



## **Access and Inclusion Strategy**

**2017-2020**

At Dumfries and Galloway College, we are moving in to an exciting stage of our development, building on the success of the past and driving forward to achieve our aspiration of becoming “an outstanding College”. The College has recently developed a five-year strategic plan, Vision 2020 that sets out our vision, aspirations and priorities.

Through Vision 2020, we will support the Scottish Government’s key pledges on growing Scotland’s economy and tackling social injustice by ensuring we have the highest quality curriculum offering that delivers skills, education and training to meet local and national needs but one that is also inclusive and enables individuals to achieve their maximum potential. The strategic plan aims to meet the further and higher education needs of Dumfries and Galloway, deliver the highest quality learning for our students, to make a positive contribution to the local and national economies and to utilise the expertise of our staff to deliver continuous improvements.

Access for people from the widest backgrounds remains at the heart of the College. We aim to improve life chances in the region by providing an outstanding learning experience regardless of background or starting point on the student journey.

This Access and Inclusion Strategy, supports Vision 2020 and the Regional Outcome Agreement, and sets out the College’s commitment to providing an inclusive environment where students with diverse needs and backgrounds are supported to access college provision; achieve positive outcomes and destinations; and progress towards employment.

The strategy also sets out how we will support the Scottish Government manifesto commitment “we will explore how students’ health and well-being can be better supported to reduce drop-out rates and ease hardship”.

Dumfries and Galloway College student retention and success rates are slightly below sector average. We believe that the inclusive and supportive practices detailed in this strategy will lead to improvements in both areas.

This strategy sets out how the College will achieve this and how it will monitor its effectiveness and impact.

## **1 Student Support Services**

Student support services, led by the Student Support and Guidance Manager, provide a wide range of support in addition to the support provided by course teams and other staff.

Student support services work closely with a number of external agencies including Drugs and Alcohol Scotland, CAMHS, Dumfries and Galloway Council Psychological Services, Police Scotland, NHS and B-EAT, LGBT, Yellow Balloon coaching, Soul Soup, local medical service, Oasis youth centre; Schools and refer students to the appropriate agencies depending on circumstances.

Members of the team attend Dumfries and Galloway Diversity Working Group and Dumfries and Galloway Council Corporate Parenting Working Group and currently two members of staff are jointly involved with taking forward GIRFEC and the Named person. The College is also recognised as a Third Party Reporting Centre.

The student support services staff have undertaken PDA Inclusiveness: Facilitating Strategies to Support Students with Additional Needs at SCQF level 9. There are an additional two staff within the department now undertaking this qualification. Two staff have completed the 2-year PDA: Student Support.

The Student Advisers service provides the most obvious welfare service in the College and can provide students with informal 'counselling' as needed. The Student Association and Personal Tutors also provide corner stones of the welfare support in the College. At the start of a new academic session Student Buddies are trained and available who can provide peer support. In addition, the 'Just Ask' service is provided in conjunction with the Student Association with students wearing a T-Shirt designed by the Art Department and offer support to students in the first few weeks of term.

The College is currently reviewing its evaluation procedures for student support services to ensure we are listening to student feedback to continually improve our service and aligned to the new Education Scotland quality framework 'How Good is Our College?.'

### **1.1 Needs-led Approach**

The College takes a needs-led approach to providing additional support for students. There are a number of ways the College is alerted to students who may have support needs, such as school/college transitional meetings, application form, enrolment form, on course referral and self-referral.

The College aims to make the transition from school to college as seamless as possible for young people. Each of the region's sixteen secondary schools invite the Student Support and Guidance Manager to attend school transitional or co-ordinated support plan meetings. These meetings enable the College to establish early on, particular needs of each prospective student in order for

the college to put in place appropriate support needs to enable the student to be successful from the very start of their learning journey with the College.

The College encourages students to disclose at application and enrolment if they believe they may have support needs. Early identification enables the college to invite students into college to meet with student advisers to discuss and assess their needs prior to starting their course. On course referral and self-referral is handled in the same way – the student is at the centre of decisions on how best to support them. The College has over time developed a robust procedure, 'Students with Additional Needs', which aims to ensure all students with additional needs are supported in their studies.

For students new to the College a full needs-led assessment is undertaken along with in-depth discussions. For returning students, the College offers further discussion and a refresher needs-led assessment, to identify any changes going forward. The Needs assessment is not a static document, and changes as appropriate with individual changing needs.

Where additional support is required and agreed with the student, academic staff are advised of the nature of the support in order to adapt lessons, handouts and approach to ensure an inclusive learning environment. All students with identified support needs have a Personal Learning and Support Plan (PLSP). Students meet regularly with Educational Support staff to discuss their PLSP, monitor the impact of the support and identify progress so far. Students can be supported in a variety of ways. For example, where a student has a visual impairment they are seated at the front of the classroom; handouts and PowerPoint presentation are provided in larger font or assistive technology as appropriate.

In some cases, students' identified need is assistance to take medication while studying at college. A student's need for medication will be outlined in their care plan (if in place). Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure allowances are made for students who are able to self-medicate. Staff are not normally involved in the administering of medications.

There are College buses to enable students to attend College. However, where there are students who mentally or physically cannot board a bus, other options may be considered such as a college funded Taxi; or student's own mobility vehicle funded from benefits the student may already receive to help with travel.

Sharing of transition information from Schools, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and other agencies remains challenging, this can affect the student, as we may not be aware of the support they need before they start their course. Resourcing the demand and volume of students with needs is also challenging.

## 1.2 Student Advisers Service

Another key support service for students is a team of Student Advisers. Student advisers are professional and experienced staff who can support students with diverse needs. Services offered by the Team are well known and advertised internally so that both students and staff are aware and can use them. The Team works in partnership with all curriculum areas, enabling joined-up working and continuity of support. They have a wide range of skills and experience, such as mental health first aiders; safeguarding; PREVENT; and provide an in-house Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) assessment service to ensure HN students access appropriate support, thus removing the stress of having to travel to be assessed. The Team works in close partnership with LGBT and support a growing number of students that are transitioning and coming out who have additional emotional needs. The College will also start working with Stonewall during the 2017-18 academic session. Along with undertaking needs assessment, this small team offers, a 'drop in' or by appointment service in which students can seek information, guidance and support on a wide range of issues, such as:

- Health and welfare (safeguarding, self-harm, bullying, mental health, anxiety, drugs and alcohol);
- Autism spectrum;
- Dyslexia;
- Unseen disabilities such as epilepsy and diabetes;
- Physical disability/mobility difficulties;
- Sensory impairment;
- Medical/health problems;
- Transitioning, coming out emotional support
- Mental health problems;
- Social, emotional and behavioural support;
- Care experienced;
- Carer responsibilities;
- Additional Support Needs;
- Assistive Technology and equipment;
- Numeracy and literacy;
- Digital skills;
- Funding and Benefits;
- Emergency Funds;
- Discretionary and Childcare Funds; and
- SAAS Applications

The College uses a holistic approach to supporting our student's health and well-being including offering a free gym membership to all students, promoting the college football and basketball teams and running lunchtime activities to help get all our students fit and active. We work closely with a number of key external agencies such as CAMHS, Drugs & Alcohol Scotland and Frenz to ensure that our students get the specialist support when they need it most. We are registered with

the local food bank who we donate to and give out vouchers to disadvantaged students. We also provides free food vouchers for the college canteen for students in crisis.

The College encourages staff to undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) particularly to support our students such as the Capita Conference on Improving Children and Young People's mental health, child and adult protection and in-house training on self-harm. This training will reinforce the College's role within the community in contributing towards young people's mental health care. Students who experience financial hardship during their studies can also be effectively supported through College Hardship Funds, the Holywood Trust, the Crichton Foundation and supporting the individual with budgeting skills. Awareness weeks are undertaken by the Student Association and Student Support Team.

As part of their responsibility to provide an inclusive learning environment in their classroom Lecturers are encouraged to allow students to use digital recorders or apps on their phone or an iPad to record the lesson to enable them to re-visit the information and add to their notes. When developing online materials staff ensure they create accessible and compliant learning materials and approaches.

Dumfries and Galloway College has made a number of ICT investments recently such as vibrating alarms for deaf students, Hoists, Digital recorders, Laptops, Ipads, Specialist key boards, USB pens with accessible software, coloured acetates and Posturite chairs. The college has installed induction loops, one at the main reception and one at the hairdressing facility that is frequently used by external visitors. These enhance the audio signal for those with hearing aids.

### **1.3 Care Experienced Support**

For care experienced students, who have been looked after at home, in residential care, foster care or kinship care coming to college can be daunting. In many cases, a disrupted education or lack of family support may make the transition to college a more intimidating experience for care experienced individuals. The College has a dedicated advisor who can help students access a package of support, be it pastoral, educational or financial. The College is registered with Propel, the charity for children in care and young care leavers, who provide help, support and advice so that young people who spend time in care can unleash their potential and take control of their lives.

The College is looking to introduce the Prince's Trust Care Experienced Employability Programme from 2017-18.

Before students start at college, we provide support such as:

- Transitional meeting(s) with care providers and the prospective student
- Opportunities to visit to the college to see what we can offer you as a student
- Student advisers can provide funding advice before you apply

- Support and guidance with filling out online applications for chosen course of study and funding

The advisor support can offer students:

- sensitive and confidential support on a range of welfare and education issues
- guidance through all the various information and procedures
- practical help with enrolling and settling into College life
- someone to talk to who understands care experienced students' particular situation and needs

The dedicated advisor also offers the following:

- Identify care experienced from applications, phone to establish contact if this has not been done prior to the application by support/Social Workers or foster carers.
- Organise a meeting if a young person would like to come in prior to applying/or after application has been made.
- Once enrolled, arrange a catch-up to see how they are settling in and to find out the current status of any young person who has not had an introduction. Fill out a contact sheet with information and contacts relevant to the young person.
- Support young people with funding advice and the best option to go with in regards to EMA/bursary or staying on/or applying for Income Support and Housing Benefit.
- Liaise with residential units with regards to getting evidence in for funding to be processed.
- Liaise with Social Work to establish best route of support and to gain background info about young person.
- Liaising with Funding to establish extra £10pw for additional financial support for non-bursary students (FE).
- Monitoring attendance and referrals for patterns of absence or behaviour, then find ways to help support young person through this and offer pathways that will help them achieve better attendance/behaviour whilst at college.
- Liaise with departments with regards to attendance, behaviour and organised appointments that the young people have to attend whilst under the care of social work.
- Telephoning young people to make sure they are coping when they have been absent to ensure there are no serious issues of which staff are not aware. Also re-enforcing the importance of attending and encouraging them to continue with college and reminding them that we are here to support.
- Attend advice sessions.
- Liaise with the Prince's Trust and Supported Programmes.
- Supporting young person to grow and to encourage them to achieve.
- Keeping up-to-date with any developments in legislation.
- Sitting in LAC meetings
- Attending Stage 2/3/4 disciplinary meetings to help support young person.
- Ensuring any young person with an additional need has a needs assessment in place with an Adviser and introduces the young person to the Educational support workers.

- We work closely with the Student Association and often have information days such as "no smoking day", "contraceptive awareness day" and "LGBT" awareness etc.
- We also run a lunchtime gardening course in the Spring. Last year it was very successful and students grew flowers and vegetables.

#### **1.4 Carer Support**

The College has a dedicated advisor to support students who have carer responsibilities. The advisor support can offer students:

- sensitive and confidential support on a range of welfare and education issues
- guidance through all the various information and procedures
- practical help with enrolling and settling into College life
- someone to talk to who understands carer responsibilities, particular situations and needs
- Liaise with tutors on special arrangements to fit round carer responsibilities
- Monitoring attendance and referrals for patterns of absence or behaviour, then find ways to help support carers
- Telephoning carers to make sure they are coping when with their carer responsibilities and their course
- Supporting carers to develop, encourage and support them to achieve.
- Support them with funding advice including external agency funding.

The adviser works closely with academic staff to raise awareness of students with carer responsibilities to ensure adjustments are in place as required.

#### **1.5 Educational Support**

The College is committed to supporting the progression and attainment of all students. The educational support team provides support to students who have an identified need. The team works closely with the student advisor service and curriculum staff to ensure that students receive the support appropriate to the students' individual requirements as well as specific course requirements. The team provide a wide range of support measures and specific resources. A full range of reasonable adjustments to both the physical environment and learning materials may be required to effectively support students. Where a student has an identified need the student advisor service will prepare, in partnership with the student, a strategy of support. Depending on the needs of each individual student, additional support may include:

- The aid of an education support worker;
- Access to assistive technology e.g. electronic spellcheckers, digital voice recorders, adapted keyboards & ergonomic equipment; assistive software; and ergonomic chairs;
- Interpreter support (British Sign Language);
- Additional individual study skills or small group tuition;
- Course material in alternative formats e.g. Braille or audio;
- Alternative Assessment Arrangements such as reader-scribes, text to speech software electronic question papers and extra time;



- Reading;
- Note taking / scribing;
- Organising work and study skills;
- Numeracy and literacy;
- Emotional reassurance;
- Pre-entry guidance;
- Mental first aid;

Educational Support staff meet with students outside normal classes at least five times per year to complete Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSP). However, additional meetings can be requested and co-ordinated if the student requires further support in the form of talking and advising. Issues are dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible and this often involves cross-college working with course lecturers and advisers to provide the best way forward for the student. A PLSP is implemented when the Needs Assessment has been received from the Student Advisers stating what recommendations should be put in place.

Educational support might be on a one to one basis or group support. This is usually the case for students on college access courses (SCQF 4). This support empowers students to realise their potential and provides a platform for a successful experience and journey.

### **1.6 Personal Tutor**

It is College policy for all further education programmes to have a one-hour tutorial as part of the programme, for access courses this is increased to two hours. The purpose of the tutorial is for students to discuss their academic progress with their personal tutor. It also gives the personal tutor the opportunity to explore any other issues affecting their progress such as poor attendance, funding difficulties, personal issues before they escalate and become more complicated. Early intervention is key to supporting students, and depending on the issues, students can be directed to the student adviser service, the Independent Learning Centre (ILC), the Learning Zone or student funding.

### **1.7 Transitional Support**

For some students the transition from school to college can be difficult. To ease students transition the support starts before they attend college. The Student Support and Guidance Manager attends 'transitional' meetings in schools, along with other agencies where a Coordinated Education Support Plan is developed for individuals. These meetings enable the College to better understand any particular needs/ difficulties some student may be experiencing, thus enabling the College to be better prepared to help students settle into College life. Attendance at those meetings is vital to ensure vulnerable students move between learning environments with ease. The role the College can take in the young person's future is fully explained to school staff, social work, Skills Development Scotland, the parents, and most importantly the young person themselves, who can talk about their aims and aspirations for the future. The Student Support and Guidance Manager is in discussion with the regions school staff and working in partnership to support school refusers on

the Autism spectrum. The aim is that with careful transition and support, the young people will eventually manage a full-time college course.

### **1.8 Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting**

The Student Support and Guidance Manager is the Safeguarding Coordinator for the college. This involves much liaison with staff across the College as well as outside agencies. Cases must be dealt with quickly to ascertain that a young person or vulnerable adult is not at risk, or if they are, action taken to support and help for example referral to an appropriate agency.

### **1.9 Learning Zone/Flexible Access Centre**

The College has invested in drop-in IT centres. The Dumfries campus has a 90 computer (including MACs) facility known as the Learning Zone and the Stranraer campus has 26 computers, known as the Flexible Access Centre (FAC). From these centres students can drop-in to access the college network and be supported by trained staff. From the college network, students can access the College virtual learning environment LearnNet, a web-based system where students can access learning resources, online support, work on and submit assessments, and communicate with staff and students through discussion boards and live chat. Centre staff are also ambassadors for the SDS My World of Work. Staff are trained to deliver a range of support such as IT Induction, LearnNet induction, internet safety, study skills, report writing, and organisation skills. Staff within these facilities encourage students to use the facilities and develop their independent learning skills.

### **1.10 Independent Learning Centre**

This centre is a dedicated resource to assist students to develop their numeracy and communication skills at SCQF level 1-6. Staff are trained to undertake core skills assessments. Staff in the centres can offer one-to-one sessions or group sessions, depending on the needs of the individuals or referral from academic teams. For some students, although they may have achieved their core skills profile at school they have poor confidence/self-esteem and benefit greatly from attending on one-to-one or in a small group. Again, staff encourage students to use the facilities and develop their independent learning skill. Staff also work closely with local Authority Adult Learning initiatives.

### **1.11 Work Placement**

Meetings take place between Employability Support Workers and College Staff to ensure the correct support is in place for students with additional support needs. The work placement coordinator then liaises with the department to pass on information to employers who take students on placements. This is vital to ensure success and to make sure the employer has all the information to support the student. The Student Support and Guidance Manager (Safeguarding Officer) assists staff in the departments if issues arise in the workplace of a safeguarding nature, or before the work experience can occur (e.g. the need for a risk assessment)

## 2 Student Engagement Officer

The College has a dedicated Student Engagement Officer to complement the team and plays an important role to continue to develop the 'Student Voices', the Student Association and Class Representatives. In collaboration with cross-college teams arranges a wide range of engagement activities and events, designed to enrich and influence the student experience. Recent activities include:

- Fresher's week. Various community partners and external agencies are on site to highlight their services, such as: Step Together Volunteering, Skills Development Scotland, The Samaritans, Police Scotland, NHS Sexual Health, Speech and Language Therapy Services, Loreburn Housing Tenants' Association, LGBT, Stagecoach, Smoking Matters, D & G Carers, DG Voice, Sally Hair and Beauty, The Stove, Addaction Dumfries and Galloway, Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust, Frenz, Easterbrook Live, Alive Radio, Bannatynes Health Club and Community Wardens.
- Macmillan Big Coffee Morning
- Volunteering and fundraising event for Women's Aid Project
- Christmas Market in conjunction with local small businesses linking student engagement with employability, sustainability and health and well-being.
- Sport-a-thon event – an inter-college sporting event to include students from many college departments (hospitality students, beauty students for sports massage, media students etc.)
- Monthly cross-college sustainability initiatives, such as cooking demonstration, highlight food waste, healthy eating and the links between food production and climate change.
- Police Scotland (local campus police) – Walk the line and beer goggles
- The Prince's Trust campus garden
- Care students for Pride not Prejudice
- Computing students fund raising for coeliac awareness
- South West Trophy round 2 –
- DG Vibes live (radio) Christmas show
- DG Vibes pre-recorded shows
- Christmas hamper appeal for the Trussell Trust
- Sleigh dog food collection for the local dog shelter
- Christmas jumper day raising money for Radio Westsound's Cash for Kids and Save the Children
- C4U Sexual Health Team
- LGBT+ and LGBT Youth
- LGBT History Month
- Community Safety Officers
- Dumfries and Galloway Alcohol & Drugs Abuse
- Smoking Matters
- Health checks for staff and students by Sports students
- Support in Mind
- Meningitis Research
- Alcohol Awareness
- ADDACTION Dumfries and Galloway – Alcohol and Drugs Abuse
- Mental Health Awareness
- Children in Need (Bake Sale, Balloon Raffle)
- UK International Soccer (Recruitment Drive for Coaches to coach in the USA)
- Avon

- Soul Soup Youth Group (Health awareness)
- Burns Night
- Chinese New Year

### **3 Library**

The library team play an active role to support access and inclusion. The library plays a key role in developing essential skills of literacy, research skills and digital awareness. It provides a flexible space with a wide and inclusive range of resources to support learning and teaching. It offers 'quick reads' as a way to encourage students to develop their literacy skills. It promotes and support events such as world book day and internet safety. In partnership with the Student Association, the library runs reading clubs with the aim of encouraging reading for pleasure

As well as the usual library resources, it offers 50-networked computers for student use as well as 'Eduroam' service for mobile devices. It has a wide range of e-books and resources for students to access. The library encourages and supports students to develop as digital citizens.

The library also play a key role in transitioning students from college to universities on the Crichton campus. The College library, known as the Crichton Library, was formed from the coming together of the libraries of Dumfries and Galloway College, University of Glasgow, the University of the West of Scotland and Scotland's Rural College. The Crichton library serves staff and students of all institutions based on the Crichton site.

### **4 Access Courses**

The College provides a number of access level and employability courses targeted to the hardest to reach in our region. These courses meet the needs of students who are not able to enter other vocational education due to a number of issues including:

- Having poor confidence / low self-esteem
- Holding few or no qualifications
- Needing an alternative to school
- Needing emotional, behavioural or learning support
- Have no idea vocational/career interests

Staff delivering on these courses work in partnership with the student support teams, usually an educational support work provides group support but very often individual support. After successfully completing the course students will be able to progress to mainstream courses in their chose vocational area but may still need additional support to progress.

### **5 Employability Courses**

The College was unsuccessful in its bid to Skills Development Scotland Employability Fund for places for 17-18 delivery. However, working in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council Employability Team, the College is planning to offer its own Employability Courses focusing on

behavioural change to support long term unemployed improve their chances of securing employment.

## **6 Supported Programmes**

The College currently offers four full time courses and one day-release course for students with complex needs. There is college wide support and encouragement from staff for students on supported programmes. There is a staff culture that students are given all opportunities to be involved in the work and life of the college. Students from these programmes are usually very active and engaging class representatives, albeit with staff support and guidance, and ensure that the student voice is heard. There are some college operational areas/functions offering work experience to the students. Staff delivering on these courses work in partnership with the student support teams, and educational support workers provide group support. All students are given a college iPad as part of their course.

Tutors also provide a 'meet and greet' before classes start in the morning to support students coming in on buses or by taxi. Support over breaks and lunch time is constantly available and a transport duty at the end of the day supports students on their way home. This extended support allows these students with an opportunity to further their independence skills and travel on public transport within the bounds of their ability. It also is a reassurance for parents or carers of vulnerable young people that they will be supported in catching correct buses and will have support systems if there are problems or delays. The other benefits of this extended support is the opportunity to include supported students in the daily routines of the college, to support inclusion and to support problem solving and decision making skills. It is also a secure environment for work experience if appropriate for individuals.

The College works closely with local secondary schools and the Social Work department in identifying students with an additional need who may benefit from time on a supported programme. Attendance at progression and transition reviews for identified students allows transitions to be put in place to allow students to familiarise themselves with college surroundings and college staff at a comfortable level. Depending on the needs of the individual, this transition may be extended over a two-year period or may involve a short link course.

Each transition is tailored to an individual. When a student progresses to becoming a full time student at college their personal tutor is the same person who supported their transition and will remain their personal tutor while they are at college. This continuity has proven to be successful and helps contribute towards a positive experience for the student while they are attending college. It is also a reassuring support to parents or carers who appreciate that college staff know and understand the needs of the student as an individual. Dumfries and Galloway College allows a holistic approach to the further education experience offered to students with an additional support needs. Working closely with schools, social work, local community groups and different care agencies, the student feels secure and supported allowing them to progress their life skills and self-confidence.

Some students from supported programmes progress to level four programmes across the college and staff between departments, advisers, and Educational support workers work together to make this transition smooth and positive. Normally the student would then receive 1 to 1 support on their level 4 course.

The College in partnership with Project Search Europe and Dumfries and Galloway Council, will continue to deliver 'Project Search', a one-year transition programme providing training and education leading to employment for young people with disabilities and/or Autism. The programme is delivered on-site at the Council's Cargen Tower premises on the outskirts of Dumfries. Project search staff also, as appropriate, attend transition meetings in school.

## **7 Princes Trust**

The College also deliver Princes Trust programmes. These personal development programmes enable students to gain new skills, take a qualification and meet new people, and vitally for this group gain confidence. As part of the course, they will also spend time developing interview and CV skills to ensure they are confident to take the next step. Often the next stop is a full-time college course.

## **8 Digital inclusion and Accessibility**

The College ICT systems are accessible and inclusive. The College is continually investing in ICT to ensure its infrastructure is future proof to meet the needs of all. Our infrastructure is designed to support 'bring your own device (BYOD)' enabling students to use the devices that are best suited to them, either college owned or student supplied. The College operates the Eduroam secure wireless network that allows staff and students to use their college network accounts eliminating the need for a wi-fi guest login.

Our web services conform to AA of the Web Accessibility Initiative (<https://www.w3.org/WAI/>).

The Student Support Team are currently working with Information Systems Team and the Blended Learning Advisers (BLA's) in developing an 'Accessibility Toolbar'. This will allow all students to use supportive and inclusive features such as screen tinting, text to speech and screen magnifying.

The Information Systems team has a focus on content development and supporting staff to develop accessible learning and teaching materials using a variety of media. The Team has been working on implementing 'Responsive Design' on all our online platforms. The Information systems teams also supports the collation, and analysis of data relating to student applications, enrolment, withdrawal, achievement and progression.

The College supports and encourages its staff to improve their IT/digital skills through formal and informal CPD. The College has invested in three Blended Learning Advisors, to work closely with

academic staff to support and mentor them in the use of technology in learning and teaching and different approaches to flexible blended learning.

## **9 Learning and Teaching Mentors**

The College has invested in four Learning and Teaching Mentors. The role of the peer mentor is to support staff to become outstanding reflective practitioners through the adoption of inclusive practices and methodologies, appropriate use of technology and to develop engaging, flexible, responsive, innovative and blended approaches to delivery. One of the key roles of the mentor is to observe staff in the class and work in partnership with them to develop and implement detailed individual developments plans.

## **10 College publicity**

The College seeks to ensure where possible that publicity and promotion practices target and encourage applicants from under-represented groups. There is careful scrutiny of publicity, promotion materials and marketing related activities to ensure that brochures, leaflets, adverts and display materials reflect the diversity of college students. We do this in a number of ways:

- We carefully monitor production of promotional materials to ensure that these do not contain socially, racially biased, stereotypical terminology in either information or illustrations.
- We actively promote to attract / encourage applications that would address gender imbalance in some subject areas. Alternative formats of information / communication can be made available to support a disability.
- Printed materials are designed with consideration of visual impairments wherever possible.
- We explore and use non 'traditional' methods of promoting college provision by establishing links with publicity networks of local community groups and other organisations as well as social media and digital marketing.
- Recruitment procedures are designed to encourage applications from all sections of the community and from all levels of ability.
- Entry criteria is clear and inclusive.
- Impartial guidance is offered to all applicants through the application / advice sessions to ensure that individuals are placed on the best course to help them succeed.
- The College ensures that admission procedures are user friendly and avoids unnecessary barriers. Although we have an online application process, we still offer hard copy and a personal support service to those that require this support.

## 11 Impact, Monitoring and evaluation

The College has in place a comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation that will:

- measures progress towards the success of this strategy, including tracking both academic achievement and the long term impact of OU study on the lives of students, their families and communities;
- enables the college to improve the way we deliver services to our students; and
- enables the college to demonstrate that resources are being spent effectively.

The College is committed to support the following priority groups:

- SIMD10
- Disabled
- Gender
- Care Experienced
- Students who are carers
- Students on Access Courses
- Age group 16-19 and 20-24
- Student with Needs Assessment
- Student with complex needs

The college closely monitors participation of learners from protected characteristics.

Through this strategy, the College aims to improve student retention and achievement in all priority groups where it is lower than the college average. The following tables show retention and achievement rates for students in priority groups over the past 3 session.

### Full-time Further Education Students

Year	All	SIMD10	Disabled	Male	Female	Care Exp'd	Access courses	16-19	20-24	Needs Assessment
2015-16	69	67	67	69	68	67	65	70	68	72
2014-15	69	60	62	69	69	68	65	68	68	72
2013-14	74	68	72	76	72	74	65	74	70	81

### Full-time Higher Education Students

Year	All	SIMD10	Disabled	Male	Female	Care Exp'	16-19	20-24	Needs Assessment
2015-16	82	77	71	81	83	100	82	87	73
2014-15	85	74	93	83	86	-	86	85	96
2013-14	83	71	84	84	81	-	82	91	83



### Full-time Further education Learners

Year	All	SIMD10	Disabled	Male	Female	Care Exp'd	Access courses	16-19	20-24	Needs Assessment
2015-16	60	59	62	60	60	67	60	50	63	61
2014-15	63	57	62	62	65	55	60	62	63	61
2013-14	62	54	62	64	60	50	56	60	60	69

### Full-time Higher Education Learners

Year	All	SIMD10	Disabled	Male	Female	Care Exp'd	16-19	20-24	Needs Assessment
2015-16	72	71	63	66	76	100	70	76	73
2014-15	72	63	70	67	75	-	72	70	64
2013-14	73	49	80	72	73	-	73	79	92

## 12 Objectives and Outputs 2017-2018

Objective	Output
To increase the number of credits delivered to students from 10% most deprived postcode	Increase credits by 4% from 8% to 12%
To provide meaningful progression / employment opportunities for care leavers and young carers	To increase successful outcomes for 16-19 year old by 5% on full-time further education courses To establish a baseline for positive destination for care experienced students To increase successful outcomes for 16-19 year old by 2% on full-time higher education courses To increase successful outcomes for students with a disability by 5% on full-time higher education courses To increase successful outcomes for male by 5% on full-time higher education courses
To ensure equal representation and positive outcomes for learners with all protected characteristic groups, with particular focus on gender equality	Increase the minority gender share in each of the imbalanced course areas in-line with gender imbalance action plan