



# **STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN**

## **BRIDGEND COLLEGE**

### **2017-2020**

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## **1. Bridgend College and our core functions**

Bridgend College is a Further Education (FE) College supporting over 6,000 students and employing over 600 members of staff across its five campuses in Bridgend, Pencoed, Queens Road, Maesteg and Cardiff. Engage Training is the business focused and externally facing directorate of Bridgend College, based on Bridgend Industrial Estate

The College offers an extensive range of courses, from Entry through to Degree level, in over 20 vocational areas with the majority delivered at our Bridgend and Pencoed Campuses. You can study the full-time BSc (Hons) in Social Work at our Queens Road Campus whilst our Maesteg Campus offers full-time Level 1 courses in Interactive Media and Exploring the Creative Arts and Media Sectors. The College is increasingly delivering more flexible programmes of study, both in the workplace and on-line through our Engage Training team and Learndirect opportunities.

Our Arts Academy in Cardiff is where over 100 students study the BA (Hons) in Photographic Practice and the Foundation Diploma in Art & Design.

Penybont 6th Form College is a Bridgend College and Pencoed Comprehensive School partnership. The 6th form delivers the very best teaching and learning experiences and unique opportunities that both the College and the school can offer.

The College has the highest number of franchise higher education students in any FE College in Wales, with over 850 students choosing to complete their higher education course locally each year. The College is a collaborative partner of the University of South Wales and works in partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University.

## **2. Mission Statement**

Treating everyone fairly, with respect and valuing difference is something that we at Bridgend College take very seriously. Our values of Be All That You Can Be are founded in positively promoting diversity and equal opportunity, supporting students and staff with additional needs or physical disabilities, and valuing the benefits that diversity brings and how it enriches the College.

Our vision for the College is to be a fair establishment, one where everyone accepts the difference between individuals, supports each other to achieve their goals and this is an integral part of the way we conduct our business.

Achieving and promoting equality and diversity at our College is a role for us all and thank you to everyone who has contributed to the progress we have made, and must continue to make.

## **3. Equality Objectives (including pay objectives) and steps to meet objectives and timescales**

This section outlines our key equality objectives, the steps we are taking or intend to take to meet them and the timescales we expect to achieve them in.

Each of the protected characteristics has been considered and objectives will clearly indicate where specific groups are being targeted through strategies, actions or positive action opportunities.

In arriving at our objectives, we have kept in mind the overriding purpose of the general duty. This is the requirement to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The general duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief
- Marriage and civil partnership

In consultation with our partners and key stakeholders we have identified the following functions of Bridgend College as the most significant issues in respect of equality and the general duty. In broad terms they are:

1. Curriculum and academic achievement
2. Student Services and Learner Voice
3. Employment and employee development
4. Health and Wellbeing
5. Physical environment
6. Procurement

### **3.1 Curriculum and Academic Achievement**

- We will improve access to courses, regardless of any of the protected characteristics and make sure that we take the needs and views of all protected groups into account when we design and deliver new courses, systematically embedding Equality and Diversity into the curriculum.
- We will continuously measure, monitor and improve the ways in which we deliver courses to different groups;
- We will build a positive culture, with a common understanding and approach through which we can integrate equality issues in respect of all protected groups into everyday work.
- We will collect data on applications for courses and notification of changes and compare with College statistics.
- We will refine the data further to give more detailed information on types of disabilities that students have and the range of ethnic backgrounds they come from. Having this information will allow us to put more targeted systems in place to redress any imbalance.

### **3.2 Student Support and Learner Voice**

- We will ensure that our student services are fully accessible for all protected groups.
- We will ensure that all frontline staff are trained in Equality and Diversity making sure that they have a sound understanding of the protected characteristics.
- We will undertake Equality Impact Assessments for all student services college events.
- We will promote strategies to all students to promote their mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- We will work with female students to increase self-esteem and confidence when setting academic and personal aspirations and goals

### **3.3 Employment and Employee Development**

We recognise the importance of our employment policies, the opportunities they represent within the local community and the impact they have on our staff. In our aim and dedication to deliver our equality ambitions, and be a local community leader in advancing equality or promoting good relations, our own policies have to be assessed for their impact on equality.

- We will collect, monitor and publish equality data in respect of all protected characteristics and in respect of all aspects of our employment policies. This will be published and updated and reviewed every year.
- We will continue to address areas of inequality. Ensuring that all processes and interactions support mental health to promote a culture of inclusivity and equality.
- We will continue working to ensure that first language welsh speakers do not suffer a detriment under the Welsh Language Act 2017.

- We will continue to circulate vacancies to organisations that would encourage and attract a more diverse range of candidates.
- We will ensure that equality and diversity training is regularly reviewed and evaluated to maintain its ongoing effectiveness and positive impact in the workplace.
- We will continue to promote equality for all protected groups, particularly those who are underrepresented, through appropriate and targeted action.
- We will work to develop a group for people with disabilities to ensure their voice is heard.
- We will monitor and review contract types by protected characteristics to ensure that staff are treated fairly and equitably, and identifying any areas for action.
- We will work with Chwarae Teg to minimise the gender pay gap.
- Where any potential pay anomalies are identified as a result of any protected characteristic, the college will seek to understand these further and propose remedial action.
- The college will actively seek to capture staff data in relation to all protected characteristics to minimise the 'unknown' information thus further informing future equal pay audits.
- We will continue to encourage staff to update information relating to their equality profile, through ongoing communications and campaigns.
- We will investigate best practice for training on Equality [e.g. Colegau Cymru, Cardiff & Vale/English City Colleges] and identify a budget for Equality training.

### **3.4 Health and Wellbeing**

- We will continue to undertake an analysis of student and staff participation and engagement in wellbeing initiatives across the College and consider appropriate actions based upon findings.
- We will continue to embed the mind 'Time to Change' project into the work of the College, working on a strategy across students and staff complement to ensure that mental health is destigmatised at Bridgend College.
- An employee approach to Mental Health to be developed so at a glance, employees can see how they can access support.
- Maintaining the Platinum and Gold Corporate Health Standard.
- Work towards Leader stage of Disability Confident.

### 3.5 Physical Environment

We have undertaken a huge amount of work to ensure that the physical environment of our facilities do not disadvantage protected groups, particularly disabled people.

- We will seek to ensure the future build of the STEAM academy is appropriate for all users, for example consideration of proportion of desks to be adjustable.
- All signage will be bilingual.
- A proportion of toilets will be unisex.
- Consideration will be given to use of contrast colours for decorating buildings and furnishings.

### 3.6 Procurement

- We will ensure that other organisations who deliver functions on our behalf give due regard to equality and we will monitor their performance towards meeting the Duty.
- We will do this by reviewing our procurement processes in 19-20 and building in appropriate measures and techniques

## 4. Arrangements for Collecting and Publishing Relevant Equality Information

Corporate monitoring of the policy will be the responsibility of the Senior Leadership team (SLT). Curriculum areas and business support departments will also be responsible for the local monitoring and implementation of the policy through procedures and practices, reporting through the planning process and to SLT, as required.

This will include:

- Annual Equality Report
- Student and Staff surveys
- Data analysis
- Monitoring of formal complaints
- Reporting to Governors
- Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice
- Quality Improvement Strategy
- SLT
- Learning Walks

All equality information in respect of the protected characteristics will be published annually on our website [www.bridgend.ac.uk](http://www.bridgend.ac.uk) .

## **5. Arrangements for Assessing Likely, Actual and On-going Impact on Protected Groups**

We are committed to measuring the impact of new and existing policies, practices and procedures on all equality groups by conducting appropriate impact assessments. When conducting assessments we will:

- Establish clear criteria for measuring the relevance of a policy, practice or procedure to equality of opportunity for all groups.
- Prioritise and set a timetable to assess all existing and future policies, practices and procedures which are considered to have an impact on all groups.
- Collect and analyse relevant data to assist with impact assessments.
- Engage appropriately through involvement and consultation people who are likely to be affected by policies and programmes from the start of the development and planning processes.
- Review and revise proposals in light of data collection, consultation and involvement of people to ensure any negative impact is mitigated.
- Provide our staff with training and support to ensure they carry out equality impact assessments with confidence and knowledge.
- Aspire to provide a positive outcome for all equality groups in our work.

Successful delivery of our objectives will require strong leadership. Leadership will be driven primarily by our Governing Board and Principal through the strategic planning group. Our Director of People has the strategic responsibility for the equality and diversity agenda and oversees the implementation, monitoring and review of equality and diversity at an operational level for employment issues and the Director of Student Services has strategic responsibility for the equality and diversity agenda for student matters.

Responsibility for operational delivery rests with all teams within the College. Each Head of Curriculum and Curriculum Manager will ensure their staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge of equality that are required.

We will review our information, engagement evidence, impact assessments and objectives on an annual basis. Delivery against the objectives will be monitored and information available will be scrutinised to ensure we identify and implement new strategies and objectives appropriately.

## **6. Action plan relating to gender pay objectives**

Used to its full potential, gender pay gap reporting is a valuable tool for assessing levels of equality in the work place, female and male participation, and how effectively talent is being maximised. This is ultimately the steps we will take to meet this objective over the coming 12 months, up to 2020:

### **Recruitment**

- Critically evaluating our recruitment process to eliminate bias (as far as is possible),

including the use of gender neutral images.

- Ensure all staff participating in recruitment activities have been trained to recognise and challenge bias.
- Interrogating recruitment channels to ensure we use those which reach the most diverse range of candidates, thereby ensuring an inclusive approach.
- Engaging more effectively with staff to understand w
- Taking an active part in recruiting in diverse areas, such as recruitment fairs at universities, disability networks and social media, to raise young people's awareness of the different career opportunities available within the FE sector.

### **Training, Development and Progression**

- Working with Managers across the organisation to develop an inclusive approach to succession planning/ career
- Continually reviewing data relating to recruitment, pay progression, career development and turnover to establish an inclusive approach which is truly person centred and supports all our staff to be all they can be.

### **Retention**

- Bridgend College is working on developing new guidelines on supporting employees prior to, during and on return from maternity and other parental leave, to be backed up by training for all line managers and senior managers.
- Encouraging take up of affordable childcare options with the onsite Day Nursery
- We will keep exploring smarter and flexible ways of working to meet the needs of our colleagues, students and stakeholders.

## **7. The Welsh Language**

We will work to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language and that students, staff and stakeholders are not unfairly disadvantaged when using the Welsh language.

## **8. Promoting Knowledge And Understanding Of The General And Specific Duties Amongst Employees**

Our objectives above include the commitment to developing and implementing a comprehensive training and awareness programme for all staff in respect of the general and specific duties.

We will publish reports internally and externally and embed equality into all our policies and practice.

## **9. Contact Us**

If you would like further information, or would like to request this document in a different format, please contact us:

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