

Public Sector Equality Duty Report

2021-2025

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Foreword from the Principal

As Scotland's adult education college, Newbattle Abbey College is enriched by the diversity of our students and staff. We remain committed to ensuring that equality is at the forefront of all aspects of college life. Everyone at Newbattle should have the best possible opportunity to realise their full potential, despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic in the past year. We are committed to the aspirations and Equality Outcomes detailed in this report and will do all we can to achieve them.

The report outlines the progress and changes the college has made in response to national priorities and the needs of students and staff. We will continue to regularly review our progress with all key stakeholders in the wider community. Our curriculum has expanded significantly in recent years. It is essential that equality is embedded within all new developments and reflected in how we treat all members of our college community.

Newbattle is proud of its inclusive culture. We welcome the contribution of students and staff as we seek to enhance equality and celebrate diversity in the years ahead.

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 created the duty for Public Bodies, such as Newbattle Abbey College, to produce and publish a report outlining how the college has due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. Newbattle Abbey College is required to publish the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) every four years. Within this four year cycle the college is expected to produce Equality Outcomes to improve equality for those who have a protected characteristic.

The Equality Act 2010 defines 9 protected characteristics:

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

There are three aspects of the general equality duty that Newbattle Abbey College need to consider when carrying out functions of the Equality Act:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.

In addition to the general duty, Newbattle Abbey College has a specific duty to:

- report progress on mainstreaming the Public Sector Equality Duty
- publish equality outcomes and report progress
- assess new or revised policies and practices
- review existing policies and practices
- gather, use and publish employee information
- publish gender pay gap information
- publish an equal pay statement

Newbattle Abbey College Context

Newbattle Abbey College is Scotland's national adult education residential college, set within an historic 16th century building and 125 acres of ancient woodland and parkland in Midlothian. We operate under a Governing Deed of Trust and our Trustees include the Principals and Vice Chancellors of Scotland's ancient universities.

We have a proven track record of meeting the needs of adults and young people at points of transition. By providing transformative learning and offering extensive support, the college helps people change their lives and achieve their personal ambitions.

We are committed to achieving the best possible results for our students, staff and stakeholders. Through our focus on continuous improvement, we are confident that we will deliver our vision as Scotland's Life-Changing College. We provide a high standard of education to our local communities and across Scotland and the UK. We offer Access to Higher Education courses in Arts & Social Sciences, Celtic Studies and Primary Education. These courses give adults the opportunity to return to learning and progress to higher education. The majority of our students have no or few qualifications and many have had disrupted lives and poor experiences of formal education. Newbattle offers them a vital second chance to improve their own lives and often those of their families.

We also offer an HNC in Social Sciences, run as an Associate Degree in partnership with Queen Margaret University, and an NC in Rural Skills. Rural Skills is a 1 year full-time practical course, in gardening and estate maintenance. Many of our Rural Skills students are vulnerable young people who face multiple barriers to learning, including mental health problems.

The college plays a strategic national role in promoting adult learning through extensive collaboration with a wide range of strategic partners to promote inclusion and progression, particularly for people in areas of deprivation. Newbattle has a recognised national role in adult learning and is a key member of the national Strategic Forum for Adult Learning. The college has hosted 6 national conferences to promote the development of adult learning. All of these events have had Ministerial support.

The college is the national accreditation centre for the Adult Achievement Awards. Supported by Education Scotland and SCQF, the college developed and piloted the Adult Achievement Awards, a unique development in Europe. The awards offer accreditation to learners with few or no qualifications. Over 600 adults across Scotland have been involved to date.

Working in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, we run online Gaelic courses and offer our Access to Higher Education (SWAP Celtic Studies) students a Gaelic language immersion week at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye.

Newbattle has also developed its role as a Forest College in consultation with a range of local and national partners, including: local authorities, colleges, schools,

the Forest School Association, Forest and Land Scotland and outdoor learning leaders. The initiative is unique to Scotland. It is socially inclusive and offers multiple learning and training opportunities. The Forest College Programme offers accredited learning options to a wide range of learners across Scotland: 3-18 pupils and staff; 16-24 year olds; adult returners; Third Age learners; outdoor learning practitioners; corporate clients. Our Rural Skills Courses and Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards (FOLAs) are delivered in our 125 acre estate and in community locations. With funding from the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund and Scottish Government, we have appointed a Community Woodland Ranger and Forest College Co-ordinator. Both posts extend community engagement in maintaining our woodland.

Equality Mainstreaming Report

The Equality Mainstreaming Report outlines how Newbattle Abbey College has embedded equalities into its ethos and internal networks. The report gives examples of how the college can put into practice the Equality Act functions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The college's commitment to the exercise of the Equality Act is reflected in its Vision, Mission and Values.

VISION: Scotland's Life-Changing College

MISSION: To be a national residential learning community that:

- Promotes lifelong learning
- Raises aspirations
- Supports learners in transition
- Enables learners to change their lives

VALUES: In the delivery of our mission, we will:

- Empower individuals
- Enhance quality
- Act with integrity and mutual respect
- Promote equality and diversity

The size and ethos of the college help to create an inclusive community. Each staff member and student is known by name, which allows college management to be responsive to their needs in the promotion of equality and diversity.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is committed to the promotion of equal rights, equity and advancing equal opportunities for staff and students. This committee meets regularly to ensure that the general duty is upheld and that we are mainstreaming equality into college life.

The Board of Directors and Senior Management Team are aware of the responsibilities that fall under the Equality Act. These responsibilities influence all decision-making and strategic planning.

Eliminating Discrimination

The college prides itself in the adjustments that are made for students to undertake their chosen course and attracts students who have been out of education for extended periods of time. The college pedagogy is adaptive and aims to respond to individual students to help them achieve their learning outcomes.

Where necessary, additional screening is offered to students who suspect they may have an additional support need. In 2020-21 the college screened 12% of the student population. This group was tested by a psychologist and 4% were diagnosed with dyslexia. This process eradicates any discrimination that might have occurred from an undiagnosed disability. As society changes, the Equality Act requires further policies to be produced. These policies are impact assessed and reviewed by senior management.

Scottish Government published its first National British Sign Language (BSL) Plan with the ambition for Scotland to be the best place for BSL users to live, work and visit. In response to the Government's National Plan, Newbattle Abbey College produced its BSL Plan 2018-2024 to mirror and achieve the same goals. This plan sets out actions that the college will undertake to promote and support BSL to eliminate discrimination.

The Board sub-committees monitor the implementation of college plans and policies. At the heart of these committees are the three functions of the Equality Act - to eliminate discrimination, advance equality opportunity, and foster good relations.

Student 1 returned to education following a desire to study most of their life. Growing up in the 1960s she was not encouraged, because of her gender, to progress to further education. Instead, she worked and raised a family.

After seeing her own children graduate, her desire to continue study returned. A third sector organisation recommended Newbattle Abbey College due to its supportive reputation. This recommendation became the deciding factor for the student to apply.

While she was studying in the Preparation for Further Education course, the COVID-19 Pandemic resulted in the nation going into lockdown, with remote learning becoming the norm for all students.

In the 2020-21 academic session, a blended learning model continued to be adopted. However, due to the ongoing pandemic this student was unable to return to the face to face element of a blended learning model due to their age and other contributory factors.

To enable the student to continue with their course, the college offered a distance learning approach with additional 1:1 support from her Guidance tutors.

Through making reasonable adjustments and eliminating discrimination for this student the college did not disadvantage this student, despite the effects of the pandemic.

Advancing Equality

Newbattle Abbey College continually strives to remove barriers, encourage participation, and meet the different needs of both staff and students. The size of the college allows management to react quickly to individual needs.

The college recruitment process aims to promote the advancement of equality. Vacancies are advertised under the UK Governments 'Access to Work' Scheme, which supports people with a disability to start or stay in work. Potential applicants have all personal details or identifiable markers removed during the screening process to ensure transparency, which eliminates any indirect discrimination. During recruitment equality monitoring data is collected and stored.

In September 2020, the UK Government made it a requirement for public sector organisations to make their existing websites accessible and compliant. The aim of this legislation was to make online public services accessible to all users, including people with disabilities. In partnership with a web designer, the college changed the accessibility of its website and made changes, where necessary.

The student body has an elected Student Representative Council to represent students' views, support them to achieve their potential and improve the student experience. Each student representative has a role within the council and elected representatives sit on committees within the college to share students' views on equality, learning and teaching, and health and safety.

Student 2 enrolled at Newbattle Abbey College at the age of 24. At 16 they had come out as being transgender, and at 18 enrolled in a course at another college. This was a negative experience for Student 2 as they felt there were lots of restrictions put in place by the other college which meant they were unable to embrace their new identity. This student dropped out of college to focus on their transition.

Student 2 was apprehensive to return to education after their previous experience, but through Newbattle Abbey College being recommended to them, they decided to give it another go.

Student 2 felt that Newbattle was 'forward thinking' on gender and while studying at the college undertook their final gender reassignment surgery. Student 2 was worried about course work during their absence but felt reassured by their guidance tutor who stayed connected with them throughout the process.

Student 2 expressed that while at Newbattle Abbey College they never felt prejudiced and said that it was good to be in a place that made them feel 'affirmed' and 'respected'. Student 2 was also screened and diagnosed with dyslexia while studying which allowed barriers to be removed to their learning and additional support being made available when progressing with their studies.

Fostering Good Relations

16% of our students are care-experienced. In recognition of this, the college has given due regard to corporate parenting responsibilities and has adapted the response accordingly.

Our 2019-20 students identified the benefit of having a designated staff member they could connect with in times of need. This was put in place and will remain for future students who have been part of the care system. Application forms now give the option for students to self-declare if they have experienced care, which allows the college to contact them prior to attending college.

A Care-Experienced Forum has created the opportunity to respond to collective concerns, when needed and, in addition, creates a voice in the development of the college's corporate parenting responsibilities. Future developments of this forum will allow for the improvements in digital information the college provides through a dedicated page for prospective care-experienced students on the college website.

The college celebrates diversity by marking key events in the Equalities Calendar. This is designed to inform both staff and students in equality issues. This reduces stereotypes of protected characteristics and helps to create a cohesive college community.

Student 3 spent their childhood in foster care, residential, and secure units, and by the age of 17 spent a short time in a Young Offenders Institution. This student was introduced to Newbattle Abbey College via the Hub for Success, which supports students who have experienced care. Student 3 was attracted to Newbattle as the subjects and class sizes were appealing, given their prior experience of education.

Student 3 discussed with Support for Learning the difficulties they previously had in education and it was decided this student would benefit from being assessed for dyslexia.

This assessment confirmed dyslexia, which created a 'lightbulb' moment for student 3 as to why they had previously dissociated themselves from learning due to the challenges they encountered.

Student 3 has taken a lead role in sharing their experiences of care with both staff and students and has been given the opportunity to discuss their care experience and adverse childhood experiences with students who hope to become primary teachers.

Student 3 is grateful for the opportunities they have been given while attending Newbattle Abbey College to foster good relations with those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

COVID-19 Response

This unprecedented year has meant that the college has constantly had to review its practices in an ever-changing and evolving pandemic.

The pandemic highlighted the inequality of digital poverty amongst the student population. Prior to the pandemic, students had access to college ICT suites. College closure and subsequent lockdowns meant this accessibility was no longer available. The college identified students most at risk of digital poverty and supported them with accessibility through the loan of laptops and funded digital connectivity.

In 2020-21, a blended learning model was introduced. This model allowed face-to-face delivery of education one day a week, with online delivery for the remainder of the week. Due to the demographic of the students and the fact that some had returned to education after a long period of time, an online only model would have been detrimental to their learning.

Face to face teaching allowed Support for Learning screenings to take place, which highlighted students with additional support needs. This led to an additional 4% of students being diagnosed with dyslexia, a recognised disability. These diagnoses will further support students in achieving learning outcomes and, with the correct supports put in place through a Personal Learning Support Plan, will increase the students' ability to succeed.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on both staff and students' mental health. Remote learning and working from home became the new norm. In recognition of this, the college invested in external mental health services. Subscribing to 'TogetherAll' allowed staff and students to access safe online mental health supports twenty-four hours a day. Furthermore, a partnership with Health in Mind offered free counselling service to both staff and students who required it.

Staff Profile

At the time of writing this report the college employs 45 members of staff. The college will annually collect data on all staff members to submit a staffing return to the Scottish Funding Council. The information provided in this report has come from this staffing return.

Human Resources staff collect equality data on protected characteristics through recruitment and retention which provides the data for the Scottish Funding Council.

As the staff complement is small the college is mindful of the level of public data that is published. This enables anonymity and privacy for college staff members.

Although we have staff members who have protected characteristics, this has not been published within this report. Therefore, Gender and Age is the only information disclosed.

Gender

	2019	2020
Male	38%	37%
Female	62%	63%

Age

Our reporting for age ranges for the Scottish Funding Council changed between 2019 and 2020.

	2019
Up to 35	28%
36 - 50	22%
51 – 60	36%
Greater than 60	14%

	2020
16-20	0%
21-25	0%
26-30	14%
31-35	12%
36-40	8%
41-45	2%
46-50	8%
51-55	14%
56-60	27%
61-65	6%
Greater than 66	9%

Occupational Segregation

Our employment data shows that men and women are clustered into different occupations. The Facilities and Estates staff are men whilst Housekeeping staff are female. The Administration staff are all female apart from one male. Senior roles within Catering are held by male members of staff with the support roles in this team being female.

However, within the Learning and Teaching team there are seventeen members of staff, nine being male and 8 female, showing gender occupation equality. All members of the senior management team are female.

The college understands the matters relating to occupational segregation in relation to gender norms and stereotyping of roles, but the college also knows that part-time hours are more suitable for those with caring responsibilities. This is reflected in 37% of staff working part-time.

Gender Pay Gap

The college mean Gender Pay Gap is 13.87% in comparison to 12.88% in 2019. The median difference is 43.49%.

Equal Pay Statement

The college recognises that, historically, women were often paid less than men for doing the same work. Equal pay legislation gives the right for men and women to be paid the same for equivalent work. Equal pay covers contractual pay and non-cash contractual benefits. The law gives a woman the right to the same pay as a man (and vice-versa) for the following:

- Like work – two employees who are doing the same or very similar roles.
- Work rated as equivalent – two employees could be carrying out totally different jobs, but they have been given the same rating as the result of the analytical job evaluation scheme.
- Work of equal value – two jobs are very different, but the employee claims they require a similar level of skill and ability.

Equal pay is often, but not exclusively, a gender issue. Under the Equality Act (2010) equal pay protection has been extended to all other protected characteristics (race, religion or believe, age, marriage and civil partnership pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability). The college is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities for all employees regardless of sex, race, religion or belief, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability. All employees receive equal pay for work of equal value. The college pay and reward systems are transparent, based on objective criteria (using job evaluation) and free from bias in relation to all aspects of

equalities. The college will regularly review the pay and reward system and act where necessary to eliminate any discrimination.

The Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Committee will be responsible for monitoring this equal pay statement. It will be reviewed every three years (or earlier if required), making amendments as appropriate in consultation with staff.

Board of Directors

In addition to publishing staff data, the college is required to publish information on the diversity on the Board of Directors. Due to the small number of individuals on the Board, the college has only published data on gender.

Board of Director vacancies have been widely advertised to ensure a diverse demographic are given the opportunity to apply.

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that policy and procedures to promote equality, diversity and inclusiveness are in place. Gender representation on the Board is 35% female and 65% male. The Board is committed to having a greater gender balance, however, due to the constraints of the Newbattle Abbey Trust Deed and Constitution, the college is limited in its influence.

Previous Equality Outcomes 2017 - 2021

In the 2017- 2021 reporting cycle the college established six outcomes which were:

- The learning and support experience is fair and equitable for all students and reflects cultural diversity.
- Students across all protected characteristic groups progress and achieve high quality learning outcomes.
- A strong culture of partnership working and collaboration removes barriers, provides equality of opportunity, and reflects cultural diversity.
- Staff feel respected and valued at work and experience equality of opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- Students, staff and visitors find that the college environment, estate and resources are aligned to remove barriers, provide equality of opportunity and reflect cultural diversity.
- Staff and students with protected characteristics find that inequalities are reduced and eliminated through strong leadership and accountability of equality and diversity being embedded in college governance and management structures.

Some of these outcomes have been carried over from the 2013-2017 equality outcome reporting cycle as it was felt at the time that these were still current for the college. Through the work carried out to embed these outcomes into the college infrastructure they have been completed and will be carried forward and reviewed through the equality mainstreaming process.

The outcomes for the previous reporting cycle were broad and gave a holistic look at the culture and experience the college wanted to achieve for those with a protected characteristic. Feedback through staff and student experiences has been positive. This has enabled the college to develop its practice in order to achieve these outcomes and embed them into equality mainstreaming initiatives.

2021-2025 Equality Outcomes

An equality outcome specifies a result that the college wishes to achieve within the reporting cycle to further one or more of the needs in the general equality duty, which are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.

To gather evidence for these outcomes virtual focus groups were held with staff and students. There was a good representation on these focus groups of people who had protected characteristics.

An explanation was given as to the purpose of the college PSED report and what an equality outcome meant. After the purpose of the consultation process was clarified, focussed discussions took place. Recurring themes were seen in all focus groups which identified the aims of outcomes and relevant evidence was given from people who shared a relevant protected characteristic.

Throughout the consultation process, evidence was given in relation to the persistent inequalities that were highlighted by the Scottish Funding Council and Equality and Human Rights Commission (Nov 2020). This report highlighted the inequalities that the coronavirus pandemic has had on human rights, as well as on those who have protected characteristics.

When outcomes were created in draft format, further consultation was held with staff, students, and those who shared relevant protected characteristics on outcomes that had been set.

Equality Outcome 1 – Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Inequality

Newbattle Abbey College recognises that most gender-based violence is perpetrated by men; however, there are some female perpetrators. We understand that gender-based violence covers sexual orientation and that gender-based violence can occur in same sex relations.

The EHRC's 'Is Scotland Fairer' (2018) report tells us that women and disabled people are more likely to experience domestic abuse, and often the perpetrator is their partner. In cases of rape and sexual violence these are more than likely not reported to the police. The restrictions imposed during the pandemic have highlighted this inequality, resulting in women and children having to be at home for longer periods of time with their abuser.

The Scottish Government Equally Safe Strategy (2018) shows that gender inequality is the root cause of gender-based violence and in its basic form a human rights issue. Throughout the consultation process of equality outcomes, the theme of gender-based violence was prevalent and it was apparent that this had an impact on members of our college community. It is acknowledged that, with students and staff working from home due to COVID-19 restrictions, they are at increased risk of gender-based violence. Currently 63% of our staff are female and our student population is 53% female.

Outcome

A safer college community is created for female staff and students because of the college's response to tackling the inequalities experienced through gender-based violence (GBV).

Outputs

- Implement a Gender-Based Violence Policy that safeguards staff and students when responding to incidences of GBV.
- Identify barriers that are faced for those who experience GBV in a college context.
- Develop a baseline which will be closely monitored each academic year.
- Create local partnerships with appropriate GBV organisations.
- Target work on raising awareness of GBV and the response within the college community.
- Offer training to staff to raise awareness of GBV and opportunities for continual professional development.

Equality Outcome 2 - Mental Health

Inequality

Mental health is a growing concern within society and it is evident that these concerns will likely increase over the coming years as we recover from the effects of the pandemic.

The Samaritans Report 'Dying from Inequality' (2017) highlighted the links between socioeconomic disadvantage and suicidal behaviour. Key findings of the report found that men are more vulnerable to the risk of suicide than women. In areas of deprivation the suicide rates are two to three times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the most affluent. Hospital admissions following self-harm are two times higher in the neighbourhoods of deprivation than those in affluent neighbourhoods.

The Samaritans have been conducting ongoing research into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and have found that everyone's mental health is being affected by this, but in varying ways and to differing magnitudes. However, based on their ongoing research they are particularly concerned about three groups – middle aged men, young people, and people with pre-existing mental health conditions.

This research by the Samaritans highlights the growing concerns that mental health has on equalities. At Newbattle Abbey College there has been an increase in referrals, particularly from the younger students, in relation to their mental health, which is affecting their attendance and engagement at college.

A percentage of the student population are from areas of deprivation which illustrates their increased risk of mental health problems. The college has been responsive to the needs of staff and students, but this year has highlighted the impact of mental health issues, which are having adverse effects on their ability to carry out their day-to-day activities when studying.

Outcome

Students are better equipped in managing their mental health through an accessible infrastructure which does not affect their academic achievements.

Outputs

- Develop partnerships with local organisations to develop joint actions and solutions.
- Create safe spaces within college in response to the increased demand on staff and student mental health.
- Create a 'Fitness to Study' Policy that allows individuals to engage effectively as learners.
- Develop a framework to ensure specific barriers to learning are addressed.
- Continue to provide mental health information, support and services which are accessible to staff and students.

Equality Outcome 3 - Digital Accessibility

Inequality

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many inequalities and the disproportionate effect this has had in different areas of society. The pandemic resulted in the college curriculum moving from face to face delivery to online learning. This created the necessity for digital accessibility, highlighting the adverse effects of digital inequality.

The Is Britain Fairer (2018) report shows that those most at risk of poverty, or are close to the poverty line, are young people, ethnic minorities, and disabled people, increasing their risk of exclusion due to digital poverty. This is confirmed in the 'Is Scotland Fairer' (2018) report which found that older and disabled people are less likely to have access to digital services.

Community Development Network Scotland published their Digital Ambition Report (2020) which outlined CDN's plan on digital accessibility and the upskilling of college staff and students. Their report outlined a whole-system approach that is inclusive and promotes equal opportunity. It is CDN's hope that by producing a digital pedagogy, learning becomes streamlined and accessible.

The Scottish Government 'If not now, when?' (2021) report has created a set of proposals or 'Call to Actions' on how Scotland will re-emerge from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Call to Action 9 sets an ambitious target to end digital exclusion in the next parliamentary term by ensuring that everyone has affordable access to digital tools, connectivity, and literacy. 'If not now, when?' is considering creating a duty on public bodies to facilitate the digital accessibility of its users and, to remain current with the digital accessibility it provides.

A recurring theme highlighted in groups was a need for the college to create a more streamlined approach to a blended learning model, particularly with digital accessibility. Students with disabilities found it difficult to navigate online systems, which was further complicated by multiple mediums being used for delivery. These difficulties were echoed by students in older age groups.

Outcome

Learners have increased digital inclusion from the digital learning infrastructure. Older and disabled students face fewer barriers with digital accessibility.

Outputs

- Students find it easier to access services through measures that are created to improve digital inclusion.
- Learning and Teaching Policy is reviewed and amended to consider the increase of digital learning.
- Online learning will be closely monitored to ensure that student retention and success rate is proportionate to previous academic years.

- Digital accessibility is embedded into student recruitment and induction to gain an understanding of students' access to digital devices, connectivity, as well as confidence in accessing digital platforms.

Equality Outcome 4 – Representation

Inequality

Representation is key to advancing equality of opportunity for those with a protected characteristic and, although progress been made, it is still evident that many groups still feel underrepresented. The 'Is Scotland Fairer Report' (2018) tells us that women, people from ethnic minority groups, and disabled groups are underrepresented in all areas of public life. Similarly, the same report states that less than half of young LGBT people said that there were enough places where they could socialise safely and be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

These sentiments were also shared in the focus groups that were held in gathering information for the college equality outcomes. One student expressed the following:

“Promoting and celebrating diversity is a principle that most people share and aspire to, despite the clear barriers to achieving it. Ethnic minorities, disabled people and women are underrepresented on our screens, industries and our places of work and study. People who associate with any or all of these know how scarce representation in services, institutions and public life can be. Diversifying our teams and resources requires hard work and commitment across all levels, including management, applications, recruitment and more. Actively engaging a wider range of people and giving them a chance is the best tool to fighting discrimination.”

In 2019 a debate was held in the Scottish Parliament #EndMenopauseStigma. This debate primarily focussed on understanding the effects that menopause can have in the workplace and the need for employers to embed a culture and infrastructure of support for women suffering menopausal symptoms.

We are aware that 63% of the staff are female, and that 16% are at an age where they will begin to enter menopause. As an employer the college recognise the adverse effects this can have on staff's wellbeing as well as performance and the impact of representation in the college community.

Outcome

Staff and students are confident that they are represented in the college community. Participation is fully accessible and inclusive regardless of gender, race, disability, and sexual orientation.

Outputs

- Develop documentation and policies to support staff and students who are transitioning.
- Develop documentation and a support network for staff and students who are entering the menopause.
- Create support networks within the college community that are supportive of those with protected characteristics.
- Create a baseline and improve data collection on the representation of protected characteristics on committees within college.
- Embed in the curriculum the importance of representation for those with protected characteristics into college life.
- Provide training to staff and students on Equality and Diversity and how this applies to their practice.
- Establish equalities groups within the college for those with a protected characteristic.

Conclusion

These four Equality Outcomes focus on the protected characteristics of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Protected characteristics that have not been a focus of the Equality Outcomes in this reporting round are

- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief

The above protected characteristics are embedded in the mainstreaming of equality within the college and there is no data that would suggest that these should have been made into a specific equality outcome for the 2021-2025 cycle.

Newbattle Abbey College will continue to meet the requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and will have due regard in eliminating discrimination, foster good relations, and advance equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee will take the lead in embedding equalities into Newbattle Abbey College and will be responsible for implementing new Equality Outcomes:

- A safer college community is created for female staff and students by tackling the inequalities that are experienced with gender-based violence.
- Students are better equipped to manage their mental health through an accessible infrastructure which does not affect their academic achievements.
- Learners have increased digital inclusion from the digital learning infrastructure. Older and disabled students face fewer barriers to digital accessibility.
- Staff and students are confident that they are represented in the college community. Participation is fully accessible and inclusive regardless of gender, race, disability, and sexual orientation.

A report detailing the progress of these outcomes will be published in April 2023.