22 academic year.

Our analysis however, is much more than looking into gaps and targets. This is about enabling individuals to reach their potential: a student who is the first among his family and friends to study for a degree; a disabled student able to access and enjoy learning like everyone else; a care leaver getting the chance to study for a degree; a black student getting the first-class degree she deserves, placing her in line for a good graduate job.

Other Factors Impacting on Achievement:

On a national scale there are substantial differences in attainment rates for certain groups of students. The College's EDI gaps in recent years in many ways reflect the national picture. Factors can be complex and warrant careful review due to other considerations that may play a part. For example, the national HE attainment rate of students from a manual working background was 8.6 percentage points lower than students from a higher managerial, administrative and professional background. Students from an unemployed background had an attainment rate 21.5 percentage points lower than students from a higher managerial, administrative and professional background.

For Higher Education, one of the most pressing is the black attainment gap. The attainment rate for black students in 2018/19 was 22.1 percentage points lower than white students.

It is not as simple as assuring ourselves that harassment has been stamped out. Workplace attitudes to race and lack of role models mean BAME individuals are more susceptible to 'imposter syndrome' than their white peers, contributing to growing issues around their attainment and retention. Imposter syndrome can be defined as a collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist despite evident success. Typically, they may find it more difficult to recover from setbacks, and in the long term their career development will begin to wane as they will hold themselves back from pursuing personal ambitions or opportunities to progress.

A recent study found that despite making up 14% of the UK population, just 3% of the country's most powerful individuals are BAME. With such a severe lack of representation, especially at senior levels, it's no wonder that so many BAME workers struggle with imposter syndrome. Our students know how they can raise concerns and report incidents and feel confident that when they do they will be listened to and issues will be addressed.

The College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team was reinvigorated with new membership and a refreshed mandate to engage in discussions which consider how Walsall College can enhance its support for BAME students, promote racial equality across the whole organisation and successfully achieve the Advance HE's Race Equality Charter (REC).

The EDI Team also looks at wider issues pertinent to all groups with protected characteristic and has a mandate to support staff at the College as well as students.

Further Considerations

As students returned to face-to-face teaching in college, the number of students disclosing struggles with their mental health and wellbeing increased. Those presenting with anxiety increased and the work of the college's two counsellors became a significant area of support for our students. Counselling has reverted back to face-to-face and students have settled back into this process well.

The demand remains significantly high and has increased comparatively year-on-year.   According to the charity MIND and the findings from their fourth survey to explore the impact of the pandemic on young people's mental health, we know that it has had a devastating impact. For example, young people have started self-harming again, are having panic attacks, are losing motivation and hope for the future. We know that some young people will be dealing with multiple pressures, especially those who have been bereaved or experienced other trauma during this time.

A survey carried out by MIND with 2,438 young people aged 13-25 year of age between 26 January and 12 February 2021 shows:

- **75% of respondents agreed that they have found the current lockdown harder to cope with than the previous ones** including 44% who said it said it was much harder. (14% said it was easier, 11% said it was the same);
- **67% believed that the pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on their mental health**. This includes young people who had been bereaved or undergone traumatic experiences during the pandemic, who were concerned about whether friendships would recover, or who were worried about the loss of education or their prospects of finding work. (19% neither agreed nor disagreed, 14% disagreed);
- **79% of respondents agreed that their mental health would start to improve when most restrictions were lifted,** but some expressed caution about restrictions being lifted too quickly and the prospect of future lockdowns.

https://www.youngminds.org.uk/media/esifqn3z/youngminds-coronavirus-report-jan-2021.pdf

The College understands that any possible exam contingencies for the 2021/22 year ahead are related to possible further outbreaks of Covid, however, what we already know and can say, is that all previous impacts of the pandemic still loom large in the educational sector and will, it seems, continue to impact on some students in the system for at least a further two academic years.

For example, too many students are working below their expected ability levels and have started at the College with achievements that do not always fully reflect their ability. This means that even through the deployment of 'catch-up' activities, many students are working hard to earn the qualification level they already have, and not always able to progress with pace upon the next level they find themselves. Further factors serve to exacerbate the challenges that remain, such as the current national absence rate of 8.6% of teachers and school leaders (6 January 2022 figures). National college groups report a student absence at levels often 10-15% less than expected this second term.

Such phenomenon has been widely communicated across Further Education Colleges and is not unique to Walsall. Other consequences of learning on-line during lockdown has meant that many students who ordinarily would be exceptionally well behaved, ready and eager to learn, are displaying unusually high-level levels of social/interactive struggle and low-level behavioural issues perhaps exacerbated by isolation, anxiety and loss of some aspiration as the result of the pandemic.

Colleges are proud to be at the forefront and helping communities re-gain their aspirations and re-energise their appetites for learning. It is important to note however that the notion that exams will go ahead in summer 2022 with only minor mitigations, is likely to have a disproportionate impact of these particular students, who have expressed concerns that they fear they are unlikely to be ready to demonstrate their best potential. Many are, and importantly actually feel, disadvantaged. There are many hundreds of students at Walsall alone who will not have benefitted from a warm, comfortable bedroom from which to study, with a desk and PC for their exclusive use, benefitting from powerful broadband to serve the family, supported by parents who work in partnership with College to support with home study etc.

The education catch-up programme is helping to make a difference, however with many college's working at full capacity and with outside agencies offering a mixed level of support, it must be accepted that the catch-up fund alone cannot be seen as completely levelling-up the playing field for disadvantaged students who's experience during lock-down, will in many cases permeate in their lived experience for several more years to come.

Vocational Achievement Rates and EDI Gaps 2020/21.

The following datasets represent all College starts on qualifications for the academic year 2020/21. The top-level view indicates where there may be gaps in either retention and or achievement for student groups such as adults or BAME etc, or where there may be trends/dips in recruitment of particular groups.

It is important to note that where there is a retention or recruitment gap larger than 3%, we record this as requiring further exploration and actions which aim to close the gap against agreed deadlines, which commonly will be to conclude by the following academic year. Each curriculum team do analyse this data much closer to their curriculum and managers and staff devise strategies and actions where relevant to address. Achievement gaps are recorded in curriculum-level Quality Improvement Plans (QIP) and are monitored each term in the curriculum quality summit meetings.

To summarise the more detailed data tables and analysis that follows, the overall qualification starts for 2020/21 shows that the following outcomes where gaps will lead to prioritised for the 2021/22 year ahead:

- There are no overall material **Gender** achievement gaps.
- There are no material **Gender** gaps in provision for Adults or Young People.
- There is a material **Gender** gap of is 6.1% in achievement for male apprentices.
- There is a material gap of 8.14% in achievement for overall students with a **Disability**.
- There is a material gap in achievement of 9.1% for Apprentices with a **Disability.**
- There is no longer an **Age**-related achievement gap for adults (previously was 6.67%).
- There is an **Age**-related achievement gap of 6.6% for 16-18 Apprentices compared to their 19+ peers.
- There is no longer an overall material **BME** achievement gap (previously was 5.23%).
- There is no gap in achievement for BME students across Adults, Young People.
- There is a gap in recruitment of **BME** students in our Apprenticeship provision at 16%, improving only slightly across the previous three years. This is below regional proportions of BME population and therefore an area for improvement in terms of recruitment.
- There is a gap of 6.6% in **BME** student achievement.
- This is a material gap in achievement for students with a **Learning Difficulty** is now 8.54%.
- There is a material gap of 5.34% in achievement for Apprentices with a **Learning Difficulty.**

- There is no longer an overall **Widening Participation** gap in achievement.
- There are no Adult or Young People gaps for **Widening Participation.**
- There is a material gap of 11.15% in achievement for Adults with a **Disability**.
- There is a material gap of 12.73% in achievement for Adults with a **Learning Difficulty.**
- Recruitment of HE students with a **Disability** is 10% which is 7% less than in previous three years.
- There is a significant gap of 23.76% for HE students with a **Disability** although the actual base number is low.
- There is a material gap in achievement gap of 4.2% for **BME** students in Higher Education.
- There is a 12.95% material gap in achievement for HE students with a **Learning Difficulty** although the actual base number is low.
- There is a material **Gender** gap in achievement of 9.04% for male HE students.
- There is a material gap in achievement of 3.81% for Widening Participation students in HE.

Education and Training – All Ages

Ethnicity

A previous 5.2% achievement gap between BAME and Non-BME students (made up predominantly by African and Caribbean students where achievement is around 76%) has been closed for 2020/21. This is very good news and back to the level of attainment seen in previous years (2018/19) where there was no achievement gap for BAME students. Retention was also high for both groups.

BAME Remote Learning impact

For 2019/20, we do know that around 50% of the 20% of overall students who did not/were not able to continue to engage with their learning post the March 2020 lockdown were BAME. This was disproportionate given that overall BAME students make up around 36.2% of all students at the College. There are several potential factors that may be contributing to this outturn such as social and economic status of those families involved, feeding into such considerations such as availability of devices to study remotely, internet access and speed, the need to have a quiet study space at home, family prioritise to contribute financially and other such matters which may impact upon aspirations and priorities of the individual students. What we can see here however, is that with a return to increased faced-to-face delivery for 2020/21 and less disruption to the curriculum, a return to the parity for BAME students is a positive.

Ethnic Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Retention %	Achievement %
BAME	2020/21	3852	95.76%	86.27%
	2019/20	3638	95.82%	80.91%
	2018/19	3634	96.95%	89.28%
Non-BAME	2020/21	6540	94.93%	85.18%
	2019/20	6477	96.21%	86.25%
	2018/19	6977	96.36%	90.05%
Grand Total	2020/21	10392	95.25%	85.61%
	2019/20	10115	96.06%	84.26%
	2018/19	10611	96.57%	89.78%

Age

A previous 6.67% achievement gap between Adults (19+) and Young People (16-18) students has now been closed. This is very good news with the 2020/21 results demonstrating no material gap. There are just 22 more Adult students starting qualifications however courses are often short or very short.

Age Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
16-18	2020/21	5185	93.40%	86.12%
	2019/20	4835	95.06%	88.32%
	2018/19	5321	96.19%	89.97%
19 +	2020/21	5207	96.80%	85.18%
	2019/20	5280	96.94%	80.72%
	2018/19	5290	97.00%	89.56%
Grand Total	2020/21	10392	95.25%	85.61%
	2019/20	10115	96.06%	84.26%
	2018/19	10611	96.57%	89.78%

Disability

Students with a Disability represented 12% of qualification starts for 2020/21, a proportion which has remained relatively steady across a three-year period. With no previous gaps in retention or attainment, it is disappointing to note a material gap in achievement of 8.14%. Whilst retained remained high, the final achievement gap requires close scrutiny at curriculum level, leading to any pertinent actions to improve for the year ahead.

Disability Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Disability	2020/21	1249	96.09%	78.76%
	2019/20	1291	97.79%	83.10%
	2018/19	1277	97.60%	87.68%
No Disability	2020/21	9142	95.10%	86.90%
	2019/20	8824	95.70%	84.50%
	2018/19	9332	96.34%	90.25%
Grand Total	2020/21	10392	95.25%	85.61%
	2019/20	10115	96.06%	84.26%
	2018/19	10611	96.57%	89.78%

Learning Difficulty

Students with a Learning Difficulty represented 13% of all qualification starts for 2020/21, a proportion which has remained relatively steady across a three-year period. With no previous gaps in retention or attainment, it is disappointing to note a material gap in achievement of 8.54%. Whilst retained remained high, the final achievement gap requires close scrutiny at curriculum level, leading to any pertinent actions to improve for the year ahead.

Learning Difficulty Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Learning Difficulty	2020/21	1340	96.39%	78.70%
	2019/20	1352	97.29%	82.46%
	2018/19	1376	97.89%	88.11%
No Learning Difficulty	2020/21	9051	94.99%	87.24%
	2019/20	8763	95.73%	84.75%
	2018/19	9233	96.20%	90.24%
Grand Total	2020/21	10392	95.25%	85.61%
	2019/20	10115	96.06%	84.26%
	2018/19	10611	96.57%	89.78%

Gender

The gender split in terms of recruitment has remained consistently equal in proportionality. There are no material gaps in terms of retention or achievement.

Gender	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Female	2020/21	5939	96.24%	86.81%
	2019/20	5874	96.17%	83.35%
	2018/19	6156	96.83%	89.46%
Male	2020/21	4453	93.99%	84.07%
	2019/20	4241	95.93%	85.40%
	2018/19	4455	96.27%	90.16%
Grand Total	2020/21	10392	95.25%	85.61%
	2019/20	10115	96.06%	84.26%
	2018/19	10611	96.57%	89.78%

Widening Participation (WP)

A previous 6.01% achievement gap between Widening Participation and Non-Widening Participation students has now been closed. This is a pleasing out-turn as students from WP areas represent 67.1% of all starts.

Widening Participation	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
No	2020/21	3416	95.95%	86.55%
	2019/20	3286	96.32%	88.47%
	2018/19	3646	97.55%	91.92%
Yes	2020/21	6976	94.95%	85.20%
	2019/20	6829	95.95%	82.41%
	2018/19	6965	96.11%	88.76%
Grand Total	2020/21	10392	95.25%	85.61%
	2019/20	10115	96.06%	84.26%
	2018/19	10611	96.57%	89.78%

Young People:

Ethnicity

When looking at ethnicity and the proportion of our students starting on programmes designed for young people, we see an almost perfectly even split with BAME and non-BAME starts. It is pleasing to note there is a strong consistency in terms of both retention and achievement for all groups with no material gaps to report.

Ethnic Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
BME	2020/21	1713	94.60%	87.39%
	2019/20	1467	95.07%	88.15%
	2018/19	1577	97.09%	90.72%
Non BME	2020/21	3472	92.81%	85.50%
	2019/20	3368	95.06%	88.39%
	2018/19	3744	95.80%	89.65%
Grand Total	2020/21	5185	93.40%	86.12%
	2019/20	4835	95.06%	88.32%
	2018/19	5321	96.19%	89.97%

Disability

When looking at students with a Disability starting on programmes designed for young people, we see a year-on-year recruitment at around 10.5% with no material gaps in retention or achievement.

Disability Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Disability	2020/21	543	92.48%	83.54%
	2019/20	528	96.23%	86.22%
	2018/19	551	97.50%	87.65%
No Disability	2020/21	4642	93.53%	86.48%
	2019/20	4307	94.88%	88.65%
	2018/19	4768	95.96%	90.38%
Grand Total	2020/21	5185	93.40%	86.12%
	2019/20	4835	95.06%	88.32%
	2018/19	5321	96.19%	89.97%

Learning Difficulty

When looking at students with a Learning Difficulty starting on programmes designed for young people, we see a year-on-year recruitment at around 13.72% with all previous material gaps in retention or achievement now closed.

Learning Difficulty Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Learning Difficulty	2020/21	708	94.37%	84.03%
	2019/20	683	95.61%	85.64%
	2018/19	681	97.62%	87.99%
No Learning Difficulty	2020/21	4477	93.21%	86.55%
	2019/20	4152	94.94%	88.93%
	2018/19	4638	95.84%	90.45%
Grand Total	2020/21	5185	93.40%	86.12%
	2019/20	4835	95.06%	88.32%
	2018/19	5321	96.19%	89.97%

Gender

When looking at the Gender split for students starting on programmes designed for young people, we see female recruitment at steady over a three-year period of 44.7% with no material gaps in retention or achievement.

Gender	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Female	2020/21	2312	94.12%	87.03%
	2019/20	2181	94.36%	88.56%
	2018/19	2479	96.10%	89.54%
Male	2020/21	2873	92.86%	85.44%
	2019/20	2654	95.62%	88.13%
	2018/19	2842	96.26%	90.31%
Grand Total	2020/21	5185	93.40%	86.12%
	2019/20	4835	95.06%	88.32%
	2018/19	5321	96.19%	89.97%

Widening Participation

When looking at the students from WP starting on programmes designed for young people, we see around 64% recruitment steady over a three-year period with no material gaps in retention or achievement.

Widening Participation	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
No	2020/21	1866	94.37%	87.23%
	2019/20	1710	95.19%	90.34%
	2018/19	1900	97.18%	92.33%
Yes	2020/21	3319	92.88%	85.53%
	2019/20	3125	95.00%	87.28%
	2018/19	3421	95.69%	88.78%
Grand Total	2020/21	5185	93.40%	86.12%
	2019/20	4835	95.06%	88.32%
	2018/19	5321	96.19%	89.97%

Adults:

Ethnicity

When looking at ethnicity and the proportion of our Adult students starting on programmes, we see a healthy 41% BAME starts. It is pleasing to note there is a strong consistency in terms of both retention and achievement for all groups with no material gaps to report, improving on a 2019/20 gap in achievement.

Ethnic Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
BME	2020/21	2139	96.46%	85.57%
	2019/20	2171	96.28%	76.45%
	2018/19	2087	96.85%	88.09%
Non BME	2020/21	3068	97.07%	84.87%
	2019/20	3109	97.43%	83.96%
	2018/19	3233	97.11%	90.59%
Grand Total	2020/21	5207	96.80%	85.18%
	2019/20	5280	96.94%	80.72%
	2018/19	5290	97.00%	89.56%

Disability

When looking at students with a Disability starting on programmes designed for Adults, we see a year-on-year recruitment at around 13%. There is a material gap of 11.15% in achievement.

Disability Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Disability	2020/21	706	98.05%	76.17%
	2019/20	763	98.68%	81.32%
	2018/19	726	97.67%	87.70%
No Disability	2020/21	4500	96.51%	87.27%
	2019/20	4517	96.48%	80.56%
	2018/19	4564	96.81%	90.08%
Grand Total	2020/21	5207	96.80%	85.18%
	2019/20	5280	96.94%	80.72%
	2018/19	5290	97.00%	89.56%

Learning Difficulty

When looking at students with a Learning Difficulty starting on programmes designed for Adults, we see a year-on-year recruitment at around 12%. There is a material gap 12.73% in achievement.

Learning Difficulty Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Learning Difficulty	2020/21	632	97.75%	75.12%
	2019/20	669	98.43%	80.29%
	2018/19	695	98.14%	88.22%
No Learning Difficulty	2020/21	4574	96.54%	87.85%
	2019/20	4611	96.47%	80.85%
	2018/19	4595	96.64%	89.99%
Grand Total	2020/21	5207	96.80%	85.18%
	2019/20	5280	96.94%	80.72%
	2018/19	5290	97.00%	89.56%

Gender

When looking at the Adult Gender split, we see female recruitment at 69% steady over a three-year period with no material gaps in retention or achievement.

Gender	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
Female	2020/21	3627	97.37%	86.70%
	2019/20	3693	97.23%	80.34%
	2018/19	3677	97.37%	89.40%
Male	2020/21	1580	95.62%	82.10%
	2019/20	1587	96.37%	81.46%
	2018/19	1613	96.29%	89.88%
Grand Total	2020/21	5207	96.80%	85.18%
	2019/20	5280	96.94%	80.72%
	2018/19	5290	97.00%	89.56%

Widening Participation (WP)

When looking at Adult students from WP, we see around 30% recruitment steady over a three-year period with no material gaps in retention or achievement.

Widening Participation	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%
No	2020/21	1550	97.68%	85.80%
	2019/20	1576	97.52%	86.47%
	2018/19	1746	97.99%	91.42%
Yes	2020/21	3657	96.48%	84.96%
	2019/20	1587	96.37%	81.46%
	2018/19	3544	96.56%	88.73%
Grand Total	2020/21	5207	96.80%	85.18%
	2019/20	5280	96.94%	80.72%
	2018/19	5290	97.00%	89.56%

Apprenticeship Provision

Ethnicity

Recruitment of BAME students in our Apprenticeship provision is at 16%, improving only slightly across the previous three years. This is below regional proportions of BAME population and therefore an area for improvement in terms of recruitment. There is also a 6.6% gap in BAME student achievement.

Ethnic Group	Year	Leavers	Ach %
Non BME	2020/21	639	64.3%
	2019/20	592	65.7%
	2018/19	652	69.3%
BME	2020/21	123	57.7%
	2019/20	97	68.0%
	2018/19	96	67.7%
Grand Total	2020/21	763	63.3%
	2019/20	690	66.1%
	2018/19	727	68.6%

Age

Young People (16-18) represent 43% of apprentice and achievement for this group is 6.6% lower that their 19+ peers.

Age Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ach%
16-18	2020/21	329	59.3%
	2019/20	301	62.8%
	2018/19	282	71.3%
19-23	2020/21	226	65.9%
	2019/20	230	73.0%
	2018/19	266	66.2%
24+	2020/21	208	66.8%
	2019/20	159	62.3%
	2018/19	179	68.2%
Grand Total	2020/21	763	63.3%
	2019/20	690	66.1%
	2018/19	727	68.6%

Disability

Apprentices with a disability represent 11% of overall cohort and those with no disability which is 5% improvement from three year ago. However, there is an achievement gap of 9.1%.

Disability Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Achievement %
Disability	2020/21	83	55.4%
	2019/20	54	66.7%
	2018/19	40	75.0%
No Disability	2020/21	677	64.5%
	2019/20	635	66.1%
	2018/19	686	68.4%
Not Disclosed	2020/21	3	0.0%
	2019/20	1	0.0%
	2018/19	1	0.0%
Grand Total	2020/21	763	63.3%
	2019/20	690	66.1%
	2018/19	727	68.6%

Learning Difficulty

Apprentices with a learning difficulty represent only 5.24% of the overall cohort which is an improving picture over the three-year period however, there is an achievement gap of 11.8%

Learning Difficulty Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ach%
Learning Difficulty	2020/21	40	52.5%
	2019/20	23	73.9%
	2018/19	14	57.1%
No Learning Difficulty	2020/21	719	64.3%
	2019/20	664	66.1%
	2018/19	708	68.8%
Not Disclosed	2020/21	4	0.0%
	2019/20	3	0.0%
	2018/19	5	80.0%
Grand Total	2020/21	763	63.3%
	2019/20	690	66.1%
	2018/19	727	68.6%

Gender

Male and female recruitment is equal for Apprenticeship provision however there is a 6.1% gap achievement for male apprentices.

Gender	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ach%
Female	2020/21	378	66.4%
	2019/20	302	64.2%
	2018/19	359	70.2%
Male	2020/21	385	60.3%
	2019/20	388	67.5%
	2018/19	368	67.1%
Grand Total	2020/21	763	63.3%
	2019/20	690	66.1%
	2018/19	727	68.6%

Higher Education (HE) Curriculum

Walsall College plays an integral role in making Higher Education courses accessible to hundreds of students in the local area. Our progression routes for our Level 3 internal students, with additional external students, is reflected in the suite of qualifications that are provided by our institution. Alongside the Pearson qualifications for Level 4 and 5 that are delivered onsite, we also have partnerships with other Higher Education institutions. We aim to continuously provide courses that suit the demand of prospective students and businesses. Our partnership with Worcester University has seen the expansion of our Higher Apprenticeship provision and Top-up Level 6 qualifications with Staffordshire University and Birmingham City University (BCU). The teacher training programmes are also offered through Birmingham City University, creating newly qualified teachers each year.

The Higher Education provision specifically supports students who want to stay local and are likely to be living with their families, not looking for a lifestyle change, have been studying vocational rather than academic programmes, career focused, and are sensitive to financial matters. Most students live and work in the local area and want to maintain part-time jobs whilst studying. The provision has remained static for the last three academic years with student cohorts between 210 to 250 college-based students.

Through set meetings held each term, the HE curriculum is examined and discussed for sustainability and validity to suit the local needs of students. We will continue to position ourselves to take advantage of increased opportunities, as the sector expands to embrace innovative ways to access higher study and our desire to adapt where necessary to local and regional needs. The Auger Report of Post-18 Education and Funding in May 2019 highlights a world class HE system that encourages widening participation for all students, that is clear in terms of repayment and value. This reflects the College's status on the Office for Students' register of Higher Education Providers, which examines the student life cycle from application to destination. This ensures transparency and parity at every point, aiming to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of Higher Education (HE) that enriches their lives and careers. The Access and Participation Plan (APP) is published on the College website for 2020/21 to 2022/2023 and then to 2026/27, outlining how we plan to continue these proposals.

The College will continue to strengthen its offer to HE students; ensuring that they gain a complete developmental experience which, for example, may include further development of English and or maths skills, as well as formal wider opportunities to include work experience, industry placements, volunteering and a full programme of personal development. Our HE students will expand their digital literacy and take part in enrichments and tutorials to explore wider issues such as culture, equality and diversity and the values that will support them into being active citizens and to be able to contribute positively within their community. HE students will leave with much more than a qualification, to become a Walsall College Graduate (WCG), gaining the wider personal development and employability skills which will give them edge in the local, national and international jobs market. HE students contribute to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by actively participating in discussion and action, displaying their initiative and autonomy in making college-wide decisions; which in turn, ensures the College has the power to be reactive to changes in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda. An example of this, is the message posted on the College website so that our community will know that we support Black Lives Matter (BLM) and will offer a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students and staff. BLM is a response to the historic and continued oppression and marginalisation of Black people across the world. For many HE students, their involvement will be their introduction to politics and political movements. With Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students experiencing disparities exacerbated by COVID-19 and particularly for a generation at pivotal stages of their educational journeys, the College will do more for its community in terms of encouraging progression to HE where this is likely to improve life choices and strengthen career options in this uncertain time of significant economic decline. The College have also published our response to Antisemitism.

We are committed to upholding academic freedom of enquiry in its education and believe that a culture of free and open discussion is essential. This open culture of discussion can only be achieved if all concerned behave with tolerance, and respect the College's values as stipulated in the 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' Code of Practice. This ensures good relations and the safety of students and staff. Our Freedom of Speech Policy is fully supported by the College's Governors and describes the philosophy, principles and procedures relating to our responsibility to foster freedom of expression and the circumstances in which that freedom might be restricted in order to prevent violence, abuse or discrimination. The policy also details the College's responsibilities regarding visiting speakers

Across 2021/23, the College will continue to expand the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team to build in the expectations to increase contextualised EDI activity across the HE curriculum. This ambition to expand our delivery of outreach work will seek to encourage increased year-on-year progression to higher education for under-represented groups. This academic year, using our membership of the 'Aspire to H.E' project, we continue to address factors relative to underrepresentation as measured by postcode and to design interventions to encourage non-traditional to consider Higher Education.

Our Access and Participation Plan aims to improve the identification of additional underrepresented groups such as Care Leavers and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities, as well as possible intersections between other underrepresented groups. The APP created several objectives that will be addressed over the course of the next five years; which have been made into QIP actions:

- Close continuation gaps between White vs. Asian, Black, Disabled and Mature students
- Increase the proportion of students who are from indices of multiple deprivation, students who have learning difficulties, and increase mature student progression.
- Re-examine and improve College's capability in terms of gathering data regarding students from under-represented groups; to ensure we recognise all students form all areas (Presently we do not collect/hold information regarding the following underrepresented groups: Roma/Gypsy/Traveller communities, Carers, Refugees, and Children from Military families).
- To ensure that HE students have a stronger voice in the ethos and decision making within the organisation by completing the Student Written Submission/Consultation.

Higher Education EDI Performance Data

Ethnicity - Walsall College

24% of HE students are BAME, which closely reflects the regional demographic. There is an achievement gap of 4.2% for BAME students. This has improved from a previous 9% gap but remains predominantly Caribbean and mixed ethnic students where achievement is around 61%.

Ethnic Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Retention %	Achievement %
BAME	2020/21	53	97.87%	85.11%
	2019/20	27	91.67%	79.17%
	2018/19	49	86.36%	70.45%
Non-BAME	2020/21	166	93.71%	89.31%
	2019/20	77	93.24%	90.54%
	2018/19	139	91.24%	87.59%
Grand Total	2020/21	219	94.66%	88.35%
	2019/20	104	92.86%	87.76%
	2018/19	188	90.06%	83.43%

Disability - Walsall College

Recruitment of HE students with a Disability is 10%, which is 7% less than in previous three years.
A significant gap of 23.76% exists for students with a Disability although the actual base number is low.

Disability Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%	Pass%
Disability	2020/21	22	83.33%	66.67%	80.00%
	2019/20	10	80.00%	80.00%	100.0%
	2018/19	32	85.71%	82.14%	95.83%
No Disability	2020/21	197	95.74%	90.43%	94.44%
	2019/20	94	94.32%	88.64%	93.98%
	2018/19	156	90.85%	83.66%	92.09%
Grand Total	2020/21	219	94.66%	88.35%	93.33%
	2019/20	104	92.86%	87.76%	94.51%
	2018/19	188	90.06%	83.43%	92.64%

Learning Difficulty - Walsall College

HE students with a Learning Difficulty represent just 9% of overall recruitment, which is relatively stable over three years, however there is a material achievement gap of 12.95%.

Learning Difficulty Group	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%	Pass%
Learning Difficulty	2020/21	19	94.12%	76.47%	81.25%
	2019/20	10	100.0%	90.00%	90.00%
	2018/19	23	85.71%	80.95%	94.44%
No Learning Difficulty	2020/21	200	94.71%	89.42%	94.41%
	2019/20	94	94.32%	88.64%	93.98%
	2018/19	165	90.63%	83.75%	92.41%
Grand Total	2020/21	219	94.66%	88.35%	93.33%
	2019/20	104	92.86%	87.76%	94.51%
	2018/19	188	90.06%	83.43%	92.64%

Gender - Walsall College

The gender split for HE is 50-50% however there is a material 9.04% achievement gap in achievement for male students.

Gender	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%	Pass%
Female	2020/21	111	95.00%	93.00%	97.89%
	2019/20	58	90.74%	81.48%	89.80%
	2018/19	101	91.84%	85.71%	93.33%
Male	2020/21	108	94.34%	83.96%	89.00%
	2019/20	46	95.45%	95.45%	100.0%
	2018/19	87	87.95%	80.72%	91.78%
Grand Total	2020/21	219	94.66%	88.35%	93.33%
	2019/20	104	92.86%	87.76%	94.51%
	2018/19	188	90.06%	83.43%	92.64%

Widening Participation - Walsall College

There are 41% WP students on our HE provision, which is healthy as we are attracting so called non-traditional HE students from regional recruitment 'cold-spots' who are performing as well as their peers. There is however a material gap in achievement of 3.81%

Widening Participation	Year	Starts (enrolments)	Ret %	Ach%	Pass%
No	2020/21	91	96.47%	90.59%	93.90%
	2019/20	46	91.30%	89.13%	97.62%
	2018/19	89	91.86%	82.56%	89.87%
Yes	2020/21	128	93.39%	86.78%	92.92%
	2019/20	58	94.23%	86.54%	91.84%
	2018/19	99	88.42%	84.21%	95.24%
Grand Total	2020/21	219	94.66%	88.35%	93.33%
	2019/20	104	92.86%	87.76%	94.51%
	2018/19	188	90.06%	83.43%	92.64%

The latest progression data available relates to the students completing their courses at the end of the **2019/20** academic year. This allows time enough for students to settle into their next steps. Clearly this continues to represent a pre-Covid world and therefore something for the College to review as we aim to address any disproportionate lack of progression across 2020/21 and beyond. As the data shared here is at top level view, it is important to note that additional gaps in attainment can appear at micro-level (curriculum and course level) analysis, and delivery teams have reviewed their data at that detail in order to generate meaningful and specific targets for improvement.

<u>Known and unknown destinations</u>

From a **total sample** of 8532 2019/20 leavers we have 6470 (76%) known destinations and 2062 (24%) unknown destinations. In comparison to 2018/19 leavers where from a sample of 9121 leavers we had 7133 (78%) known destinations and 1988 (22%) unknown destinations.

<u>Positive and negative destinations</u>

Overall

- For leavers in 2019/20, the **overall total** of positive destinations has decreased by 5%. A decline was expected due to the impact of pandemic; however, we are pleased that overall this is less than anticipated.
- The positive destinations are primarily maintained due to the increase in take-up of further and higher study, against a decline in securing employment.

Gender

- Positive destinations of **female** leavers in 2019/20 has decreased by 6% in comparison to 2018/19 leavers.
- Positive destinations of **male** leavers in 2019/20 has decreased by 3% in comparison to 2018/19 leavers.
- Positive destinations of **Male** leavers in 2019/20 was 3% above **female** leavers. In 2018/19 positive destinations were the same for both males and females, therefore, the gender gap has increased by 3%.

Ethnicity

- Positive destinations of **Non-BME** leavers in 2019/20 has decreased by 4% in comparison to 2018/19 leavers.
- Positive destinations of **BME** leavers in 2019/20 has decreased by 7% in comparison to 2018/19 leavers.
- Positive destinations of **BME** leavers in 2019/20 was 5% below **Non-BME** leavers. In 2018/19 positive destinations of **BME** leavers was 2% below **Non-BME** leavers, therefore, the ethnicity gap has increased by 3%.

High needs

- Positive destinations of **high needs** leavers in 2019/20 has decreased by 9% in comparison to 2018/19 leavers.
- Positive destinations of **non-high needs** leavers in 2019/20 has decreased by 5% in comparison to 2018/19 leavers.

- Positive destinations of **high needs** leavers in 2019/20 was 2% above **non-high needs** leavers. In 2018/19 positive destinations of **high needs** leavers was 6% above **non-high needs,** therefore, the high needs gap has decreased by 4%.

Widening participation

- Positive destinations of **widening participation** leavers in 2019/20 has decreased by 5% in comparison to 2018/19 leavers.
- Positive destinations of **non-widening participation** leavers in 2019/20 has decreased by 3% in comparison to 2018/19 leavers.
- Positive destinations of **widening participation** leavers in 2019/20 was 7% below **non-widening participation** leavers. In 2018/19 positive destinations of **widening participation** leavers was 5% below **non-widening participation** leavers, therefore the widening participation gap has increased by 2%

Personal Development - (Student Engagement and Activity)

The Personal Development curriculum aspires to provide students with a rich set of experiences that allows them opportunities to reflect upon and challenge issues taking place in the wider world. Personal Development at Walsall College encompasses the tutorial curriculum, enrichment activity and the integration of worldwide issues into all curriculum delivery.

In 2021, the tutorial curriculum provided 'accessibility' checked resources on a wide range of curriculum topics, this was supported by externally sourced resources provided by Blended Learning Consortium (BLC). Through this resource, staff and students are able to access supportive materials on a whole host of curriculum content, much of which is designed to challenge students to think about issues/topics outside of their core programme.

Some of the topics covered within the tutorial curriculum include:

- Unconscious Bias;
- Equality and Diversity assessment (Induction);
- Antibullying Week (LGBTQ);
- Interfaith Week;
- Women's Safety;
- International Day of People with Disabilities day;
- Learning more – accessibility on digital devices;
- Mental Health and Well-being;
- British Values;
- Black History Month;
- National Inclusivity Week.

Students are encouraged to reflect upon all of their tutorial curriculum, the quality of reflections is varied but overall in the 2021/2022 academic year 6,300 reflections have been recorded to date.

Reflective Practice

A random sample of student records from across a range of courses, offers an example of how their understanding and appreciation is enhanced through reflective practice and how their engagement with equality, diversity and inclusion topics, broadens their personal development and strengthens their potential and prospects as Walsall College Graduates.

A sample of reflections can be seen here:

We looked at why we celebrate Black history month in the UK. We then discussed in groups various role models within the black community and why they are good role models for people. We then chose one role model to write about and celebrate their achievements.	In this session, we learned about different black role models and why they are classed as role models. We looked at people like Ru Paul, Shea Diamonds, Stevie Wonder who are all positive role models in the black community. We also looked at why black people who are LGBTQ or disabled may not be heard of.
We looked at why we celebrate Black history month in the UK. We then discussed in groups various role models within the black community and why they are good role models for people. We then chose one role model to write about and celebrate their achievements	We had looked at different black icons who were apart of the LGBTQ community and be able to understand the facts of these icons. Understanding the rights and the reason why we celebrate it to recognise their success
We discussed why Black history month is celebrated in the UK. In groups we debated whether or not black role models were discriminated. We focused our own thoughts on one specific black role model and discussed this with our peers, why we think they are role models.	I think today was an important lesson to raise awareness on black history month so we can discuss and learn about black people's accomplishments and how they are good role models for communities and they should not be discriminated against. We are all the same we are all human and should not be discriminated against for the colour of our skin or genders. I have written about Marcus Rashford and how is he is a brilliant role model. He has experienced racial abuse throughout his career and rises above it and being by positive about his experiences he reinforces in the communities we have today and does a lot for charities to help vulnerable people. He has used his platform to speak out and raise awareness. He campaigns against radical, homelessness and child hunger to drive societal change
We watched a short film about safety while near railways, it was called "18".	It showed in detail a family's reaction to their sons' accident near a railway, as well as the friends of the son and how they reacted. It was a good way to enforce safety in situations like in the short film
we talked about the effects social media have on people's mental health as people will leave mean comments on your page. We also talked about how teenagers getting bullied may not confide in their friends, family or teachers. They may write a journal/diary	I have identified different types of bullying and know ways to stop it or help prevent a suicide
today we talked about homelessness, stereotypes issued with being homeless and myths and truths.	ow how to help charities in different ways through fundraising
we have learnt; about the meaning of movember and what is it for and who. we also started to make posters that will help contribute our awareness towards this	result of this I have gained more knowledge about movember and what is it aim towards for instance I know it is towards cancer.

we went through a power point and watched videos on Remembrance Day and why we celebrate it. we also watched a video of a popular remembrance; day poem and we also watched a video on PTSD for soldiers that have come back from war.	I learnt about Remembrance Day and the effect the war has on family and soldiers

A calendar of cultural events and awareness days is provided to all staff to allow for competitions, fundraising and lesson discussions to be developed to increase awareness of national and international events.   Some of the events that have been covered include:

- SLDD students becoming AoC Sport regional champions in PAN Disability Football;
- Food Bank Donations;
- Volunteering at the Women's Cycling Event;
- Black History Month - Health and Social Care Celebratory Event at Wisemore Campus.

Personal Development (Students activities and engagement across the year)

Despite ten years of austerity, qualification reform and because of the significant increase in numbers of students needing mental health, wellbeing and safeguarding support, we have invested in our support staff, employing extra Pastoral Officers, Counsellors, Work Experience Officers and Safeguarding support as well as Sales Executives.

Likewise, we understand that the learning environment is essential to the students' experience and so we have invested in our new Digital Engineering Centre, Business and Sports Hub and digital technology, across all campuses. Part of our commitment to providing the best possible online experience includes the additional layer of inclusive software to our website. By utilising accessibility and language technology solutions, we have supported our students, parents, carers and communities to read and understand the content on our website barrier-free, and the accessibility toolbar has been launched on our site thousands of times.

Monitoring the Impact of Personal Development

The College systematically measure the engagement and impact upon students through the Walsall College Graduate (WCG) on-line system. This is the College's bespoke Individual Learning Plan and personal profile for every student. We are able to track the engagement of all students through their reflections that are prompted once they have completed an activity.

Implementation

SEND Workforce Development – 18 February 2022

The upcoming Workforce Development Day on 18 February 2022 includes a number of workshops focused on SEND, including:

- Using Subtitles in Microsoft PowerPoint to Support Students
- Introduction to BSL
- Deaf Awareness
- Intro to understanding BSL structure in order to support students writing
- Dyslexia/Dyscalculia Awareness & Exam Arrangements
- ALS Funding – How does it work in FE
- Intro to Inclusive Support
- Making Sense of Autism
- Working effectively with LMs
- Hypermobility
- Dyspraxia
- Makaton for All
- SENDing your courses

CDM's/ASM's will take part and complete the Equally Yours™ training programme. This will be the first cohort of staff to complete with a view to cascading the training across the organisation by the end of this academic year.

The training will be delivered face-to-face and online for flexibility.

Equally Yours™ is dynamic, challenging, thought-provoking, fun and provides a platform for both reflection and moving forward. What people love about Equally Yours™ is that it's truly inclusive. It challenges everyone to look at themselves first and then at others. It allows participants to explore a range of diversity matters in a way which is challenging but safe. It validates you and stretches you at the same time.

Equally Yours™ helps to create an honest dialogue, in which we encourage everyone to participate. The honesty often dispels myths. Colleagues will share their experiences in ways that are powerful. People will be able to reflect on self and think more carefully about their lens and the impact of how they think and behave. Organisations then have an opportunity to think about how they re-design, recruitment, development, promotion in a way that is for the organisation's good and its employees, customers and communities.

The Big Teaching and Learning Day - 12 February 2021 (Academic Staff)

This day was planned as a result of themes highlighted from LW's and it was designed to support teaching staff with strategies that could be utilised switching between face to face delivery to synchronous delivery and vice-versa. The platform used (Microsoft Teams) allowed for the sharing of good practice. Feedback was gathered via Microsoft Forms.

- The Tutor as a Role Model;
- Curriculum Sequencing;
- Inclusive Teaching from the Classroom to Online;

- Formative Assessment, from the Classroom to the Online Platform;
- Effective Questioning and Sharing of On-line Techniques.

Academic Staff Induction Programme September 2021

This year to prepare our teachers for the new academic year we created the Academic Staff Induction Programme 2021. The platform chosen to deliver the session was GOAL, which allowed for a blended model. Three different styles of delivery were offered. Asynchronous training packages that are available on GOAL, synchronous online sessions delivered through Microsoft Teams and face-to-face workshops. The programme ran over two weeks prior to the students start date.

This training programme is designed to inform staff of any changes, updates and services available to both staff and students. It also covers pedagogic developments for their teaching, learning and assessment. The wider staff development programme for this year included the following relevant topics:

- Walsall College Graduate (WCG);
- Work Experience/Work Placements;
- Personal Development;
- Ready, Respectful, Safe, Expectations;
- English and maths;
- SEND Awareness Top 5;
- Safeguarding Updates, Sexual Harassment and EDI;
- ER Staff Update;
- Blended Learning Consortium (BLC);
- Unifrog;
- LinkedIn Learning;
- Student Voice - Reps and Union;
- Team Teach;
- Student Transition;
- Office for Students;
- Aspire to HE;
- Mental Health and Wellbeing;
- CIAG – Careers.

All sessions have an online quiz and evaluation form for staff to complete; so we can evaluate the effectiveness of our offer and measure the impact of new knowledge and skills in terms of student progress, attainment and satisfaction as well as their engagement in the wider aspects of personal development.

Ready, Respectful, Safe Re-set 2022

2022 began with a Workforce Development day supported by Directors of Faculty to deliver a Ready. Respectful, Safe Behaviour Expectations Re-set to all academic staff, along with the launch of the Education for Sustainability Development (ESD), supported by Charlotte Bonner from the Education and Training foundation. This is to support staff with the development of sustainability in their curriculum and across the whole study programme, including Personal Development.

- Sustainability in the Curriculum;
- Team Time Teaching and Learning Conversations;
- EdTech Mentors Programme;
- Ready, Respectful, Safe-Behaviour Expectations Re-set 2022;

- Jisc Insights Survey 2022;
- The Ideas Room;
- Blended Learning Consortium.

Learning Walks (Lesson Observations)
EDI Comments from Learning Walks– 2020/21:

Areas recorded – what went well

- Strong evidence of inclusive learning.
- Individual formative task and peer assessment conducive to long term learning.
- Inclusive learning evident. All students were encouraged to participate and answer the starter activity and research activity. All asked to raise hand to convey they were ready to learn and had materials to write notes. All asked to complete the handout during delivery.
- All had access to the materials, quizzes research activity, handouts and folders through chat and one note.
- The tutor handled often sensitive discussion with regards to learners' beliefs and opinion on E&D in a supportive and professional manner and provided a safe environment where learners had no hesitation in sharing their opinions and experiences.
- Strong discussions around consent and misogyny showed that most students were aware of the term 'consent' and a small majority were able to articulate this well.
- Questions regarding the recent BLM protests, very current and apprentice gave his views in a very considerate manner.
- Vast majority of the learners are sharing their views with their peers and also showing tolerance for different practices related to 'marriage' which are observed in various other countries.
- Learners are also inquisitive and behaving sensibly to some sensitive issues such as the practice of giving 'dowry' in certain countries.
- The session was a celebration of Chinese culture. The students' varying needs and ability levels were clearly planned and catered for.
- Equality and diversity was supported throughout as you used student individual preference to how they would like to communicate during the session. supported individual looking at criteria for the grade they were working towards.
- E&D was explored as part of the session and the tutor explored stereotypes.
- Due consideration to EDI was evident, for example, enabling subtitles on the video.

Areas recorded – what didn't go so well

- Students' starting points with the new topic was not checked at the outset to inform the session or support peer learning.
- A missed opportunity to discuss Equality and Diversity with regard to the current football i.e. taking the knee and chanting the opposition.
- Was there an opportunity to talk about the differences in the hair growth cycle in different ethnicities/genders/ages?

EDI Comments from LW's – 2021/22:

Areas recorded – what went well

- Good use of a range of activities to support visible and hidden disabilities within the session in a practical way or assessment.
- Sharing support equally across students in group.
- Voluntary peer support was encouraged by the tutor.
- 1:1 tutor support was constant for each student to meet individual learning needs.
- Ongoing support was in place to engage a disengaged and reticent student.

Areas recorded – what didn't go so well

There was no discussion of equality and diversity during the review. This could have included links to PPE used at work that meet the needs of different cultures or linked to Disability Awareness Month/World AIDS Day and the medications available etc.

As a result of the analysis in this report, we aim to:

- Close the material Gender gap of 6.1% in achievement for male apprentices.
- Close the material gap of 8.14% in achievement for overall students with a Disability.
- Close the material gap in achievement of 9.1% for Apprentices with a Disability.
- Close the Age-related achievement gap of 6.6% for 16-18 Apprentices (compared to their 19+ peers).
- Close the gap in recruitment of BAME students in our Apprenticeship provision at 16%, improving only slightly across the previous three years. This is below regional proportions of BAME population and therefore an area for improvement in terms of recruitment.
- Close the gap of 6.6% in BME student achievement.
- Close the material gap in achievement for students with a Learning Difficulty is now 8.54%.
- Close the material gap of 5.34% in achievement for Apprentices with a Learning Difficulty.
- Close the material gap of 11.15% in achievement for Adults with a Disability.
- Close the material gap of 12.73% in achievement for Adults with a Learning Difficulty.
- Increase recruitment of HE students with a Disability, which is 10% (7% less than in previous three years).
- Close the significant gap of 23.76% for HE students with a Disability (although the actual base number is low).
- Close the material gap in achievement of 4.2% for BME students in Higher Education.
- Close the 12.95% material gap in achievement for HE students with a Learning Difficulty (although the actual base number is low).
- Close the material Gender achievement gap of 9.04% for male HE students.
- Close the material gap in achievement of 3.81% for Widening Participation students in Higher Education.

1.1   INTRODUCTION

At Walsall College we recognise that our employees are our greatest asset. We want them to be happy and proud that they work in a College that eliminates all forms of discrimination.

1.2   Walsall College's Corporate Strategy 2021 – 2024 sets out the College's vision and Our Shared Values of Passion; Integrity; Innovation; Equity; Collaboration; and Sustainability. Giving our students the best support, facilities and opportunities, and valuing our staff and delivering on equality, diversity and inclusion are all key enablers in achieving the goals of Walsall College.

2.   SUMMARY OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTIVITY

This section of the report summarises Equality and Diversity activity over the last academic year.

2.1   Disability Confident – Employer (Level 2)

Since joining the Disability Confident scheme in 2017, we remain a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer. The Disability Confident scheme is voluntary, and aims to help employers successfully employ and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. Being Disability Confident is a unique opportunity to lead the way in our community.

Some of the commitments that the College agrees to in order to maintain this status are:

1.   Actively looking to attract and recruit disabled people.
2.   Offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job.
3.   Providing paid employment (permanent or fixed term).
4.   Promoting a culture of being Disability Confident.
5.   Providing occupational health services if required.
      The Disability Confident – Employer logo is prominent on all job adverts with a separate statement to say that we particularly welcome applicants with a disability. We also display the logo on the Human Resources SharePoint site and internal emails to ensure it is promoted to our employees.

2.2   Health and Wellbeing

2.2.1 The College has clearly defined its commitment and approach to Wellbeing and Mental Health with the development in 2020/21 of the Wellbeing & Mental Health Strategy 2021 - 2024. This strategy outlines a College wide approach to wellbeing and mental health. It builds on existing activity and the purpose of the approach is to ensure that wellbeing is seen as essential to 'creating the right conditions' for our staff. The objective is to establish a healthy behaviour culture across Walsall College, building on our ways of working to consider lifestyle, safety, sustainability, and diversity, equality and inclusion.

Our approach will be underpinned by a focus on the themes of Culture & behaviours, Leadership & Management, Prevention, Collaboration & Impact and Our Practices. It is the intention that this should be flexible and not set in stone; it should be treated as an evolving document which will be shaped by outcomes and feedback. We see this as part of our long-term commitment to supporting employee health and wellbeing that is reviewed regularly and adapted as necessary. This strategy and its implementation will be taken forward in 21/22 as outlined in the timeline with a focus on Introducing Wellbeing.

2.2.2 Initiatives & Activities

Through ZEST we offer a range of services, guidance, awareness and activities to help ensure we embed a strong culture of workplace wellbeing. Some examples of the ZEST activity from 2020/21 are listed below:

Mental Health First Aid Team – Walsall College now has 17 members of staff that are trained as Mental Health First Aiders. The MHFA Team are trained with the skills, knowledge and understanding of first aid for mental health and how to effectively support staff experiencing distress. The MHFA Team was set up to help create a positive environment, whereby staff and managers feel able to talk openly and with trust about mental health and seek help if necessary.

Awareness Days – Throughout the year ZEST has celebrated Awareness days to help promote wellbeing to staff. Some of the campaigns that we have supported over the last 12 months include; Men's Health, Time to Talk, Mental Health Awareness Week, World Mental Health Day and World Menopause Day, The International Day of People with Disabilities. We promote awareness material via email, Yammer, posters, and screensavers as pop ups and access to events and activities.

Physical Health – The onsite gym is accessible to staff. In addition, ZEST in partnership with the College's onsite gym offers a free 3-month trial for all new starters to the college.

Cycle to Work Scheme – Through ZEST we also offer Cycle to Work, which enables employees to get a bike tax-free, saving 25-39% on its high street value. The scheme helps staff save money, be healthier, and be more environmentally friendly. Last year 6 staff members purchased a bike through the scheme.

SimplyHealth – Through ZEST we also offer staff the benefit; SimplyHealth, which aims to keep our workforce healthy while minimising the additional worry about cost. Staff are able to claim back a proportion of the cost of treatment (i.e. dental, optical, prescriptions, vaccinations and counselling) from SimplyHealth. Staff can also access 24/7 GP access and an Employee Assistance programme (EAP) which includes counselling telephone services and cover for up to four children (under the age of 18). Our claims performance with SimplyHealth is currently over 90%, which demonstrates our staff are fully utilising this health benefit scheme.

ZEST events. We have converted activities to deliver virtual ZEST events. In May 2021 we held our second virtual ZEST event, ZEST from Home, which coincided with Mental Health Awareness Week. The event offered a comprehensive package of wellbeing initiatives, services and activities to encourage and motivate staff to look after their health, both physically and emotionally generally, but especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Flexible Working – As part of the College's commitment to providing a positive working environment, the college endeavour to support employees in achieving an appropriate work-life balance. Last academic year, the College have supported 23 members of staff with flexible working requests; three of these requests were from male employees. By offering flexibility, this increases the ability of the organisation to attract and retain skilled employees; raise employee morale; decrease absenteeism; lower staff turnover; and react to changing market conditions more effectively.

Clearer guidelines on Ways of Working have also been introduced which provide further clarity on how we are currently able to operate and support more flexible practices for staff.

Accessibility – During the last year work has taken place to ensure that information, activities and resources are more accessible. Examples of where events have been made accessible and inclusive include interpreters at all staff conference events, Training events have been made accessible in different formats to allow a more inclusive approach including the use of subtitling and accessible formats. As the COVID period has seen many staff working from home we have continued to support staff and this has included a number of Access to work arrangements, individual assessments and also links to support for staff such as counselling and Occupational intervention. We took active steps to provide for the inclusion and needs of staff working off site in terms of health and safety and potential discrimination. The Ways of Working Guidelines also consider accessibility as part of those considerations.

Family Friendly

20 employees took maternity leave during the year 2020/21. 9 employees took paternity leave.

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. Pregnant employees and partners/those with shared parental responsibility have access to a variety of information packs to provide support and guidance on pregnancy at work, medical issues, having a healthy pregnancy and planning ahead. Pregnant employees also have access to a Freephone Pregnancy Line staffed by experienced midwives and support and information for when pregnancies don't go to plan.

For more information visit https://www.tommys.org/

2.3 COVID Support

Throughout the pandemic situation the College has established and maintained a robust COVID secure response. As part of this staff receive regular communications and contact which promotes health and wellbeing information, signposting to relevant resources and services and reminders about the support that is available internally. There continues to be clearly communicated and accessible sources of support information, ZEST updates, online resources for staff including access to counselling services, Mental Health First Aiders and signposting to relevant other organisations and resources. Staff are also receiving individual support through their line managers and/or HR as part of other processes including absence management. We have also provided specific resources and support for those staff who have suffered a loss and those with health conditions.

2.4   Equality Training

We have delivered a range of Equality and Diversity training in college and approved training requests for staff to attend external courses as featured below (* denotes mandatory training):

- Equality and Diversity Training *
- Disabled Go Online Training
- Equality and Diversity in the Classroom
- Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Classroom
- Mental Health and Suicide Awareness
- Understanding and using Equality and Diversity data
- Banter Vs Abuse
- Disability Awareness

2.5   Gender Pay Gap Reporting

The College's Gender Pay Gap Report for March 2021 is produced in line with Government regulations. The gender pay gap shows the differences in the average pay between men and women. This differs from equal pay, which deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. The College's Mean Gender Pay Gap for March 2021 was 14.5%, 1.2% higher than in March 2020. The Median Gender Pay Gap increased by 3.3% to 18.7% and the college are working to reduce this gap. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the Education Sector's Mean Gender Pay Gap for hourly rate for 2021 was 17.6% and 25.4% for the Median Gender Pay Gap for hourly rate. Walsall College's Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap for hourly pay is less than both of these average rates.

The gender pay gap remains lower than the National Average of 14.9% and we are confident that male and female employees are paid equally for doing the same role at the College.

2.6   Policies

Walsall College has a dedicated Human Resources area on its SharePoint pages which focuses on policies that ensure employees with protected characteristics can access easily. These policies can be issued in alternative formats.

3   MONITORING

We monitor our work by examining the statistics every term and concentrating our efforts to improve the way we do things to drive equality and diversity forward.

A Human Resources representative attends all Equality and Diversity team meetings and Committee meetings which are held frequently (half termly and termly) throughout the academic year. In addition to this, we monitor our casework and work with our employees if they have a complaint about any type of discrimination to reassure them it will be managed appropriately.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

4.1 The below table gives a summary overview of equality characteristics compared to sector and local data.

	Female %	Male %	Declared Disability %	BAME %	LGBTQ+ %	White %	Part time %	Full Time %
Walsall College	67	33	11	20	2.95	80	44	56
Walsall Population (2011 Census)	51	49	-	23	2.7^	77		
FE Average*	61	39	10	10	0-2	84	46	54

^ National Figure taken from ONS: Annual Population Survey Data – Sexual Orientation, UK 2019
*FURTHER EDUCATION WORKFORCE DATA FOR ENGLAND Analysis of the 2018-2019 Staff Individualised Record (SIR) data

4.2 The sector continues to employ a higher % of females. Walsall College is slightly higher than the sector average. The split between part time and full-time posts in the college aligns to sector norms and BAME workforce, disability declarations and LGBTQ+ are slightly higher. BAME representation is slightly lower than the local population representation.

4.3. Distribution at Management Levels

4.3.1 Improvements have been made to the way in which we are looking at our data. This includes looking at equality characteristics at different job levels to inform a wider view and any appropriate actions. The below table shows distribution by characteristic at management level. Operational Management includes delivery management roles and business support managers. The Senior Management Group is the SMT group as outlined in the College organisational structure and includes the senior leadership roles. The Senior leadership group is also reported below as a separate group and includes senior post holders and senior direct reports.

	% of Whole college staff	As % of all managers	As % of Operational Manager Group	As % of SMT Group	As % of Senior Leadership Group
Disability Declared	12.00	9.38	11.36	5.00	-
BAME	20.00	10.94	11.36	10.00	28.57
White	80.00	89.06	88.64	90.00	71.43
Gender Female	67.00	40.63	38.64	45.00	14.29
Gender Male	33.00	59.38	61.36	55.00	85.71
LGBTQ+	2.94	0	-	-	-

4.3.2 This shows that whilst BAME staff represent 20% of all staff they represent 10.94% of all managers. 11.36% in the operational management group and 10% in the SMT group. BAME representation at senior leadership level is 28.57%. Although females represent 67% of the College workforce this is not replicated in the management groups. Whilst LGBTQ+ representation is slightly higher than the national average within the College workforce, this is not represented within the management levels. Disability is representative within the operational management level when compared to the College workforce disclosure however this is not within the representation in the SMT or above levels.

4.4 Please see the appendix for the detail of the current workforce profile. This is based on a 3-year comparison period based on academic years.

The **staff gender** profile shows a slight decrease in the number of females compared, in particular, with the previous year. As outlined in 4.1 and 4.2 the sector continues to employ a higher % of females.

In relation to **staff disability**, there has been a 2.4% increase in staff with a declared disability (11.3%).

The **ethnicity** profile has not significantly changed. The number of BAME staff (now at 20%) shows a slight decrease from previous years. The College has a higher representation than the national profile, which shows over 85% being "white British" or "white other" but slightly lower than the local ethnicity demographic.

The **age** profile has increased by 1.5% for those within the 55-59 age group and staff aged 60+ has increased by nearly 1%.

In relation to the **sexual orientation** of staff, the College has remained successful in recording this information (circa 4% of staff prefer not to say which has remained the same on the previous year).

There are no national figures for **religion/belief**. There have not been any significant changes over the three-year period.

5   REVIEW OF OBJECTIVES – 2020/21

Item	Objective	Base Data/Action	Update
1	Continue to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster a culture of respect.	Grievance/ Disciplinary data reviewed Case work grievance/ Disciplinary data reviewed Case work	In 20/21 there no grievance or disciplinaries due to discrimination, harassment or victimisation reasons. Management training was put in place which covered management skills for sensitively, effectively managing performance and absence and difficult conversations. This was delivered by external trainers. 80 managers have attended this training since July 2020. College induction – The existing processes are being reviewed amended and this will include improvements in embedding our values and expectations around behaviours, respect and culture. Embedded in key strategies and approaches including Wellbeing & Mental Health Strategy – see point 4 below.

Item	Objective	Base Data/Action	Update
2	Maintain workforce profile to be reflective of the community through improving the diversity of the pool of applicants, diversity in shortlisting and diversity of appointments.	Review of workforce data from web recruitment Review of quality of recruitment processes Review of complaints	In each of the protected characteristic categories the recruitment conversion rates from applications received (total responses) to shortlisted, interviewed or offered does not identify any specific trends or issues. Disclosure of data at the application stage is low, with 56% of applicants not answering the EDI monitoring data. Further work will be undertaken to encourage applicants to disclose so any emerging trends or issues can be identified and appropriate actions considered. Changes have been made to ensure all vacancies are captured through our web recruitment platform so that reporting on recruitment-based activities can be more robust and so that we are able to collect more comprehensive data. We have broadened our use of social media in attraction activities to try to better promote vacancies and increase application numbers. The level and view of the data for EDI for staff has been changed to include a different view such as characteristics by job type and level to enable the data to inform a wider view and any appropriate actions. This is reported to the EDI committee.
3	Design and develop appropriate professional development and training interventions to support equality, diversity and inclusion.	Training available Completion rates of relevant training.	In 20/21 the framework for a management development programme was put in place and for colleagues in management roles with responsibility and accountability for a functional area or curriculum department and the performance of a team. Core Sessions include - Managing People, Managing Resources & Planning, Health & Safety, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.

Item	Objective	Base Data/Action	Update
			80 managers who all have people management responsibilities have attended the training sessions outlined in section 1 since July 2021.
			We have recently changed the EDI online provider for the mandatory training for all staff.
			EDI training remains an ongoing requirement for both new starters and existing staff. Current completion of this training is 90%. Training is discussed at the cycle of SMT meetings and also within performance management support meetings with individual operational managers.
			Additional specific EDI training is booked with WFD and sessions will commence in early 2022.
			Managers are also undertaking Mental Health First Aider training. The first cohort commenced in January 2022.
4	Develop and strengthen the links between the equality and wellbeing agendas	Processes/policies in place. Staff engagement measures	A Wellbeing & Mental Health Strategy has been established and is being launched this term. This strategy clearly outlines the commitment to establish a healthy behaviour culture across Walsall College, building on our ways of working to consider lifestyle, safety, sustainability, and diversity, equality and inclusion. This strategy was formally launched to all staff in December 21 and a wellbeing survey in January 2022.
			Staff interest groups – To advance awareness and realise our objectives the College has started work to establish Conversation teams and interest groups as below:
			Wellbeing Champions - Work has commenced as part of the Wellbeing & Mental Health Strategy (outlined in 2.1) to introduce these roles.

Item	Objective	Base Data/Action	Update
			It is intended they will be integral in the championing wellbeing inclusion and work to ensure wellbeing is a priority for all and shaped by needs and requirements of our staff. Menopause Meet Up - We believe enabling menopause to be talked about openly, empowering people to understand what it is and what they can do, will support our staff and also help with equality. The group is open to those experiencing menopause, those who want to be menopause aware, or are colleagues or managers who want to support their staff or someone they know experiencing menopause or other hormonal change patterns e.g. surgery or gender reassignment. To date there have been two meet ups and this has taken place as both an in-person event and an online event to improve accessibility and allow more staff options to access this support. We introduced and promoted our partnership with **Able Futures** which offers specific and longer-term Intervention, support for those with mental health. This included specific sessions for our managers so they understood what is available for our staff and also directly for staff. Feedback from staff using this service, which is a self-referral DWP service, have all expressed the benefit of it. It is now embedded as part of our tools for supporting staff who have mental health difficulties.
5	Take all practical steps to ensure the workplace is accessible and inclusive and supports a progressive, informed and diverse workforce.	Review of absence data Review of recruitment data Review of case work Staff feedback	Improvements are being made to engage and collaborate with staff including the introduction of Walsall College Conversation Teams /Networks with Wellbeing Champions being the first group, as part of the above-mentioned Wellbeing & Mental Health Strategy.

Item	Objective	Base Data/Action	Update
		Review of policies	Communications with staff have improved since the pandemic with regular, clear messages to staff.
			Occupational Health has also become a key and routine part of our processes to support us in managing staff with health conditions.
			Introduced a regular Menopause Café event which facilitates and encourages staff to come together to support and inform each other.
			We remain a Disability Confident employer.
			Flexible working continues to be supported within the workplace.

5.1 OBJECTIVES FOR 2021/22

Our community of colleagues and students bring a rich mix of backgrounds and experiences to the College which enriches our diverse and inclusive organisation. Within Walsall College there is lots of EDI activity with a strong belief there is a good record and bank of evidence around matters relating to diversity. However, further development of a clear framework to support and progress this work is a key commitment and priority.
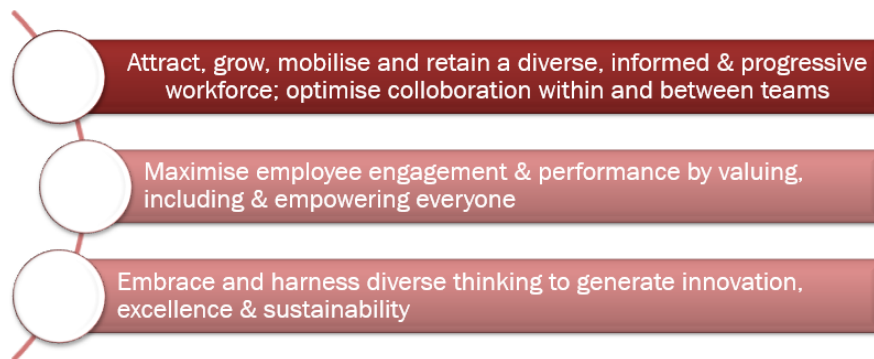
As part of the focus for the Equality and Diversity Group have collectively identified "The Way Forward" with focus on the development of a clear framework to progress our Equality and Diversity agenda. We recognise Equality, Diversity and Inclusion cannot be a one-off or a set of initiatives. Promoting them in the workplace is a constant work-in-progress and they should be maintained and nurtured to ensure effectiveness and equity.

The EDI commitment framework outlines a commitment to our objectives under the 5 C's
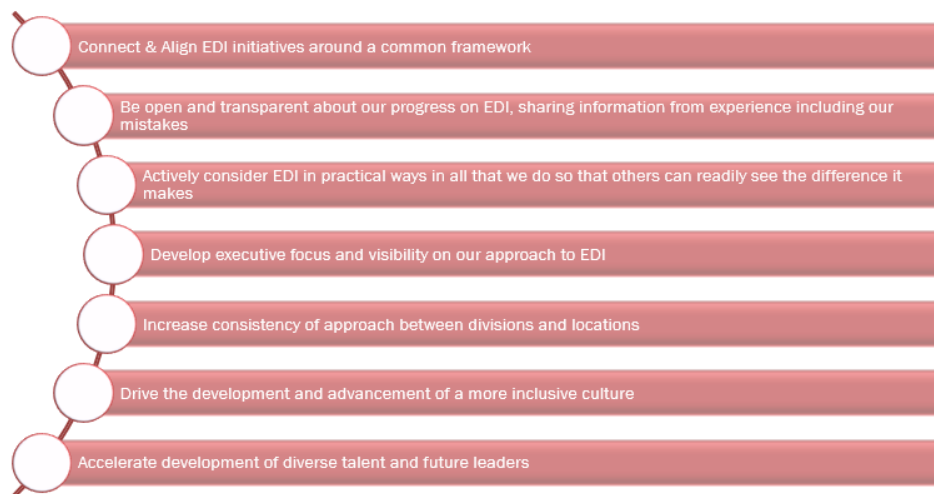
- Culture
- CPD
- Curriculum
- Connected
- Challenge

As an organisation the following represents our commitments and aims:

The Way Forward - Understanding our workforce drivers

- Attract, grow, mobilise and retain a diverse, informed & progressive workforce; optimise colloboration within and between teams
- Maximise employee engagement & performance by valuing, including & empowering everyone
- Embrace and harness diverse thinking to generate innovation, excellence & sustainability

The Way Forward - Our Aims & Requirements

- Connect & Align EDI initiatives around a common framework
- Be open and transparent about our progress on EDI, sharing information from experience including our mistakes
- Actively consider EDI in practical ways in all that we do so that others can readily see the difference it makes
- Develop executive focus and visibility on our approach to EDI
- Increase consistency of approach between divisions and locations
- Drive the development and advancement of a more inclusive culture
- Accelerate development of diverse talent and future leaders

Workforce Priority Objectives

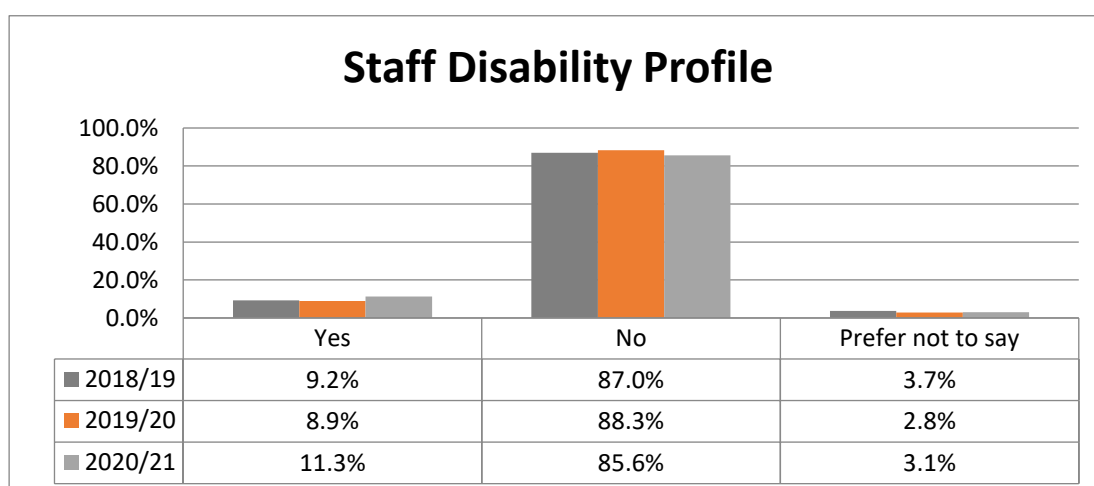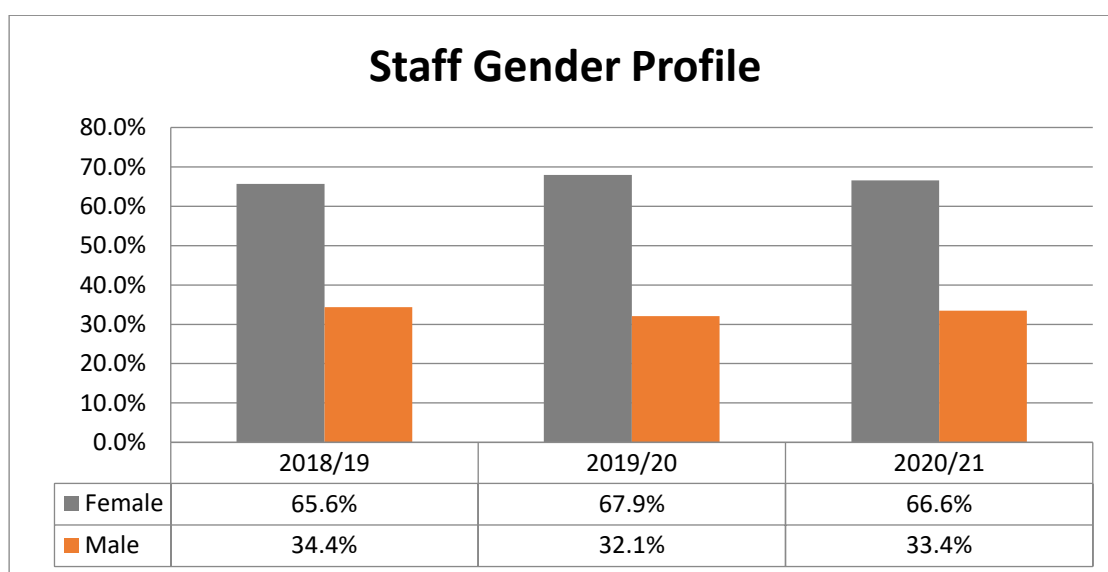| EDI Commitment	Our Aim	Objective	Actions we will take:
Culture	Drive the development & advancement of a more inclusive culture	Proactively take steps to address imbalances in the representation of staff with particular focus at management levels.	Implement measures to enable increased workforce representation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff and other underrepresented groups in management and/or promoted positions. Develop reporting to include ethnicity pay gap reporting and review data to monitor promotion and progression against equality characteristics.

EDI Commitment	Our Aim	Objective	Actions we will take:
Culture	Be attractive to a diverse range of talented people.	Develop & Engage a diverse staff population which reflects and meets the needs of the students and the communities the College serves.	Review recruitment processes to ensure the way we advertise our opportunities will apply to the widest range of people and the way we select allows them to show themselves at their very best.

Ensure that the language and imagery we use reflects our commitment to diversity, and profiles a diverse range of existing employees to show that everyone can be a success at Walsall College.

Take steps to improve disclosure rates, particularly in recruitment process where disclosure is currently very low. This will allow us to better collect and analyse applicant data at each stage of the recruitment process to ensure we are to take appropriate actions.

Make sure recruitment panels are as diverse as possible and selection techniques allow candidates to demonstrate their strengths. |
| Challenge | Challenge Discrimination | Promote a culture of mutual respect, tolerance and continue to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation and foster a culture of respect. | Ensure EDI messages are factored into employee communications.

Ensure managers have relevant training and understand how to act in an inclusive way and to recognise and address any bias.

Continue to commit to having a clear and transparent process for complaints.

Address allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation in an effective and timely manner. |

EDI Commitment	Our Aim	Objective	Actions we will take:
Connected	Actively Consider EDI in practical ways in all that we do so others can readily see the difference it makes.	Maximise opportunities to develop understanding, and celebration of equality, diversity and inclusion and promote a diverse culture	Establish new and enhance existing mechanisms to listen to the voices of staff, to provide opportunities for feedback and increase engagement, influence in our EDI plans and actions including regular staff feedback/surveys. Establish inclusive staff networks to enable all staff, irrespective of their background or position in the organisation, to participate and contribute towards shaping positive change. Develop a communications plan to include key messages/updates to increase visibility and involvement on our EDI approach, activities and campaigns and how staff can be involved. Use the feedback from staff voice to inform action plans and activities.
Connected	Progress and strengthen the links between the equality and wellbeing agendas	Champion wellbeing inclusion and work to ensure that wellbeing is seen as a priority for all and demonstrated in our policies and practices	Create a positive culture around disclosure for wellbeing and mental health. Recognise that wellbeing may be impacted due to reasons relating to protected characteristics. Progress the Wellbeing & Mental Health strategy and priority actions outlined within it.
CPD	Accelerate the development of diverse talent and future leaders	Ensure that staff at all levels have access to relevant training, tools and personal agency to contribute to positive culture change	Review development and training available and put in place opportunities that address any potential barriers for any underrepresented groups. Monitor the take up of development opportunities and evaluate feedback by characteristics on staff

EDI Commitment	Our Aim	Objective	Actions we will take:
		at all levels of the organisation.	experience to address any gaps in experience or outcome.
			Improve induction processes to ensure all staff have clear and accessible information on how the College works including progression and development.

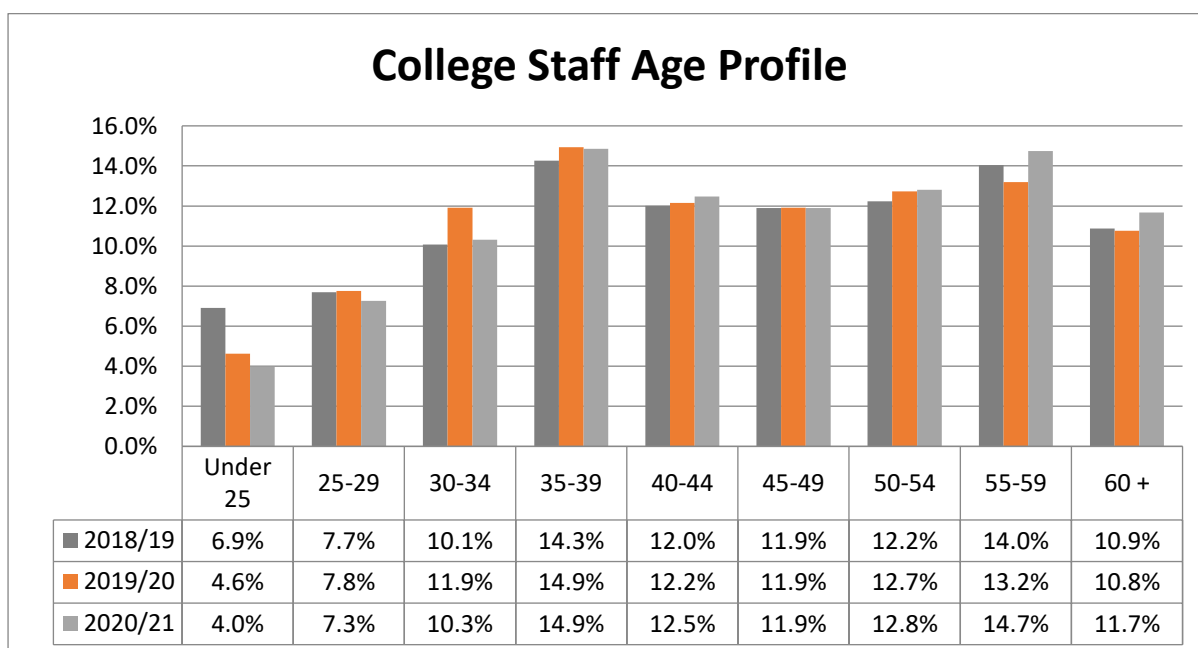**Appendix - Our Staff – Summary of work force data**

The data below shows the workforce profile by characteristics over a 3-year comparison period based on academic years.

Staff Gender Profile

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
■ Female	65.6%	67.9%	66.6%
■ Male	34.4%	32.1%	33.4%

Staff Disability Profile

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
■ 2018/19	9.2%	87.0%	3.7%
■ 2019/20	8.9%	88.3%	2.8%
■ 2020/21	11.3%	85.6%	3.1%

Staff Ethnicity Profile

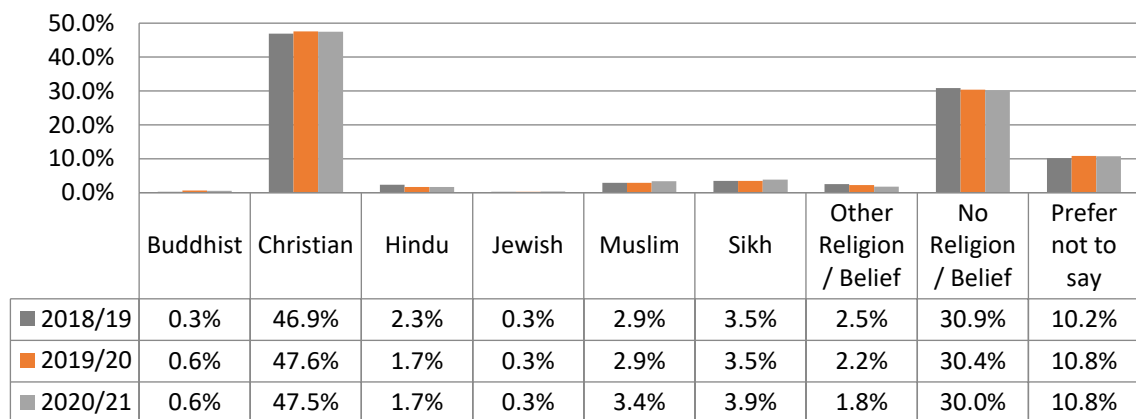| Ethnicity	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21

White English Welsh Scottish Northern Irish - British	75.5%	77.2%	77.4%
White - Irish	0.8%	0.2%	0.3%
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%
White - Any Other White background	1.6%	1.3%	1.5%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - White and Black Caribbean	1.1%	1.7%	1.4%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - White and Black African	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - White and Asian	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group - Any Other Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Asian / Asian British - Indian	8.9%	8.2%	8.0%
Asian / Asian British - Pakistani	2.5%	2.2%	2.0%
Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%
Asian / Asian British - Chinese	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Asian / Asian British - Any other Asian background	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African	0.5%	0.8%	0.9%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean	0.8%	4.3%	4.3%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	4.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Any Other	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%
Prefer Not to Say	0.1%	0.8%	0.6%
Total BME	20.4%	20.1%	19.7%

College Staff Age Profile

	Under 25	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60 +
2018/19	6.9%	7.7%	10.1%	14.3%	12.0%	11.9%	12.2%	14.0%	10.9%
2019/20	4.6%	7.8%	11.9%	14.9%	12.2%	11.9%	12.7%	13.2%	10.8%
2020/21	4.0%	7.3%	10.3%	14.9%	12.5%	11.9%	12.8%	14.7%	11.7%

Staff Sexual Orientation Profile

	Bi-sexual	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Prefer not to say
2018/19	0.8%	92.6%	1.2%	5.3%
2019/20	1.2%	93.8%	1.4%	3.7%
2020/21	1.4%	93.1%	1.6%	4.0%
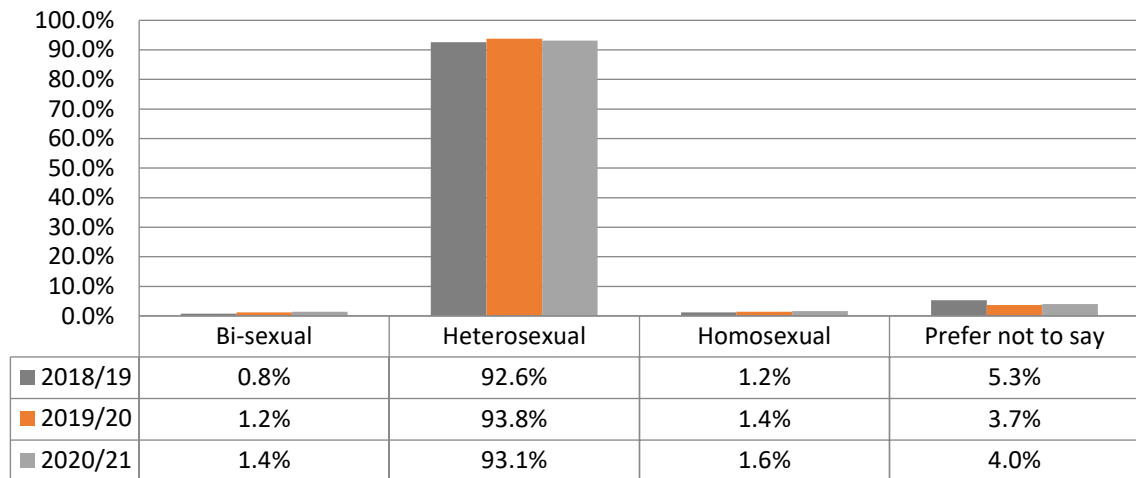
Staff Religion/Belief Profile

|	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other Religion / Belief	No Religion / Belief	Prefer not to say
2018/19	0.3%	46.9%	2.3%	0.3%	2.9%	3.5%	2.5%	30.9%	10.2%
2019/20	0.6%	47.6%	1.7%	0.3%	2.9%	3.5%	2.2%	30.4%	10.8%
2020/21	0.6%	47.5%	1.7%	0.3%	3.4%	3.9%	1.8%	30.0%	10.8%

Recruitment – The data below from 1 August 2020 shows an overview of the recruitment process to include applications received, shortlisted, interviewed and offered candidates by characteristic group.
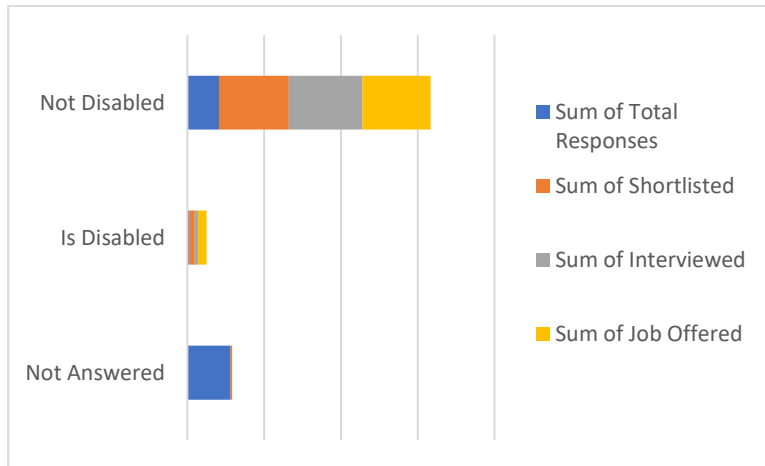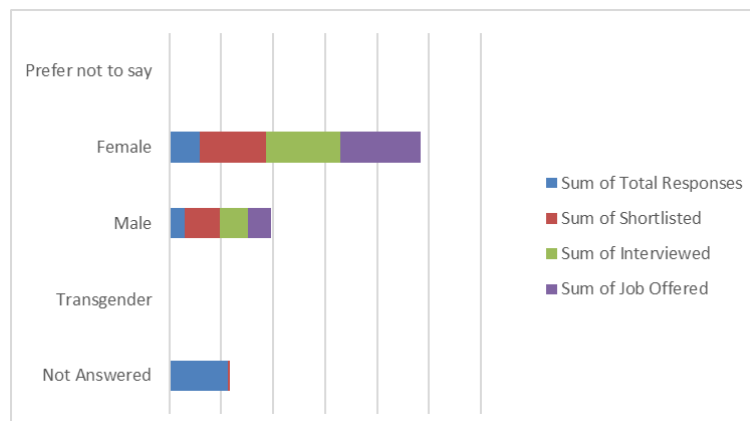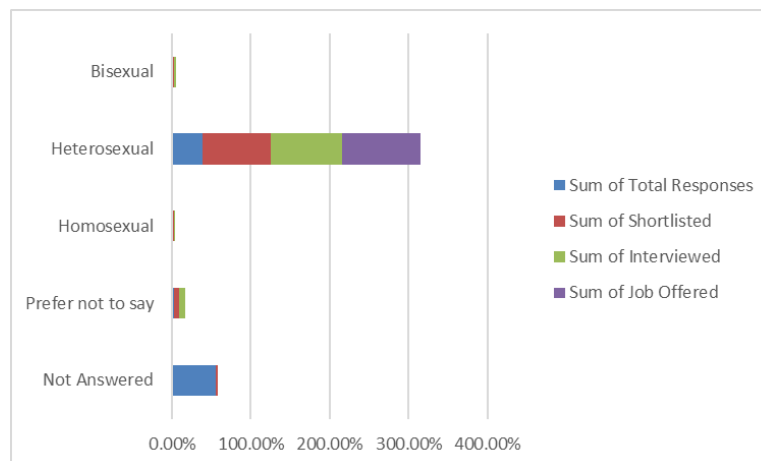
Ethnicity
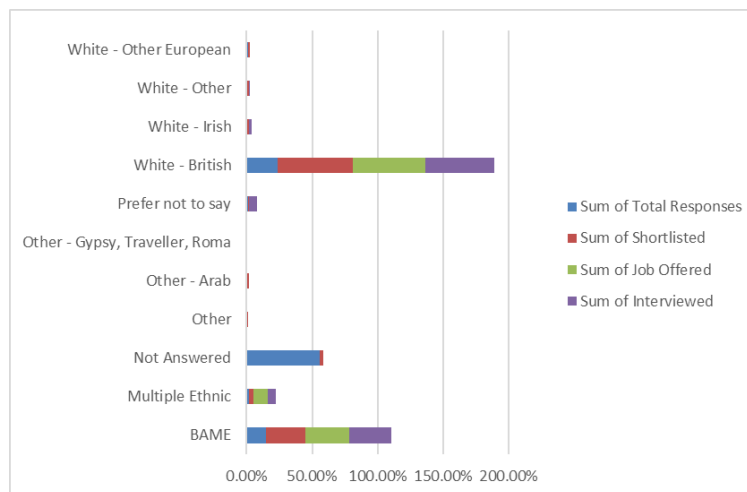
Age
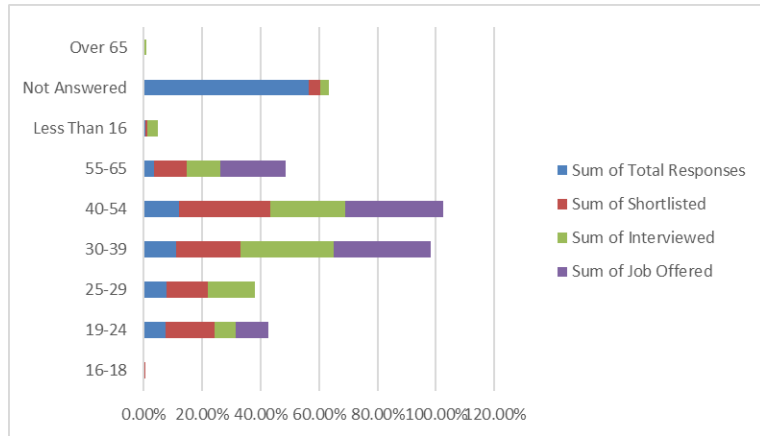
Disability

Gender

Sexual Orientation

In each of the categories the conversion rates from applications received (total responses) to shortlisted, interviewed or offered does not identify any specific trends or issues. However, the non-disclosure of this data at the application stage is high at 56%.

Our current recruitment practices have well established aspects to remove potential for bias including multiple panel members who independently score candidates, anonymous shortlisting with personal details removed, clear scoring criteria, work relevant questions and/or skills tasks that give candidates opportunity to demonstrate their skills, scoring individual questions. All managers who undertake interviewing are also required to complete Safer Recruitment Training.

Walsall College

01922 657000
www.walsallcollege.ac.uk
info@walsallcollege.ac.uk

Ofsted Outstanding Provider

QAA UK Quality Assured

RoSPA 2019 Gold Medal Award

matrix

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