

Education  
Partnership  
North East

# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Report 2023-2024



# Foreword

**We are committed to promoting equality and strive to ensure that all communications and learning materials are available in various languages and formats, including large font.**

An enlarged print version of this document is available on request. If you would like this document in an alternative format to meet your needs, please contact:

**Marketing, Sales and Corporate Affairs**  
0191 511 6000  
marketing@educationpartnershipne.ac.uk

If you have any questions or queries regarding any aspect of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, please contact:

**Vikkie Morton**  
Vice Principal Student Services and Community  
vikkie.morton@educationpartnershipne.ac.uk



We want our students, staff and the communities we serve to thrive, to explore their potential and to unlock their future. For that to become possible they need to feel safe and welcome in every interaction they have with us; they need to feel that they belong.

Our work, highlighted in this report, to achieve diversity, equity, inclusion and to nurture belonging is essential to realising this ambition and fulfilling our role. In pursuit of it we also fulfil and demonstrate our commitment to our public sector duties as described in the Equality Act (2010).

This work – diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) – is hugely important to me, my fellow Board members, the senior leaders and the whole staff body. It is not a bolt on or a box to be ticked.

This work is fundamental to ensuring we can, and do, play the fullest role we can to support our communities to flourish. You will see in this report examples of the work we are doing and impact we have on our students and our wider community. It is work I am enormously proud of and I am grateful to colleagues across the length and breadth of our colleges for their help to make it happen.



This work doesn't stop. The society we are part of continues to change, our communities grow and evolve and our understanding develops. We are committed to refreshing and revising our approach to make sure it continually meets the needs of our communities and helps to create an environment that allows everyone to flourish.

James Stuart,  
**Chair of Governors**



# The College's key initiatives and successes

Progress against key priorities for 2021-2024 and onwards:

## Driven social change to strengthen gender equality and stop violence against others, regardless of gender identity

- Public declaration made by governors and leaders to prevent sexual harassment and violence.
- Implementation of action plan to tackle Sexual Harassment & Violence.
- Developed and delivered Sexual Harassment training to managers and staff.
- Developed and delivered a programme of Sexual Harassment awareness for students' across all campuses as a part of induction and Self, Society & Skills Roadshows.

## Driven social change to strengthen racial equality

- Developed and delivered a programme of Race awareness sessions for students across all campuses
- Embedded Hate Crime Champions model across all colleges within (EPNE)

## Developed Student Mental Health Champion Programme

- Developed student-led resources to support student wellbeing.
- Health and Wellbeing Officer appointed as part of Student Collective to lead on student-led activity and initiatives and support team of campus-based Champions.
- Health and Wellbeing Roadshows included student-led activity.



# The College's commitment

## Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Principles

### Our community

We will value our differences and benefit from our diversity of thought, background and experience. We will reflect the diversity of those that we work with and for.

### Our behaviours

Our leaders will act as role models and champions. Individually and collectively, we will uphold our shared vision, and stand up to challenge behaviours that don't reflect it.

### Our progress

Data will be central to our decision making in helping us measure and drive change. We won't stop listening and learning and will be honest and transparent about our progress.





# The College

Education Partnership North East (EPNE) is a multi-award-winning regional College group recruiting students from Tees Valley to the Scottish Borders in diverse urban and rural communities. The College comprises several large campuses; Sunderland College (3 campuses), Hartlepool Sixth Form College (1 campus) and Northumberland College (2 campuses).

Provision extends across all subject areas with specialisms in vocational, technical, and academic education and training for 16–19 year-olds and adults. The College is the biggest provider of Apprenticeships in the North East. Provision includes specialist SEND education, Land-Based and Sixth Form. Further education courses span from pre-entry level to level 3, and higher education spans from levels 4–6.

## The North East is an area of high social and economic deprivation

Education Partnership North East recruits and delivers education to some of the most deprived areas in the UK. 54.6% of households in the North East are classed as deprived in at least one dimension, the highest rate in England and Wales. Sunderland has the highest % of deprived households at 58.5%, Northumberland has 51.5% and in Hartlepool 57.8% of households are deprived in at least one dimension.

## Employment and the Labour Market

- Unemployment in the North East is currently 5.2% (0.9% above the UK average) with a 21.9% inactivity rate (0.8% above the UK average)
- The latest NE unemployment rate is the lowest since the start of comparable data in 2004/05
- The latest NE female and male unemployment rates were both the lowest since the start of comparable data in 2004/05
- Both female and male NE unemployment rates were highest among 16 to 24 year-olds
- The largest net decreases in unemployment in the last year were among males aged 50 to 64 and females aged 16 to 24

## Poverty (Trussell Trust & NE Child Poverty Commission)

- Over the past year, the Trussell Trust reported a 28% increase in the number of food parcels delivered to food banks across the region.
- Wards in each North East local authority area with the highest % of child poverty, before housing costs 2021/22 include Sunderland (Hendon), Northumberland (Blyth and Berwick), and Hartlepool (Victoria).
- 38% of North East children live in relative poverty, with over half of those in working households.
- Almost two in five – 35% – of all children in the North East were living in poverty in 2021/22. This rises to almost half – 47% – of North East children in families with an under 5 (in 2019/20 – latest breakdown available).
- The North East has experienced the country's steepest child poverty increases since 2014/15 (up from 26% in just under a decade).

## Qualifications (2021 Census)

- 20.3% of people in the North East have no qualifications (2.1% above the national rate) with only 47.2% having qualifications at Level 3 and above (3.5% below the national rate).
- Only 25.3% of people in the North East possess a degree or equivalent (8.3% below the national average).
- In Sunderland those with Level 3 and above is 41.7%, Northumberland 48.4% and Hartlepool 43.2%.

## Health (2021 Census)

- 7% of people in the North East rate their health as bad or very bad (1.7% above the national average) with the North East having the highest proportion of people reporting very bad health in England.
- Children in the deprived areas are twice as likely to be obese by year 6 compared to the least deprived areas.
- The North East ranks lowest for life expectancy compared to other regions at 76.9 years for males and 80.9 years for females.
- 9.8% of people report that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot by a disability – compared to the English average of 7.5%.
- 5.7% economic inactivity due to ill health or disability – compared to the English average of 4.1%.
- 10.1% of people state that they provide unpaid care – compared to the English average of 8.9%.
- The highest rate of smoking at 14.8%.
- Mental health concerns for young people have increased with the North East having the second highest in the country at 542.9 per 100,000 and 3.2% of school pupils were identified with social, economic and mental health needs, significantly higher than England.

## NEET

- 12.3% of young people (16–24) in the UK are NEET with a rise in young males becoming NEET, however, this is 17.2% in the North East which has the highest levels of NEET.
- The proportion of NEET (16/17 year olds) in 2023 in Hartlepool was 3.9%, 4.8% in Sunderland and 5.1% in Northumberland.

The College has developed strong relationships with local partner schools to ensure that young people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and are supported by seamless transition processes that are underpinned by timely provision of information, advice and guidance.

The College's aspiration is **'Excellence at the heart of everything we do'**. To realise this vision, the College will excel in the pursuit of excellence to enable an increase in student population and growth in performance by uniting the College's people and culture and strengthening their reputation locally, regionally and nationally. Purposefully bold and challenging, the College aspires to be:

In the top 10 colleges nationally for student achievement

In the top 30 of colleges nationally for financial health







## Strategic goals

**Goal 1:** Shape and evolve a career focused curriculum

Our focus is providing curriculum pathways that meet the current and future demands of the region's labour market.

**Goal 2:** Create outstanding learning opportunities for our students

An unwavering and relentless focus on developing our students through outstanding teaching, learning, support and assessment.

**Goal 3:** Unite our culture and empower our people

A culture built on developing high performing people, who are empowered to lead, innovate and take ownership.

**Goal 4:** Strengthen our financial resilience and invest in our resources

We will build our financial resilience and strengthen our resources to ensure all stakeholders benefit from outstanding learning environments.

**Goal 5:** Engage locally, regionally and nationally and build our reputation

We will be an engaged and influential sector leader with a strong reputation and winning partnerships.



### Values

The College aspires to be the best in all that they do and to enable employees and students to reach their full potential. A culture of strong values means strong results for all of our stakeholders. This is why a set of professional values are fundamental to the pursuit for excellence and must underpin all activities.

The professional values and behaviours provide a valuable framework for use by people at every level of the organisation. They help to evaluate decisions and instil confidence in the choices that are made.

### Authentic

We are who we say we are, we do what we say we will do.

### Respectful

We value the opinion of others and the contribution they make.

### Innovative

We work hard to create a dynamic, forward-looking culture.

### Ambitious

We are determined to achieve our vision and goals.

# Section 1: Eliminate unlawful discrimination

## Our approach

Treat all students, staff and stakeholders fairly and equitably regardless of a protected characteristic including age, race or ethnicity, disability, gender, gender preference, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, non-belief, membership of professional associations or trade unions, marital status, family responsibility and socio-economic standing.

Raise awareness of equality and diversity within and outside curriculum settings, to challenge and minimise discrimination and prejudice.

Work in partnership with the local communities, Northumbria Police, Cleveland Police and Hate Crime Advocacy to ensure all incidents of hate crime are reported and that support is provided to victims.

## The impact of our work

### Special Educational Needs and Disability - SEND

Students in Directions collaborated with the charity Grace House on a short film titled 'Is it a Crime?' The film, created by actors with SEND, aims to educate individuals with SEND about hate crimes and how to report them. You can watch the film on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/q81CiwY5i3o>





Our Foundation Learning students at Kirkley Hall actively engaged in a research project, a collaboration among Newcastle, York, and Glasgow Universities, commissioned by the Economic & Social Research Council. The study focuses on the transition into adulthood for disabled young people. The researchers were delighted with the insightful data and active involvement of our students, contributing significantly to the project. This research is a crucial part of the broader initiative on the preparation for adulthood framework at Northumberland Council.



Students in our specialised SEND provision, participated in project#2999 with Dr. Sarah Martin Denham from the University of Sunderland. They represent the 2999 children, many with SEND, excluded daily due to lack of inclusion. Dr. Sarah's research, involving young people, parents and caregivers, aims to raise awareness and advocate for improved school support. The project involves crafting 10cm x 10cm crochet squares, each symbolizing an individual, to create a giant blanket of solidarity. Through this initiative, they highlight the plight of excluded children and call for greater inclusivity in education.



### True Colours

The College's LGBT+ group has continued to strengthen, with over 50 students regularly joining together across all campuses. The group offers peer support and the opportunity to talk in confidence in a safe, supportive environment. The group has also been instrumental in helping the College to make changes and improvements that create a more inclusive environment for the LGBT+ community.

The College now hosts and supports an LGBT+ group for school age pupils from the local community and this academic year, both groups came together for joint meetings to offer peer support and share experiences.

The True Colours Group also supported at open events and activities to promote the support to prospective students as well as raising awareness with staff and governors.

### White Ribbon

As part of the Stay Safe Roadshow, a series of workshops and activities took place on sexual harassment and violence, this included student-led activities in performances, videos and pledges to support the White Ribbon campaign. In response to the activities, students' awareness of sexual harassment and violence improved by 35%, and their confidence in reporting concerns improved by 26% compared to before the sessions took place.

### Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day was promoted, with staff and students taking part in various activities to raise awareness of events past and present. Over 350 students across our campuses also took part in a live Q&A with a Holocaust survivor Susan Pollock MBE with 100% of students attending agreeing it had improved their understanding of discrimination and the impact it can have.

**"Events like this are so important to promote in College, we must never forget what happened and the messages are as important today to make sure we all challenge discrimination and make sure everyone feels like they belong." - Student**

### Display and remembrance tree.



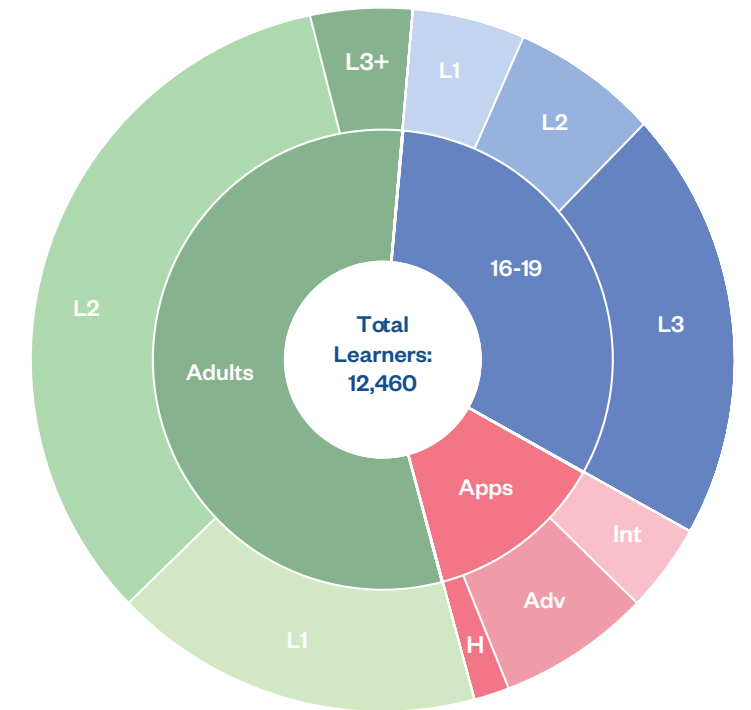




# Student profile

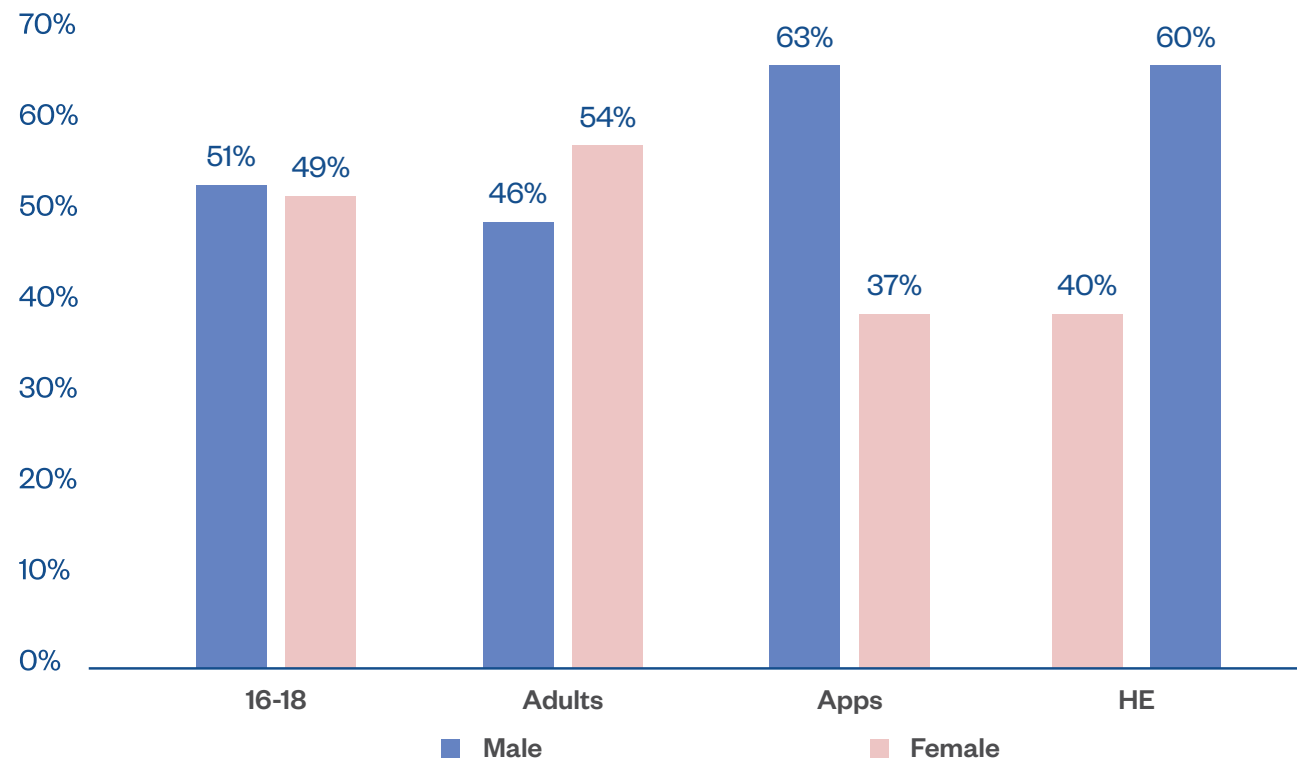
The vast majority of students at EPNE are in further education programmes with approximately 7% studying Higher Education. Overall the student profile is 49% male compared to 51% female. The vast majority of students studying at EPNE are English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish British with 16% of students coming from an Ethnic Minority. 63% of students are Adults studying either further education, apprenticeships or higher education. Higher Education programmes are predominately delivered to “very mature” students over 31 years old and over 60% of students come from the lowest participation post codes (POLAR Quintiles). A significant proportion of further education students come from disadvantaged backgrounds with 77% 16 – 18 year olds, 63% Adults and 49% of apprentices.

The College recruits a significant proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Overall 21% of students with 40% 16-18 year olds, 10% Adults, 12% Apprenticeships and 15% of Higher Education students declaring a learning difficulty or disability.

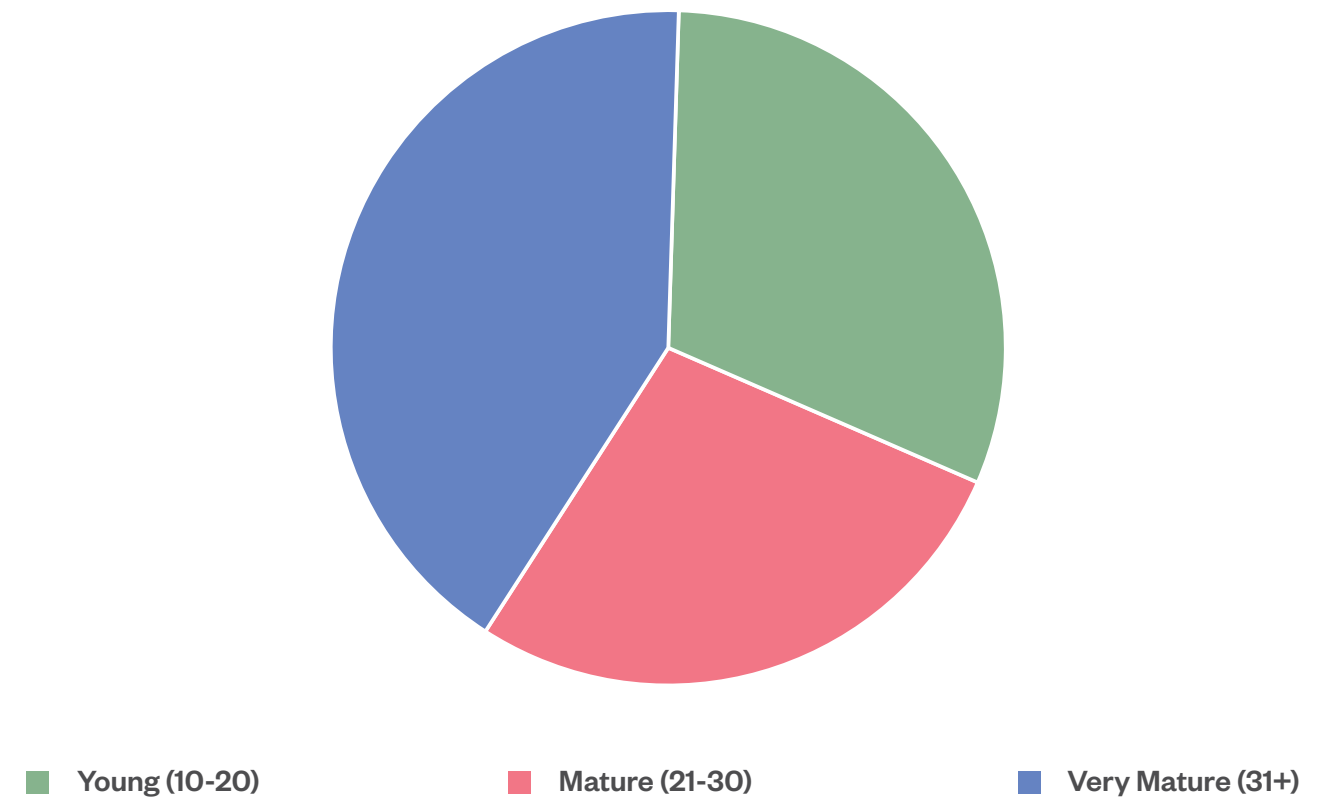


■ 16-19 Funded	4,290	34%
■ Level 1 or below	710	6%
■ Level 2	950	8%
■ Level 3	2,630	21%
■ Apprenticeships	1,260	10%
■ Intermediate	460	4%
■ Advanced	680	5%
■ Higher	120	1%
■ Adults (Adult Skills & Loans)	6,910	55%
■ Level 1 or below	2,600	21%
■ Level 2	3,730	30%
■ Level 3+	580	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,460</b>	<b>100%</b>

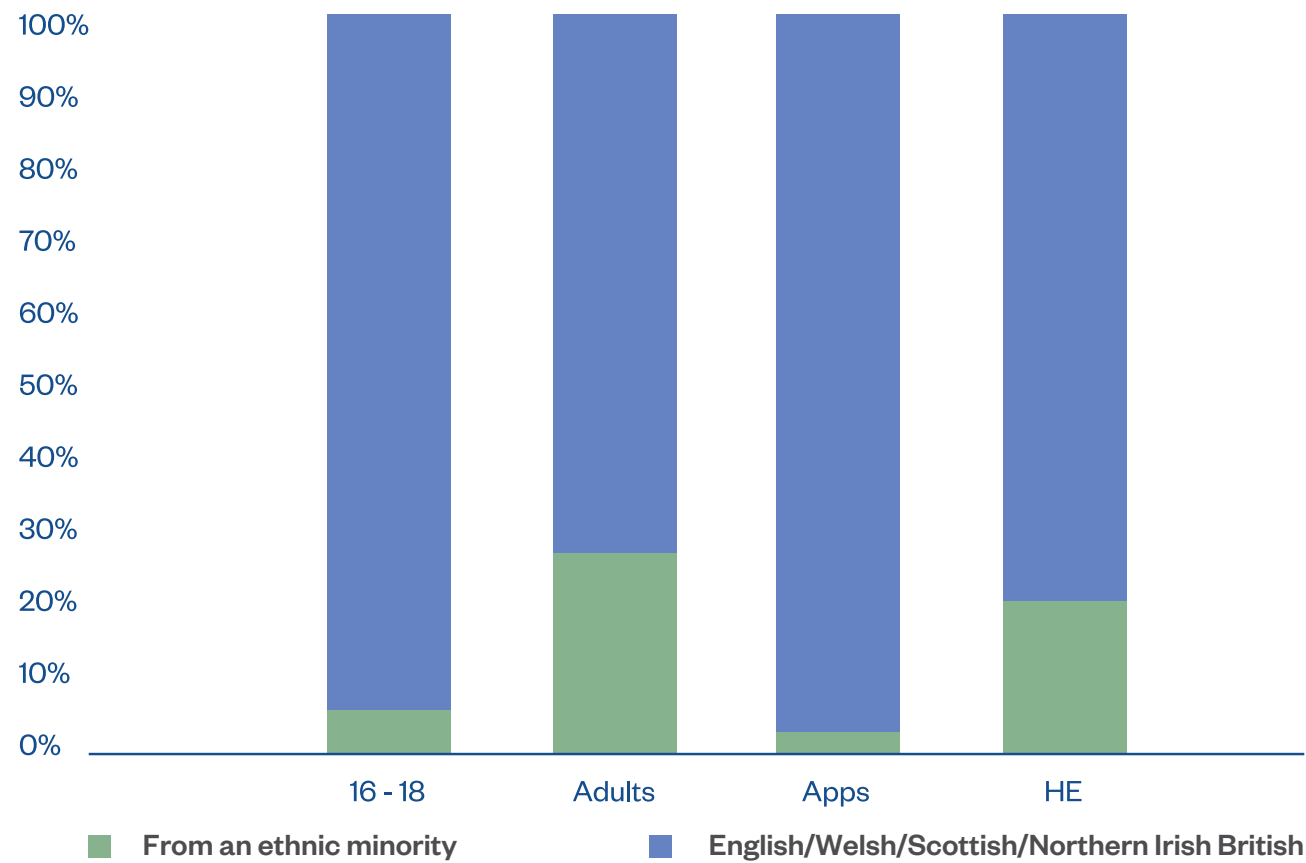
Proportions of male/female student by Funding type



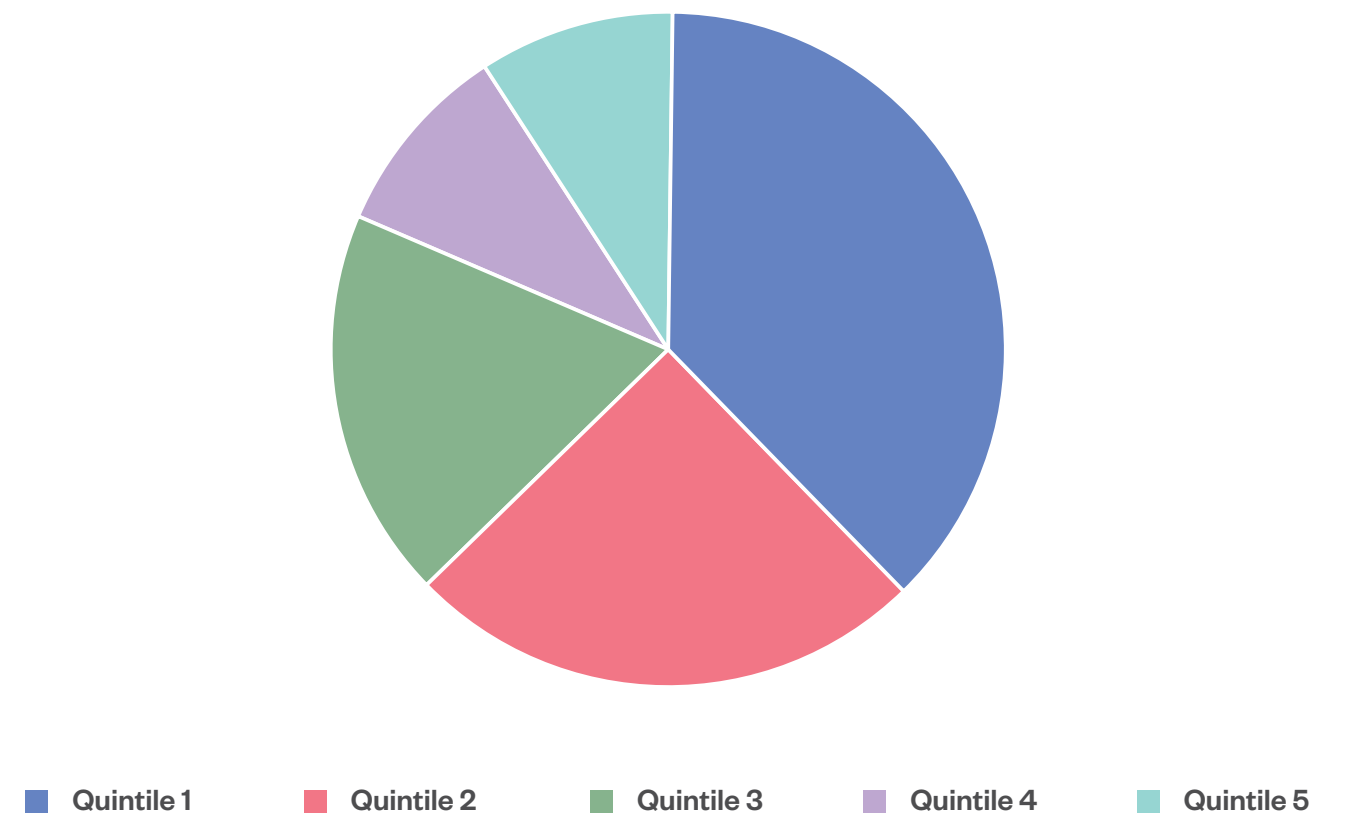
Proportions of Higher Education students by age band



Proportions of students from an ethnic background by funding type

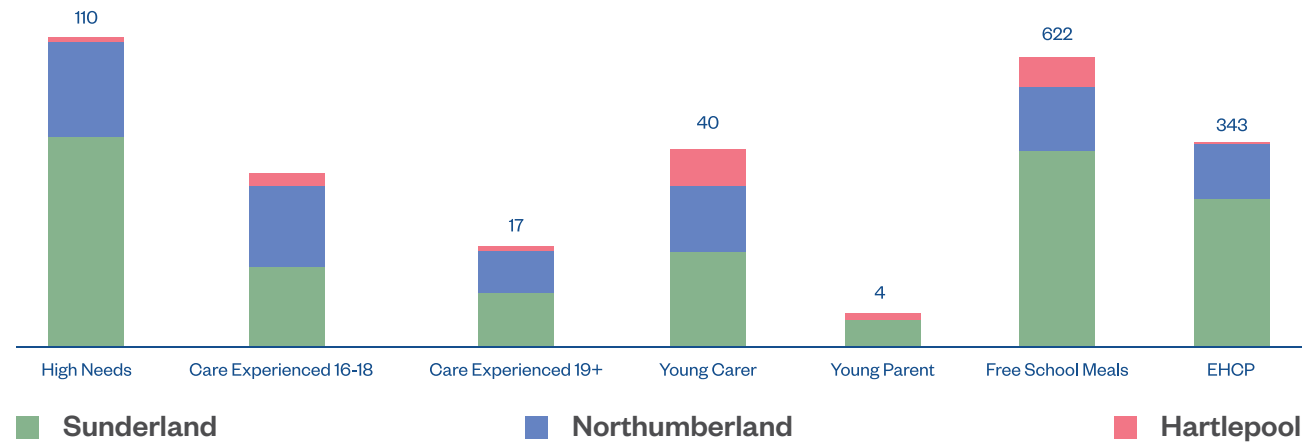


Proportions of Higher Education students by POLAR Quintile

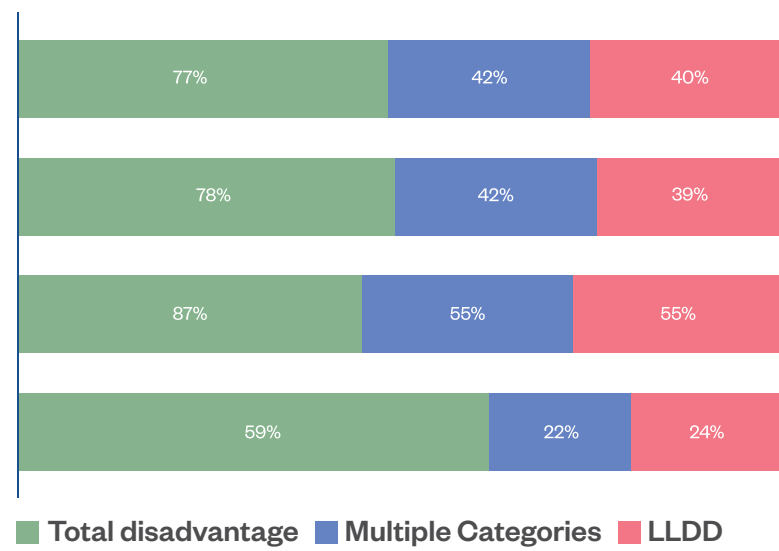




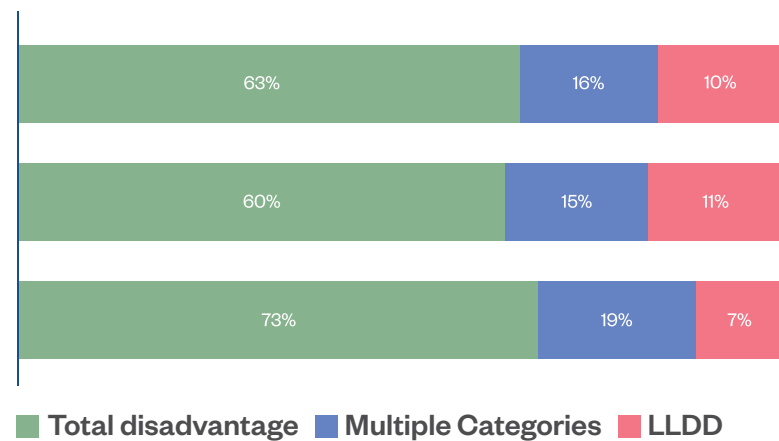
No.s of 16-18 students from different backgrounds



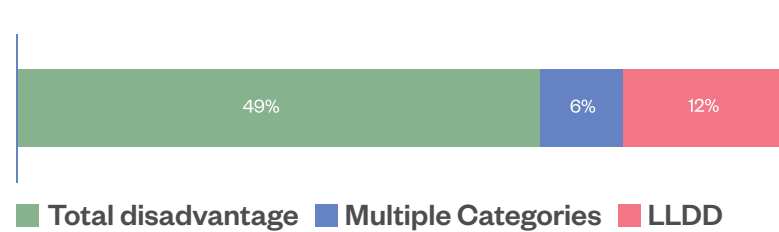
Proportions of disadvantage 16-18 year olds



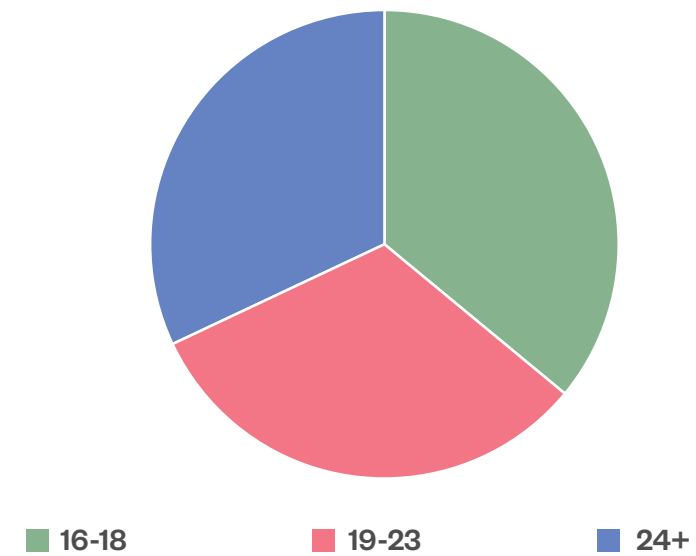
Proportions of disadvantage Adults



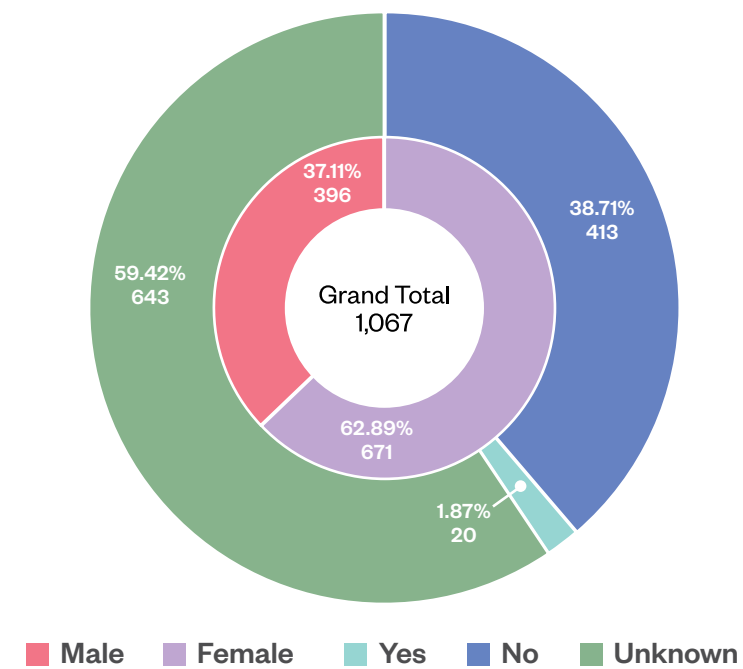
Proportions of disadvantage Adults



Proportions of apprentices from different age groups



Staff Profile by Gender & Disability



**Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)**

Sunderland College is a committed equal opportunities employer and holds the Disability Confident Employer accreditation.

The Disability Confident scheme aims to help employers successfully employ and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. It was developed by employers and disabled people's representatives to make it rigorous but easily accessible. The five commitments that the College adheres to are:

1. Ensure the recruitment process is inclusive and accessible.
2. Communicate and promote vacancies.
3. Offer an interview to disabled people.
4. Anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments as required.
5. Support any existing employee who acquires a disability or long term health condition enabling them to remain in work.





By Ethnicity	Count as %	Count
Any Other Asian Background	0.28%	3
Any Other Background	0.47%	5
Black-African	0.28%	3
Black-Congolese	0.09%	1
Black-European	0.09%	1
Black-Ghanaian	0.09%	1
Black-Nigerian	0.09%	1
Black-Somali	0.09%	1
Indian	0.56%	6
Not Stated	18.46%	197
Other White	1.31%	14
Pakistani	0.37%	4
White British	77.79%	830
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,067</b>

The ethnic makeup of our college group is comprised of staff who work across the North East from Hartlepool to Berwick. The census data for 2021 showed that the percentage of All White population in the North East was 93% and 81% in England. In terms of comparing our staffing profile to that of the North East we can see that 79.1% of staff have declared themselves as white and 2.44% of staff declared themselves as other ethnic groups. However, 18.13% of staff have not stated their ethnicity. Analysis of our non-declaration of equality data and agreement of actions to improve will be a key priority of the College's Inclusion and Vulnerable Groups Committee.



By Sexual Orientation	Count as %	Count
Bisexual	0.28%	3
Gay/Lesbian	1.50%	16
Hetrosexual	43.49%	464
Prefer Not to Say	1.31%	14
Unknown	53.42%	570
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,067</b>

### Positive mental wellbeing



Since 2017, the College has been recognised for its ongoing commitment and outstanding practice around workplace health and wellbeing and maintains the prestigious Better Health at Work Award - Maintaining Excellence Standard.

In 2022/23, we extended our work to support staff wellbeing by introducing campus-based Wellbeing Action Groups. Led by the Head of Campus and nominated staff who worked together to identify and prioritise actions and activities to promote wellbeing and increase the sense of wellbeing (both physical and mental) among the wider staff team.

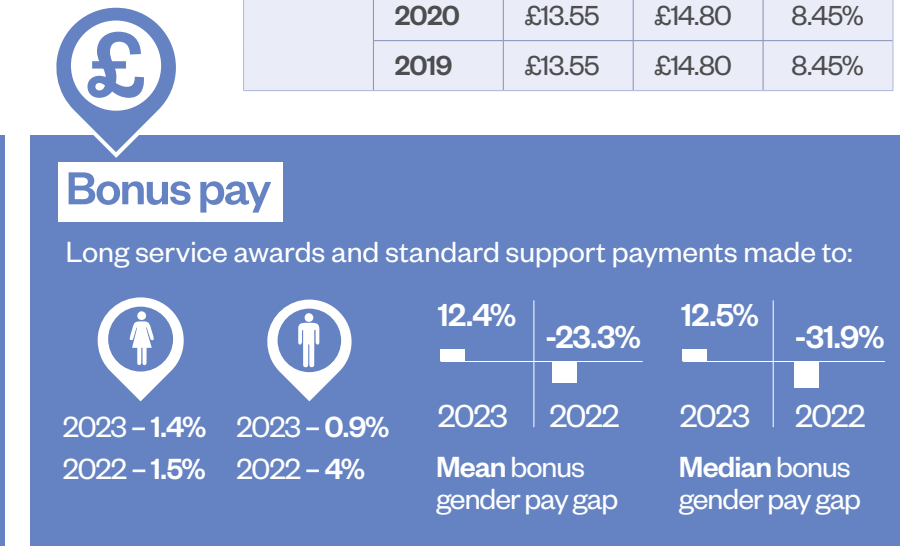
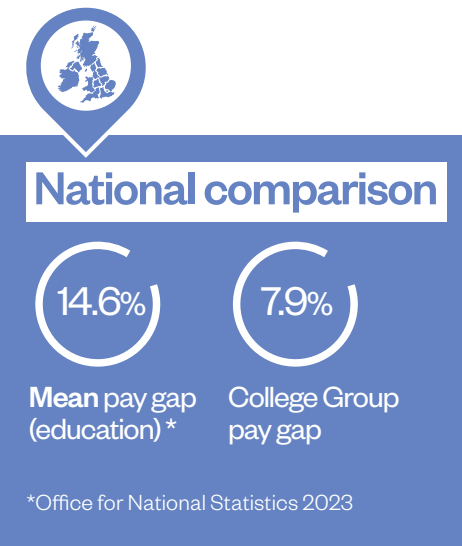


# Gender Pay Gap Report

## Gender split at EPNE

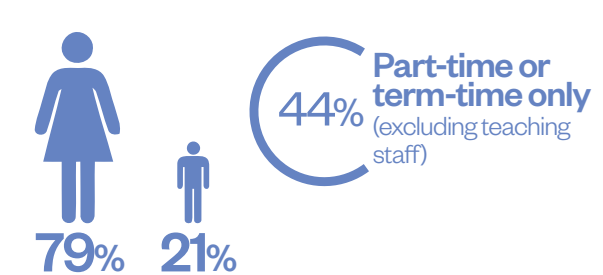


Gender pay gap		♀	♂	£
<b>Mean</b>	2023	£15.27	£16.58	7.9%
	2022	£14.81	£15.82	6.4%
	2021	£14.71	£15.71	6.4%
	2020	£14.44	£15.34	5.9%
	2010	£14.26	£15.28	6.7%
<b>Median</b>	2023	£13.96	£15.71	11.1%
	2022	£13.42	£15.02	10.7%
	2021	£13.68	£14.80	7.6%
	2020	£13.55	£14.80	8.45%
	2019	£13.55	£14.80	8.45%



Employment quartile bands	♀	♂	Grand total
Lower Quartile	152 73.4%	55 26.6%	207
Lower Middle Quartile	130 63.1%	76 36.9%	206
Upper Middle Quartile	113 54.9%	93 45.1%	206
Upper Quartile	111 53.9%	95 46.1%	206
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>825</b>

## Why gender pay gap?



## Actions

- Review our recruitment practice to see if we can encourage more female staff to apply into male dominated academic subjects
- Additional analysis in line with the gender pay gap service recommendations to further understand why the pay gap has widened and appropriate actions which can be implemented to reduce the gap
- Review our existing process for capturing exit data and carry out additional leaver data analysis to understand reasons for leaving to determine appropriate actions to encourage retention
- Review our non declaration of equality data and take agreed actions in conjunction with the People & Resources Committee to encourage an increase in applicant and workforce declarations



# Governance and DEIB

The governance of DEIB starts with the Board of Corporation who has responsibility for ensuring the college meets its public sector duties. But it takes its responsibility beyond that and works to embed the principles of DEIB into all the College does through asking challenging questions and ensuring data is broken down by protected characteristics, those on free meals, or caring responsibilities.

The Corporation went through a significant transition in the past year moving from a structure with local governing boards to one with none but still ensuring the local voice was heard. Lead Governors for Economy and Place were introduced, alongside a Lead Governor for SEND.

During 2022-23 the Board of Corporation or one of its committees:

- Approved an inclusive Curriculum Offer for 23-24 which provides something for everyone no matter their age or previously acquired qualifications. The offer provided for increased hours devoted to personal development and behaviour and attitudes with Skills, Society and Economy embedded in every course to help our students become informed and active citizens
- Adopted our Accountability Agreement 2023-24 which demonstrates our strategic aim to be an inclusive provider setting clear progression pathways for all including those most disadvantaged and with an aim to 'deepen our expertise in delivery for the most vulnerable and disadvantages across our communities'
- Approved Strategic Roadmaps for each college brand which includes goals such as becoming a College of Sanctuary, extending progression pathways from Level 2 to Level 4, and creating hubs for students with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Approved the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement which was collaboratively designed and co-created with students
- Approved the annual Modern Slavery Statement setting forth the College's commitment against human trafficking
- Approved a staff pay award ensuring the College remains a Real Living Wage employer
- Scrutinised and approved the publication of the Gender Pay Gap Report
- Approved a Group Quality Improvement Plan with a focus on supporting our high needs students into employment
- Approved a Higher Education Framework with ambitions to widen access and participation to strengthen the College's impact on social mobility including for those from minority backgrounds
- Invited external scrutiny on itself through an External Board Effectiveness Review which reflected on the diversity of the membership and provided recommendations to enhance practice

# Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

- Ensure policies, services and practices reflect the College's commitment to equality
- Celebrate diversity and enable everyone to achieve
- Develop self-confident students who realise they have the potential to be successful and achieve their goals
- Foster inclusivity and removal of barriers

## The impact of our work: DEIB Statement

This year, the College was bold in its review of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy revising the policy to a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement bringing together college values and work areas such as leadership, curriculum and business support commitments. The DEIB Statement is formatted in a much different way to our corporate policies to engage readers and was co-created with ESOL students, students from our True Colours group and staff across a number of departments. With specific statements from leadership, curriculum and business support, the DEIB Statement is unambiguous in the College's approach to nurturing belonging.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging at EPNE.** Education Partnership North East

**The purpose.** The purpose of this statement is to say what we mean by equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, to promote best practice and to guide our compliance with the Equality Act 2010, other legislation and guidance such as the SEND Code of Practice. Our path forward aims to be broad and intentional, with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging included as a core value and priority of the College.

**Our Pledge.** To provide an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential with a feeling of self-esteem. It will eliminate unfair discrimination through a zero-tolerance approach, regular target setting and through monitoring the development of positive action programmes.

**We take a person-centred approach, providing people with the tools to achieve, to enable:**

- > Fair access
- > Fair opportunities to participate and shape how we work
- > Fair outcomes

**Diversity**  
Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals these include but are not limited to: age, disability (mental or physical ability), gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

**Equity**  
Recognising individual needs and backgrounds; making sure that all have an opportunity to succeed by allocating the right resources to reach an equal outcome.

**Inclusion**  
The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and be their full authentic selves.

**Belonging**  
The sense of acceptance as a part or member of a group; an important human need that cultivates value and positive outcomes.

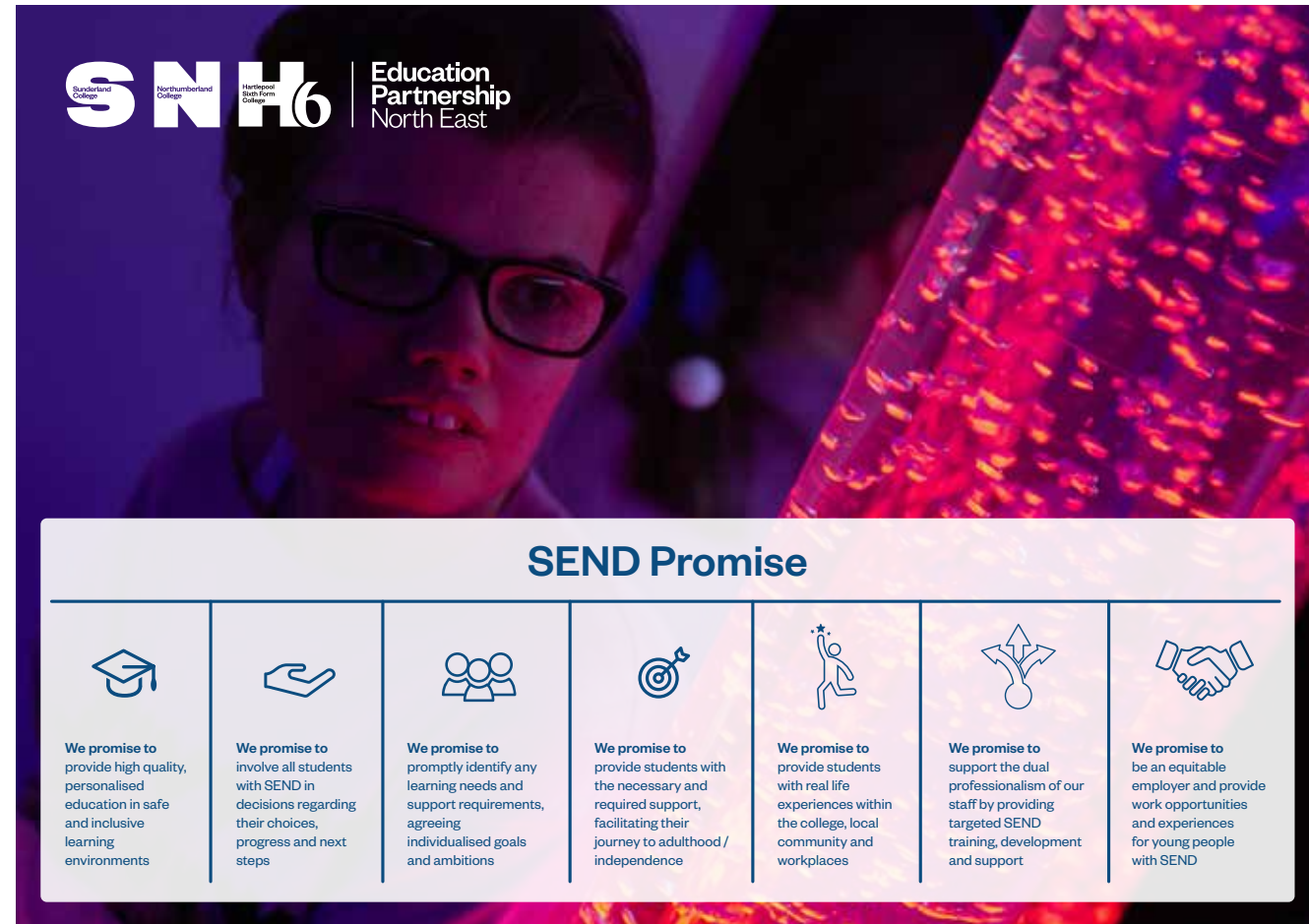


## SEND Champions







Having SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) champions significantly enhances support and advocacy for individuals with diverse learning needs. These champions promote inclusivity, provide expertise, and foster understanding within communities and institutions. Their presence fosters a culture of empowerment, ensuring every individual's right to education and participation is upheld.

## SEND Promise

Implementing a SEND Promise, ensuring tailored support, accessibility, and inclusivity for individuals with diverse learning needs. It fosters a culture of accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement, enhancing educational outcomes and empowering every learner to thrive in a supportive environment.



**SEND Promise**

						
We promise to provide high quality, personalised education in safe and inclusive learning environments	We promise to involve all students with SEND in decisions regarding their choices, progress and next steps	We promise to promptly identify any learning needs and support requirements, agreeing individualised goals and ambitions	We promise to provide students with the necessary and required support, facilitating their journey to adulthood / independence	We promise to provide students with real life experiences within the college, local community and workplaces	We promise to support the dual professionalism of our staff by providing targeted SEND training, development and support	We promise to be an equitable employer and provide work opportunities and experiences for young people with SEND

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2022-23

Whilst our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually, this review aligned with the changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education, to provide that the Board of Governors are aware of their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## HE Framework 2022-26

The College's aim of widening access and participation is set within the Higher Education Framework 2022-26. Within the framework the College has set a goal to attract and support students from diverse social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds with actions designed to break down the barrier to the access of higher education.

## SEND Graduation

The SEND graduation ceremonies at both Bede and Kirkley Hall campus celebrates the accomplishments of dedicated young individuals with additional needs, alongside the educators and learning support staff who have guided and supported them.

## Josh Deighton

Josh Deighton's journey at Directions showcases the transformative power of support and encouragement. Despite struggling with English writing and spelling, his eagerness to learn and impeccable attendance remained consistent. Through group presentations on climate change, Josh found his voice, advocating for sustainable practices like recycling and reusing coffee cups. His initiative sparked institutional change, leading the college to address recycling issues in the refectory and hospitality areas. Alongside academic achievements in English and maths, Josh honed independent living skills and culinary expertise. Now employed at Bede Campus Refectory, his new-found confidence and self-esteem reflect his remarkable growth and contribution to both the college and community.

## Young Carers

The College continued its work to embed support for those with caring responsibilities, demonstrating how we identify carers as a vulnerable group and develop a personalised plan to support them throughout their student journey. We celebrated Young Carers Action Day with a range of activities to share the experiences of our students with caring responsibilities and provide them with some well earned time for themselves with a trip to the theatre to see the Lion King. Staff and other students also pledged how they would further support the young carers they work with.



Life is a juggling act but the support I receive in college and spaces available where it is calm and safe to work really help. Trip and activities are also a good break and I have loved the theatre trip.  
- Young Carer





### Mental Health and Wellbeing Peer Support

Student Champions support in the development of resources to support health and wellbeing and help to support other students with strategies to remove barriers and support their success at college. Students also led sessions as part of Mental Health Awareness Week.

### Narrowing achievement gaps

Achievement gaps continue to narrow for Education Partnership North East. Further Education 16-18 year olds and Adults continue to have very low gaps in the achievement rates and all achievement rates are well above the National rates.

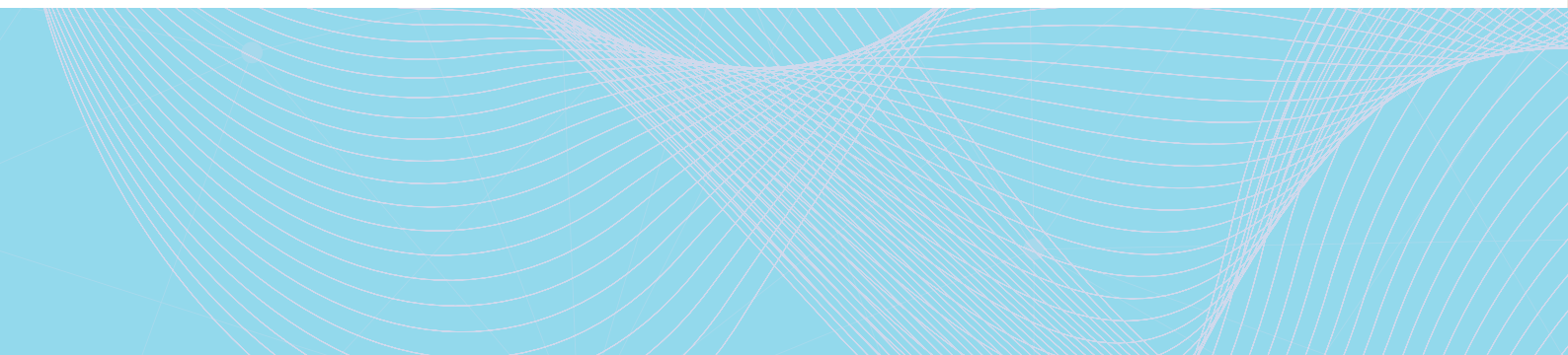
	20/212	1/22	22/23	NR	Diff NR
Eligible for free school meals	87.4%	92.3%	89.8%	84.2%	+5.6%
Not eligible for free school meals	88.6%	91.0%	90.0%	84.2%	+5.8%
Has a learning difficulty or disability	86.2%	89.8%	90.4%	81.6%	+8.8%
Does not have a learning difficulty or disability	89.2%	91.5%	89.8%	85.2%	+4.6%
From an ethnic minority	91.7%	90.5%	91.1%	84.9%	+6.2%
Not from an ethnic minority	88.2%	91.2%	89.9%	83.9%	+6.0%
From a disadvantaged ward	87.7%	90.3%	89.6%	84.2%	+5.4%
Not from a disadvantaged ward	89.5%	92.1%	90.5%	84.2%	+6.3%
Male	88.5%	92.2%	91.1%	83.9%	+7.2%
Female	88.5%	89.9%	88.8%	84.4%	+4.4%

### Apprenticeship narrowing achievement gap

Apprenticeships continue to narrow achievement gaps with apprentices from ethnic minorities perform significantly above the national rate and in line with their peers. Female apprentices perform slightly better than males and this is against the national trend.

Students with a learning difficulty or disability perform well above the national rate, further development for those students with LLDD. To take this further the college will be participating in DfE English & maths apprenticeship flexibilities pilot during 2023/24. The pilot will enable apprentices to pursue structured Entry 3 English and math education, tailored for learners facing special educational needs (SEN) and/or learning difficulties (LDD), regardless of whether they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

	22/23	NR	Diff NR
Has a learning difficulty or disability	58.6%	51.0%	+7.6%
Does not have a learning difficulty or disability	62.2%	55.3%	+6.9%
From an ethnic minority	61.5%	48.9%	+12.6%
Not from an ethnic minority	61.8%	55.7%	+6.1%
Female	63.8%	54.1%	+9.7%
Male	60.3%	55.2%	+5.1%





### Student Voice

As part of the comprehensive student voice strategy, students provide feedback on equality and diversity. Through cross-college students focus groups, have quality and diversity as a standing item at the student collective meetings and have presentation at key college committees. Through these opportunities students are involved in the decision-making process and have the opportunity to improve the learning experience for themselves and others.

Students consistently feel they are treated fairly by staff across the College Group. Different types of students feel they are treated fairly by staff in line with their peers. Different types of adult students are particularly satisfied with the support their tutor provides and Higher Education students feel part of a college community of staff and students. Student experience for Higher Education is rated Silver by the Teaching, Excellence Framework which demonstrates further the engagement the College has with students.

#### I am treated fairly by staff

Types of students	20/21	21/22	22/23
16-18	94%	94%	96%
Apprentices	98%	97%	98%
Males	94%	94%	96%
Females	94%	95%	97%
From an Ethnic Minority	95%	98%	94%
Has a Learning difficulty or disability	95%	93%	95%

#### Adults

#### The help and support my tutor provides is good

Different types of students	20/21	21/22	22/23
Adult	91%	92%	98%
Males	95%	96%	98%
Females	90%	91%	98%
From an Ethnic Minority	94%	93%	97%
Has a Learning difficulty or disability	88%	88%	100%

#### Higher Education

#### I feel I am part of a community of staff and students.

\*(I get the right opportunities to give feedback on my course)

Different types of students	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
HE Year 1	94%	94%	90%	92%
HE Year 2	91%	88%	88%	90%
Male	93%	92%	90%	89%
Female	94%	95%	90%	94%
From an Ethnic Minority	93%	100%	75% (8 students)	100%
Has a Learning difficulty or disability	94%	90%	88%	93%

# Foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

#### Our approach

The College strives to be inclusive in all aspects of the provision that it delivers and recognises the richness that comes from strong, diverse and engaged communities. Working with valued community partners ensures our students have opportunities to influence, not only the College environment, but the communities within which they live and work. We provide opportunities for students to become active citizens and good role models who embrace British Values.

The College supports community organisations and development at an operational level through student projects, and at a strategic level through a range of partnership boards. Strategically, the College has representation on various boards and committees, which ensures the College is reflected in the local community. This includes the North East Local Economic Partnership, Children's Strategic Partnership, Safer Sunderland Partnership Board, Economic Leadership Board, Educational Leadership Board and Sunderland Bid.



### Key partnerships with external agencies include:

- Advocacy Centre North
- Answers
- Brooke Advisory Service
- Cleveland Police
- Collaborative Outreach Programme
- CYPS
- NHS
- Kooth
- Dementia Friends
- Friends of the Drop In (FODI)
- Live Life Well
- MESMAC
- North East Refugee Centre
- Northumbria Police
- Northumbria Healthcare
- Sunderland Care and Support
- Sunderland & Washington Mind
- Sunderland BME Network
- Sunderland Carers Centre

- Northumberland Carers Centre
- Sunderland and Newcastle Pride
- Psychological & Wellbeing Services
- School Nursing Team
- Talk Works
- Tyne & Wear Fire Service
- Virtual School for Looked After Children
- Women into Policing
- Young Asian Voices (YAV)
- NELEP
- The Girls' Network
- White Ribbon
- Pears Foundation
- Washington Women in Need
- YDAP
- Age Concern
- Carers Federation
- Blooms Resilience Programme
- NECO
- Citizens Advice
- NECA
- BIC
- Princes Trust
- CDAS
- THINK

### The impact of our work Cross College Collaboration

Throughout the year, students from different areas of the college came together to run and take part in a range of activities, promoting positive relationships between those with a protected characteristic and those without. Our common room spaces are a hub for these activities. The Self, Society and Skills Roadshows also provided the opportunity for students to share their experiences and learn from each other.

ESOL students enjoying one of the physical team building activities facilitated by Sports students during the Health and Wellbeing Roadshow.

Directions students enjoying a game of pool facilitated by City students during their visit to City Campus.

Kirkley Hall students organised an afternoon on campus for ESOL students from Ashington Campus, including preparing food, organising a tour of the zoo and welcome letters.

### Cultural Festival

Students and staff worked together to organise the Cultural Festival, a celebration of world foods, music and costume, bringing together our communities and providing the opportunity to share experiences.

### Positive Contribution Projects

Students take part in a range of community social action projects as part of their Self, Society and Skills programme, working with local community groups. Each group undertook a positive contribution project which have included organising events for supported living residents, developing intergenerational relationships, as well as community art projects and fundraising. Over 200 projects which engaged over 3000 students and 90 local and regional organisations.

“ I learnt so much working on this project, not only did I make a difference to the residents but learnt so many new skills and learnt a lot about the lives of the residents and how different things were for them. - Student ”





# Our priorities

	Year 1: 2023-24	Year 2: 2024-25	Year 3: 2025-26
1. Diversifying Workforce	<p>Reconfirm commitment to Armed Forces Covenant</p> <p>Achievement of Silver Status-Armed Forces Covenant</p> <p>Analyse recruitment data to understand recruitment and applicant gender patterns and inform action planning</p> <p>Analyse our non-declaration of equality data to identify patterns and inform action planning.</p>	<p>Review Recruitment processes to identify and address race disparities in equality of opportunity.</p> <p>Analyse exit interview results to identify and address race disparities in retention of staff members.</p> <p>Review our recruitment practice to see what actions can be taken to encourage more female staff to apply into male dominated academic subjects.</p> <p>Agree a plan to increase take agreed actions to encourage an increase in applicant and workforce declaration</p>	<p>Achievement of Gold Status -Armed Forces Covenant</p> <p>Undertake ethnicity pay gap recording and publicly publish results.</p> <p>Track and monitor progress on action taken to increase diversity in applications</p> <p>Track and monitor progress toward increasing the number of applicants and staff declaring equal opportunity data</p>
2. Principles of Pedagogy-meeting diverse learner need	<p>Continue to implement existing strategies to ensure achievement gaps remain zero</p> <p>Refresh and publish SEND Framework for 2024-2027</p> <p>Work with employers to encourage and support supported apprenticeships</p> <p>Participation in DfE English &amp; maths apprenticeship flexibilities pilot</p> <p>Appointment of a SEND Lead Governor and a Quality Lead Governor to support and scrutinise provision offered to our students with SEND</p> <p>Professional Practice Day focussed on fair and equitable pedagogical practice that meets the diverse needs of all students.</p> <p>ESOL Community of practice with External Partners</p> <p>Curriculum EDI professional development</p>	<p>Development of a EPNE SEND pedagogical approach across academic and inclusive learning.</p> <p>Review skills and qualification framework for inclusive practitioners in SEND</p> <p>Development of SEND training &amp; skills matrix</p> <p>Targeted development for both academic and support staff to meet the needs of ASC and SEMH</p> <p>Targeted development for both academic and support staff to develop capabilities and understanding of how to meet the needs of students from different cultural backgrounds and experiences</p>	<p>Implement SEND training &amp; skills matrix across all colleges</p> <p>Develop qualifications and SEND specific resources to support skill and knowledge enhancement for SEND practitioners.</p> <p>Develop and validate of HE in SEND and Inclusive Practice</p> <p>Roll out of training in Pedagogical Principles to 'Participatory Story Telling'.</p>

	Year 1-2023-24	Year 2-2024-25	Year 3-2025-26
3. Addressing social-economic deprivation	<p>Undertake Poverty Proofing Audits in for all campuses</p> <p>Deliver Skills for jobs -levelling up</p> <p>Provide opportunity for students and staff to receive free food on Fridays that would otherwise be thrown out</p> <p>Breakfast clubs initiated at most campuses</p> <p>Support student fundraising for local charities such as food banks</p>	<p>Development of a Poverty Proofing Framework</p> <p>Financial Support Scheme revised to reflect outcomes of audit</p> <p>Delivery of Skills bootcamps</p>	<p>Continue to implement Poverty Proofing framework and publish impact</p>
4. Culture of belonging	<p>Sign Organisational Pledge for College of Sanctuary.</p> <p>Submit application for College of Sanctuary</p> <p>Northumberland Campuses to become a Safer Reporting Centres for Hate Crime</p> <p>Sign AoC Mental Health Charter</p>	<p>Develop a clear and visible anti-racism programme of initiatives and actions for staff and students</p> <p>Implement unconscious bias and anti-racism training for all staff members.</p> <p>Implement AoC Mental Health Charter Action</p>	<p>Development of a plan for College of Sanctuary re-appraisal in 2026/27.</p>
5. Report/Support: Bullying & Harassment	<p>Launch of survey to staff to understand experiences of bullying and harassment</p> <p>Development of Tool for anonymous reporting and support for bullying &amp; harassment across</p>	<p>Roll out of anonymous reporting tool across all EPNE campuses</p> <p>Policy review and development of policy around sexual violence/ misconduct</p> <p>Launch of survey to students to understand experiences of bullying and harassment EPNE colleges</p>	<p>Expand tool to provide further areas of support and information</p> <p>Launch any targeted initiatives stemming from one full year of reporting</p>



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