

**EQUITY, DIVERSITY &  
INCLUSION STRATEGY  
2024/27**

## Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024/27

**Strategy Owner:** Board  
**Date Approved:** 4 July 2024  
**Next Review:** July 2027  
**Responsibility for Review:** Principal & Chief Executive  
**Strategy Review Frequency:** Tri-annually

Applicable to staff: Yes/~~No~~

Applicable to students: Yes/~~No~~

Publish on College website: Yes/No

### Consultation:

Undertaken with:	Yes/No:	Date:
Board/Committee	Board Resources Quality & Standards	4 July 2024 13 June 2024, 8 February 2024 20 June 2024, 29 February 2024
ELT	Yes	11 June 2024
CMT		
Unions		
Students		
Employees		
Employers/Stakeholders	EDI Working Group	20 May 2024, 24 January 2024, 31 October 2024

### Any Associated Documentation, for Reference:

**Curriculum Strategy 2024/27, Estates Strategy 2024/27, People Strategy 2024/27, Equality & Diversity Statement, Equality & Diversity Policy Access and Participation Statement, Anti-bullying and anti-harassment Policy, Positive Behaviour Framework, Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy**

**ELT SIGN-OFF:** Simon Nixon, Principal & Chief Executive

## **STRATEGIC VISION**

Preston College is committed to the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion. We celebrate the diversity of all our learners, apprentices, colleagues and any visitors accessing our services and have embraced the principles of Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement (FREDIE).

Preston College believes that everyone should expect to be treated with respect and dignity and we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment in which everyone is able to study and work to the best of their abilities.

The College recognises and proactively works towards its responsibilities in respect of Equality Legislation and our duty to:

- **Eliminate discrimination and harassment**
- **Advance equality of opportunity**
- **Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who don't.**

## **INTENT**

There is a clear ethical, moral, social case for why equity, diversity and inclusion matter and why the associated themes should be at the forefront of our strategic planning.

Knowing the communities that we serve and responding to their diverse needs are at the very heart of our educational offer.

## **KEY PRINCIPLES**

The College's EDI Objectives help to ensure that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are placed at the heart of College policies and procedures and are considered as part of the decision-making process. EDI objectives are not stand-alone but are interwoven in all aspects of our work, which is underpinned by the People Strategy

The objectives cover all of the protected characteristics, these are legally protected by the Equality Act 2010:

- **Age**
- **Race**
- **Disability**
- **Religion or belief**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Marriage & civil partnership**
- **Sex**
- **Pregnancy and Maternity**

and those additional characteristics pertinent to Preston College which extends to include, where appropriate, social status, deprivation, homelessness, unemployment, asylum and

refugee status or membership of a trade union, or for any identifiable cause protected by law.

By meeting these objectives and the actions associated with each, we strive to ensure that we remove any barriers that learners, apprentices, colleagues or stakeholders may face while being proactive in promoting good practice.

We aim to create an inclusive learning and working environment that respects and celebrates differences and individuality. We want everyone to feel able to fully participate in College life and achieve their full potential.

Our key themes for our EDI objectives are to promote and champion social mobility, accessibility, voice and influence, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing while challenging discrimination. These themes align with our core values.

### **Our values:**

- **Welcoming and inclusive** – we believe in making sure that all learners, staff and visitors to the College feel welcomed and valued at all times
- **Supportive and compassionate** – we believe in the importance of being reassuring, encouraging and caring towards our College community
- **Aspirational for our learners, ourselves and each other** – we believe in being ambitious in the way we work and promoting this with our learners
- **Act with integrity and transparency** – we believe in acting honestly at all times, and having open and transparent communications
- **Be accountable** – we believe in the importance of taking ownership of our actions, and expect others to act similarly

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Equality and equity**

There is now growing awareness and consciousness that EDI is made up of four constituent parts: Equality which is laid down by law in the Equality Act; Equity which is our ability within further education to make those adjustments that empower individuals to take ownership of their learning; Inclusion which again is in our gift to create that environment which supports all our learners and all our staff members to thrive and to make best use of their talents; and Diversity, which is the fact of life that we are all very different and have different talents and different needs.

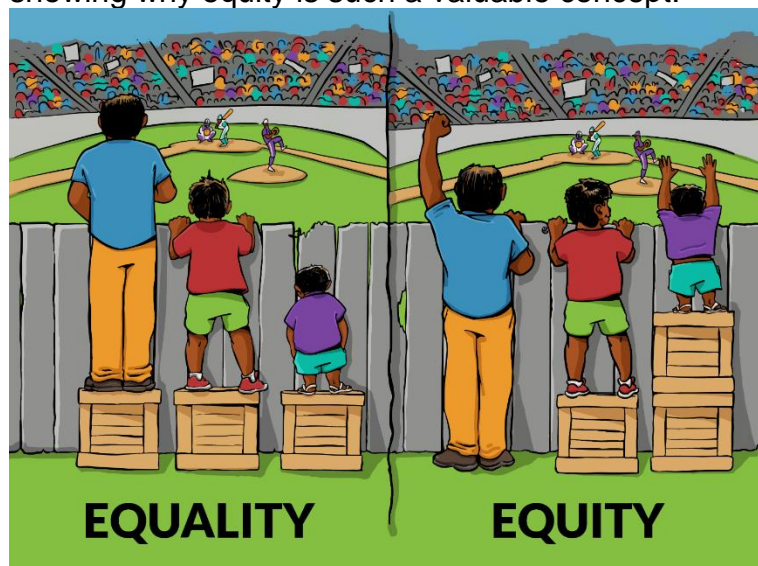
Equality is ensuring that every individual has the same opportunities to make the most of their lives and talents. No one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

*‘Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their talents and the most of their life. It is also the belief that no one should have fewer opportunities because of where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability. Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, disability, sex, and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination and that this discrimination should be challenged in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.’*

(Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2021) (Equality Act, 2010)

The term equity refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances.

Equity and equality are often used interchangeably, but the illustration below is a good way of showing why equity is such a valuable concept:



Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

## Diversity

Diversity is to recognise that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways, and that those differences are to be recognised, respected and valued.

*'Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. It is about empowering people by respecting and appreciating what makes them different, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin. It extends to political, social class, linguistic and other categories of identity which might be sources of social inequality. These differences lend themselves to the generation of critical perspectives and points of view, and a diverse group of people will have a wide range of skills and experience. Beyond accepting and tolerating difference, diversity means celebrating the added value that these differences bring.'*

(Global Diversity Practice, 2021)

## INCLUSION

Inclusion involves fostering an environment that enables people to be themselves. Regardless of their backgrounds, characteristics and ways of thinking, to work effectively and fulfil their full potential. Our whole College community must feel valued, listened to and respected. We want all of our learners and apprentices to develop a range of wide personal and social skills as they get ready for the world of work and other opportunities in the future.

‘Inclusive practice ensures that exploration of diversity and differences is conducted in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment free of discrimination. It means understanding one another by surpassing simple tolerance to ensure people truly value their differences. This allows us both to embrace and to celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual and place positive value on diversity in the community and in the workforce. Everyone in an organisation brings with them a diverse set of perspectives, work, and life experiences, as well as religious and cultural differences. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels valued, that their contribution matters, and they can perform to their full potential. The power of diversity can only be unleashed, and its benefits reaped when we recognise these differences and learn to respect and value each individual irrelevant of their background’

(Global Diversity Practice, 2021).

## STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

To further improve the celebration of diversity and equality of opportunity for all, removing barriers to learning and work wherever reasonably practicable.

Preston College values	Equality objective
Welcoming and inclusive	Ensure that everyone feels part of the College community and included in our activities
Supportive and compassionate	Promote and champion diversity and challenge discrimination
Aspirational for our learners, ourselves and each other	Ensure that everyone is set realistic goals and given equal opportunities to succeed
Act with integrity and transparency	Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equally
Be accountable	Promote the taking of ownership for actions relating to equality of opportunity

## LEARNER AND APPRENTICE EDI OBJECTIVES

### Learner and Apprentice EDI Objective 1:

Ensure that everyone feels that they belong to the College community and included in our activities (aligned with our College Value: Welcoming and inclusive)

We commit to:

- a) Work with the wider learner body to increase engagement, influence and co-production in our equality, diversity and inclusion action plan, to ensure learners and apprentices are widely consulted and create their own opportunities
- b) Shape and promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the College through

- intelligence collected throughout the academic year to represent the full learner journey.
- c) Develop the knowledge, confidence and awareness of learners' and apprentices' representation via the Learner Council and Learner Voice to ensure they have a strong EDI voice in their study, work and social environments.
  - d) Continue to coordinate activities for learners and apprentices to plan, co-produce and lead activities which challenge non-inclusive behaviours, including wider curriculum and enrichment activities
  - e) Continue to create opportunities for learners and apprentices to engage with local communities and networks, to share best practice and build links with external groups.

### **Learner and Apprentice EDI Objective 2:**

Promote and champion diversity and challenge discrimination (aligned with our College Value: Supportive and compassionate)

We commit to:

- a) Identify and implement where appropriate an external audit tool to support Equality Impact Assessment at organisational level, monitored through the EDI Group.
- b) Review and further improve our strategies to inform and celebrate equality and diversity and British values across all aspects of college life.
- c) Refine the data reporting process within the quality cycle, with a view to increasing outreach and support.
- d) Continue to celebrate the differences between members of the College community with actions, demonstrated in all documents and images, drawing on diversity in its broadest sense.
- e) Continue to provide opportunities for learners and apprentices to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to challenge behaviours which are inappropriate, disrespectful or intimidating.
- f) Engage with learners to develop their own EDI Statement, promoted widely through a poster campaign in teaching and social spaces.

### **Learner and Apprentice EDI Objective 3:**

Ensure that everyone is set realistic goals and given equal opportunities to succeed (aligned to our College Value: Aspirational for ourselves, our learners and each other)

We commit to:

- a) Continue to eliminate gaps in learner achievement and progression.
- b) Raise awareness of the impact of hidden disabilities on participation and inclusion in college life.
- c) Improve the way we identify and meet additional support needs for all learners and apprentices, through a SEND operating framework and procedures.
- d) Champion accessibility of the curriculum and the College environment, both physical and online, challenging disability discrimination and promoting respect.
- e) Ensure barriers to socio-cultural accessibility are diminished by fully promoting our range of bursaries and hardship funds.

#### **Learner and Apprentice EDI Objective 4:**

Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equally (aligned to our College Value: Act with integrity and transparency)

We commit to:

- a) Reference a trauma informed approach in designing learner and apprentice facing policies and procedures.
- b) Develop strategies to challenge internal bias and stereotypes.
- c) Informing and equipping staff with the understanding and skills needed to ensure inclusivity and equity are at the forefront of everything we do.
- d) Continue to consistently review College policies and procedures for learners and apprentices to ensure they are inclusive in both language and impact
- e) Continue to monitor the take-up of development opportunities and evaluate feedback on learner experience and outcomes by equality characteristic.
- f) Identify and address performance gaps in experience or outcome throughout the learner journey.
- g) Continue to develop our curriculum portfolio to reflect local and regional skills needs matched to the needs of our community.

#### **Learner and Apprentice EDI Objective 5:**

Promote the taking of ownership for actions relating to equality of opportunity (aligned to our College Value: Be accountable)

We commit to:

- a) Raise awareness of, and promote with all learners, the 5 As Accountability Framework
- b) Ensure that pastoral activities encourage learners and apprentices to be accountable, including awareness of the importance of EDI.
- c) Develop video resources to capture a “day in the life of” learner groups in College to increase awareness and facilitate a greater sense of ownership.

### **PRESTON COLLEGE EMPLOYEE EDI OBJECTIVES**

**Employee EDI Objective 1:** Ensure that everyone feels part of the College community and included in our activities (aligned with our College Value: Welcoming and inclusive)

- a) Continue and develop collaborative, open relationships with Staff Voice and recognised trade unions.
- b) Continue to ensure that relevant groups are consulted with when redrafting and introducing policies and procedures.
- c) Continue to deliver, and increase participation in, staff surveys and PULSE surveys to enhance the employee voice and ensure that appropriate feedback is provided with actions taken and pledges shared and progress measured.
- d) Develop and continue Preston College’s induction processes for new colleagues, those with specific characteristics or experiences, apprentices and other groups to ensure experiences are optimised and feedback sought and acted upon, regularly collating induction feedback for consideration by the EDI Group.
- e) Ensure that leaders develop, drive and role model a culture where every voice matters.
- f) Encourage and organise social activities across the whole College to create a greater



sense of inclusivity.

**Employee EDI Objective 2:** Promote and champion diversity and challenge discrimination throughout the College (aligned with our College Value: Supportive and compassionate)

- a) Continue to review external partnerships with groups that promote diversity and work towards appropriate awards and standards as approved and endorsed by the College Board
- b) Review College policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive in both language and impact
- c) Provide opportunities for colleagues to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to challenge behaviours which are inappropriate, disrespectful, intimidating or bullying, including the development of mechanisms to facilitate safe reporting of concerns.
- d) Continue reporting and plan activities to reduce the Gender Pay Gap.
- e) Continue to provide a suite of mandatory leadership, management and wider staff development programmes, including a core theme of equality, diversity and inclusion within our professional development offering.
- f) Celebrate diversity through Staff Development and social activities.
- g) Develop external benchmarking relationships, including Disability Confident, Dying To Work, and Armed Forces Covenant.

**Employee EDI Objective 3:** Ensure that everyone is set realistic goals and given equal opportunities to succeed (aligned to our College Value: Aspirational for ourselves, our learners and each other)

- a) Continue to create and enhance the supportive environment where colleagues feel empowered to disclose protected characteristics should they wish to do so.
- b) Continue activities to achieve and support Disability Confident Leader accreditation, including the use of Staff Champions for internal promotional activities.
- c) Continue to develop and review all policies, procedures and other colleague facing materials to ensure accessibility requirements are considered and embedded.
- d) Continue to support all colleagues with disabilities through reasonable adjustments and other appropriate support, supported by robust recruitment and Health & Safety practices.
- e) Continually promote and enhance a culture where differences are celebrated and everyone is supported to achieve their full potential.
- f) Continue to successfully embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into recruitment, training, promotion, appraisal, onboarding and induction, including potential development of a College Charter to demonstrate our approach.

**Employee EDI Objective 4:** Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equally (aligned to our College Value: Act with integrity and transparency)

- a) Create training opportunities for colleagues that explicitly promote inclusion, including strategies to build resilience
- b) Continue to enhance the colleague experience through fostering an environment of access and inclusion
- c) Promote the diversity of our organisation allowing everyone to achieve their full potential.

**Employee EDI Objective 5:** Promote the taking of ownership for actions relating to equality of opportunity (aligned to our College Value: Be accountable)

- a) Continue to provide timely and relevant CPD opportunities.
- b) Use the PDP framework to encourage embedding EDI practices into all job roles.
- c) Use Pulse Surveys to check in with any emerging mental health concerns.

## **PRESTON COLLEGE GOVERNANCE/GOVERNING BODY OBJECTIVES**

**Governing Body EDI Objective 1: Ensure that everyone feels part of the Governing Body community and included in its activities (aligned with our College Value: Welcoming and inclusive)**

- a) Continue to develop collaborative, open relationships with stakeholders.
- b) Continue to deliver, and increase participation in Board and committee questionnaires , to enhance the governor voice and ensure that appropriate feedback is provided with actions taken and progress measured.
- c) Develop and continue Preston College's Corporation Member/Co-opted Member induction processes and ensure that feedback sought and acted upon, regularly collating induction feedback.
- d) Ensure that Corporation Members/Co-opted Members, particularly chairs, develop, drive and role model a culture where every voice matters.
- e) Encourage and organise activities outside of Board and committee meetings to foster a greater sense of inclusivity and board cohesion.

**Governing Body EDI Objective 2: Promote and champion diversity and challenge discrimination throughout the College (aligned with our College Value: Supportive and compassionate)**

- a) Continue to review external partnerships with groups that promote diversity and work towards appropriate awards and governance standards as approved and endorsed by the College's Governing Body.
- b) Review College policies and, where required, procedures to ensure they are inclusive in both language and impact.
- c) Provide opportunities for Corporation Members/Co-opted Members to continue to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to challenge behaviours which are inappropriate, disrespectful, intimidating or bullying, including the continued development of mechanisms to facilitate safe reporting of concerns to reflect best practice.
- d) Review reports such as Gender Pay Gap and workforce profile reports and where appropriate approve relevant strategies, policies and objectives in order to provide constructive challenge to management on progress.
- e) Continue to provide Corporation Member/Co-opted Member with a suite of governor development programmes, including core themes of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.
- f) Appoint a lead governor to help the Board discharge its responsibilities for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Provide suitable training and practical support for the lead governor.

**Governing Body EDI Objective 3: Ensure that all Corporation Members/Co-opted Members are given equal opportunities to succeed (aligned to our College Value: Aspirational for ourselves, our learners and each other)**

- a) Continue to create and enhance the supportive environment where Corporation Members/Co-opted Members feel empowered to disclose protected characteristics should they wish to do so.
- b) Continue to monitor all policies, and where required procedures, and other reports/documents as appropriate, to ensure accessibility requirements are considered and embedded.
- c) Continue to support all Corporation Members/Co-opted Members with disabilities through reasonable adjustments and other appropriate support, supported by robust recruitment and Health & Safety practices.
- d) Continually promote and enhance a culture where differences are celebrated and everyone is supported to achieve their full potential.
- e) Continue to successfully embed Equality and where appropriate equity, diversity and inclusion into recruitment, training, appraisal, onboarding and induction of Corporation Members/Co-opted Members.

**Governing Body EDI Objective 4: Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equally (aligned to our College Value: Act with integrity and transparency)**

- a) Create training opportunities for Corporation Members/Co-opted Members that explicitly promote inclusion and strategies to build resilience.
- b) Continue to enhance the Corporation Member/Co-opted Member experience through fostering an environment of access and inclusion.

**Governing Body EDI Objective 5: For the Governing Body to have a diverse membership which is representative of the community served by the College whilst meeting any skills and experience gaps.**

- a) When searching for potential new governors and co-opted members, to ensure the governing body has regard for the need to combat discrimination and promote equality.
- b) Ensure there are transparent and fair policy and procedures in place for the election and appointment for independent, staff and student governors and co-opted members.
- c) Seek to ensure that there are initiatives in place to encourage Corporation Member/Co-opted Member applications from a range of backgrounds and experiences.

**Governing Body EDI Objective 6: To be transparent about the College's approach to equity, equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives**

- a) Develop a clear strategy for promoting equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation, including in its membership and practice and its equity initiatives. The Board should ensure that the strategy includes a focus on actions and impact, rather than just declarations of intent.
- b) Ensure that there are appropriate arrangements and resources in place to monitor and achieve equality, diversity and inclusion plans and objectives.
- c) Publish an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion review, including data on protected characteristics at Board, executive leadership, staff and student level and action to address disparities. The Board should maintain active ownership of this strategy, with

regular and robust oversight of implementation

## **OPERATIONALISING THE STRATEGY**

### **WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT**

*processes aligned to Preston College People Strategy*

#### **Implementation of the learner/ apprentices Equality Objective commitments:**

The above commitments will be incorporated into an EDI Learner and Apprentice Action Plan which will be monitored and actioned through the Quality and Standards Committee.

#### **Implementation of the employee Equality objectives:**

The above commitments will be incorporated into an employee EDI statement which will be consulted and monitored through our governance processes aligned to Preston College People Strategy, specifically Resources Committee at a detailed level and Board from a more strategic perspective.

#### **Impact measures for learners and apprentices:**

Through our EDI Learner and Apprentice Objectives and Action Plan, key KPIs will be monitored and measured to track impact, examples will include attendance, retention, achievement, progression and destinations – however other measures such as participation in learner voice activities, enrichment, and take up of support (including bursaries) will be developed to provide the widest possible picture of the full learner journey.

#### **Impact measures for employees:**

Through employee EDI Objectives, key KPIs will be monitored and measured to track impact, for instance, work force demographics will be monitored against all performance frameworks including attendance, recruitment, retention, progression and performance reviews – however other measures such as Gender pay gap analysis, staff voice activities (including staff survey) and Joint Union Body (JUB) feedback will be developed to provide the widest possible picture of the employee journey.

## **ALIGNED STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Whilst all Policies & Procedures - Preston College will naturally align under this strategy, as our process for Equality Impact Assessment is an integral part of design and approval processes for all policies, there are particular links with:

Access and Participation Statement  
Anti-bullying and anti-harassment Policy  
Positive Behaviour Framework  
Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy

#### **For employees:**

People Strategy

## **Appendices**

Legislation and associated organisations:

The Equality Act 2010

British Values (from the Prevent Duty 2014)

Human Rights Act 1998

Disability Confident Employer Scheme