ACCESS AND INCLUSION STRATEGY
(MARCH 2017)

inclusive

Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations

Forth
Valley
College
Making Learning Work

www.forthvalley.ac.uk

FVC Access and Inclusion Strategy March 2017

Developed as part of the FVC Regional Outcome Agreement 2017-2020

Context

FVC is proud of its reputation as an inclusive organisation. Diversity and inclusion matters and we strive to represent and support everyone. We have made excellent progress to date but must continue to do more – we want to build an understanding of inclusion in everything that we do. We want to be accessible to everyone who wishes to study at FVC regardless of age, gender, locality, ability or disability, ethnicity or financial status.

This strategy must be read in conjunction with the Outcome Agreement particularly where there is information on activity, which relates to Access and Inclusion, e.g., DYW, Opportunities for All, Corporate Parenting etc. In particular, this Access and Inclusion strategy must be considered alongside our (from April 2017) Equality Outcome work which includes evidence and data on how FVC meets the General and Specific duties of the Equality Act (2010).

The current strategic and policy landscape confirms that access and inclusion is an area of high volume activity for us however, it is 'what we do' and central to our corporate social responsibilities as an education provider. In developing this strategy, our Equality Outcomes work and other key internal strategic development such as our Creative Learning and Technology Strategy, we are attempting to deliver in line with the following:

External

- Scottish Government Digital Inclusion strategy
- Scottish Government STEM strategy development
- Scottish Government Mental Health consultation
- British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015

- Scottish Government Race Equality Framework

Internal

- Equality Outcomes, mainstreaming report, Equal Pay info, EQIA report
- Equalities Policy
- Draft Creative Learning and Information Technology Strategy
- STEM ambitions (in development)
- Gender Action Plan (in development)
- Corporate Parenting Strategy

1. FVC Access and Inclusion Approach to meet the needs of students

Evidence

- Learning Support team
  - Needs-led learning support service – student at centre of process
  - Last 3 years – supporting around 500 students annually
  - Staff experience and qualifications (knowledge/expertise build up over a number of years; PDA Inclusiveness attainment)
  - Robust needs assessment process and comprehensive PLSPs
  - Data on outcomes for ELS (staff and student feedback on service; beginning to look at more comprehensive methods of tracking ELS students within PI data)
  - Robust links with teaching departments

- SAAS validated assessment centre for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) applications

- Supported education programmes:
    - Curriculum review
    - Team-evaluation
    - Listening to Learners
    - Needs-led provision
    - Personal Learning and Support Plans
    - Staff experience and qualifications
    - Creative Learning and cross-college collaboration
    - Local Employability Partnerships
    - Transition information and transition team meetings
    - Collaboration with partner agencies
- Inclusive learning and teaching approaches, e.g., Learning Activity Planning Tool (LAPT)
- Range of Support services:
    - SDS Careers
    - DWP
    - Student counselling service
    - Social work links
    - Learner Advisers
    - Third Sector organisations
    - NHS
    - Forth Valley Student Association
    - Who Cares? Scotland

- Student Funding – evidence of appropriate flexibility (e.g., authorised absences, use of discretionary funding)
- Marketing and Communications - 'Respect' campaign etc.
- Positive environment for disclosure of ASNs at any time
- LGBT Youth Scotland and Investors in Inclusiveness Chartermarks
- Staff in a range of roles within FVC hold the PDA Inclusiveness

Key learning points about what works well

- ELS approaches embedded across college
- Comprehensive ELS PLSPs
- Collaborative cross-college approaches to support – Learning Support staff; Student Funding; Learner Advisers; LDFs ability to increase Authorised Absences; use of Discretionary funds; links and referrals to external partners
- Usage of Educational Psychologist assessments to support DSA applications
- Commitment to ongoing staff professional development and upskilling where required

2. How we have used ELS Funding to support this approach

Learning Support Service

The College Equalities Team provides a needs-led Extended Learning Support (ELS) service for students with additional support needs. Support is tailored to individual circumstances with the student at the centre of the process to ensure their needs are met effectively. High quality needs assessments are completed with students who tell us they have support needs and the College is an accredited needs assessment centre for Student Awards Agency for Scotland Disabled Student Allowance applications. All prospective, new and current students are informed of support available and how to access it – students are able to disclose support needs at any time during their time at College. In Session 2015-16, support was provided to over 500 students with a wide range of needs from acquired brain injury, short term memory loss, dyslexia or Asperger's to mental health difficulties, completing a range of programmes at all levels.

The team consist of 4 Learning Development Facilitators (or needs assessors) who complete comprehensive needs assessments with students on an individual basis; 5 Learning Mentors who provide 1-1 support to students ranging from study skills, training and guidance in software and equipment and an Assistive Technology Coordinator who leads on the development within the team and wider College of the use of enabling technologies and software to support specific learning difficulties as well consideration of broader digital inclusion approaches. The team also support staff who support students through the provision of advice, guidance, training and staff development. Staff development is via awareness raising and specific training depending on the support needs of the students in the classroom. Training on deaf awareness and autistic spectrum difficulties has been delivered to teaching staff, providing them with the resources and information to work with students with these specific needs. The Learning Support team also provide advice to teaching staff based on the support recommendations they make according to students individual need. A key aspect of working with teaching departments is the strong links that the needs assessors have with the department they are allocated to. In depth knowledge of the course content and demands is fundamental to identifying the individual support that the student will require.

It can be challenging to attempt to quantify the impact of ELS on a student's achievement or progression as there are so many other factors to consider. However, the Learning Support service is evaluated in a number of ways. Annually students are asked for feedback via an online survey on their experiences of the support provided and how this impacted on their learning and teaching. As part of self-evaluation, this information is reviewed and evaluated and if required, changes made to processes, procedures and operational targets for the next year. Focus groups with students with additional support needs are also facilitated.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the ELS service in 2014 suggested a number of ways in which the service could be improved, the key one being improving the joined up approach across college to supporting students and getting the message about support available out to all staff holding different roles in college. The service was rebranded as Learning Support service in Session 2015-2016 and there has been an increase in the number of referrals since then.

In Session 2016-17 the team plan to work with students who have had benefit from the service (which helped them stay on course/achieve), and use their experiences to formulate case studies to use in service marketing purposes. The aim is that real people describing their experiences of ELS may encourage others to seek this support. One area where we received excellent feedback from students was in the department of Creative Industries where a project to maximise inclusion using technology to enhance the student experience was developed. As a result of this project students were able to access a dedicated FVC YouTube channel where specific tasks from the NC Sound Production course had been captured and recorded as computer images. This enabled the students to access these resources outside of formal teaching environments – learning at their own pace and resulted in improved competence levels for students as well as up-skilling staff to use technology to create a more inclusive learning experience.

While student feedback is crucial feedback from teaching staff who put arrangements in place for student support and make adjustments is also required. Teaching departments through self-evaluation monitor PIs and this includes students with protected characteristics and those with disabilities often include those who have ELS. The Diversity Coordinator provides guidance to Curriculum Managers to investigate the differences in attainment rates by course level for disabled and non-disabled students (and other characteristics). Processes for analysing PI data and information are being reviewed. Approaches to supporting students with mental health difficulties are being developed; there has been a significant rise in the number of students disclosing this need. The approaches involve working more collaboratively with colleagues across Student Support services and up-skilling staff to understand and appropriately support students with mental health difficulties.

Price Group 5 Provision

Supported programmes are funded at price group 5 which means that we offer 'in course' support to these groups. This support can take many forms. For example, curriculum is developed with smaller class sizes and the content of the curriculum is tailored to the additional support needs of student groups. We have Additional Support for Learning Workers who look after our students' wellbeing both in and out of class. In addition, support workers are provided by external agencies to provide 1:1 support to individual students as negotiated with the student and with partner agencies. Teaching staff on supported programmes have a pastoral role with assigned groups to look after any additional support needs and their development. A student's development is identified and measured by the use of Personal Learning and Support Plans. Staff are encouraged to participate and provide CPD opportunities to keep their practice up to date and that of the wider college and partners. We provide bespoke employability courses and opportunities for students who have additional support needs or are far removed from the job market. These courses are supported by a Work Placement Co-ordinator who co-ordinates work placement opportunities in industries in the community. The department delivers a wide range of English for Speakers of Other Languages programmes from SQA Level 2. Staff conduct fortnightly assessments

of students' language levels in order to place them in an ESOL class at the appropriate level, to support them in other mainstream courses within the college or to signpost them to appropriate external provision.

Professional Development

- Range of compliance training available for staff on College VLE for Equality; Health and Safety; Freedom of Information; Safeguarding. This training is available online to all staff throughout the year.
- The college have specific staff development sessions twice a year, February for support staff and August for lecturing staff.
- Staff are encouraged to participate in relevant CPD and this is discussed at regular one to one sessions and Performance, Review and Development (PRD) meetings.
- Within the department of Access and Progression (AP), which delivers Price Group 5 provision, specific staff CPD includes: autism training, Mental Health First Aid, NHS sexual health training, SQA Qualifications Design Team for National levels 1 and 2 and ESOL curriculum development.
- Delivery of the PDA Teaching in Scotland's Colleges to college lecturers. This prepares staff in AP for delivery of:
  - the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award
  - the Branching Out award in partnership with the Forestry Commission
  - the John Muir Conservator level award
- Staff in specific roles receive additional access and inclusion training which is identified at induction and performance reviews throughout the year.
- A range of staff participated in awareness raising regarding Care Experienced Young people through Who Cares? Scotland and Supporting Student Mental Health and Wellbeing.

ICT investment

Assistive and enabling technologies

- Established student equipment loan bank for students with a range of support needs, items include laptops, tablets, digital recorders, coloured overlays, reading rulers. Also provide a range of specialised software (both networked and stand alone) for students such as Dragon Naturally Speaking; TextHelp Read and Write Gold; Inspirations.
- Role of Assistive Technology Coordinator developed and in place in early 2016 to develop approaches to the use of tablets and Apps; work with staff to provide information and training on enabling software and equipment; build links with relevant colleagues in the sector and partners such as JISC, College Development Network; work across college to take digital inclusion further; work closely with IT colleagues to provide effective support to students using assistive technologies and equipment.
- AP staff deliver courses for the visually impaired at the Sensory Centre and utilise in particular, the many accessibility features found within Microsoft software and Apple iPads
- AP staff use Board Maker in the delivery of PSD to students with profound and complex support needs

See FVC Creative Learning and Technology Strategy for ambitions and direction of travel for 2017-2022

3. Expected impact Approach will have on PIs

What are the PIs currently for priority access groups, what do we want them to be and by when

- Not enough data at present to set PIs for groups
- Need to establish benchmarks for a range of protected characteristics and priority access groups
- This section will outline FVC aspirations for PIs

The following performance and targets have been extracted from the College's draft Outcome Agreement for 2017-20 to act as an indicative baseline.

Measure	Performance			Current Year Target	Targets		
	2013-14 [1]	2014-15 [1]	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners from protected characteristics:							
Volume of Credits delivered to students where ethnicity is Black or an Ethnic Minority	1,605	1,787	2,482	2,482	2,500	2,500	2,500
Proportion of Credits delivered to students where ethnicity is Black or an Ethnic Minority	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Volume of Credits delivered to students who are disabled	10,964	14,136	11,985	8,621	12,000	12,000	12,000
Proportion of Credits delivered to students who are disabled	13%	16%	14%	10%	14%	14%	14%
Volume of Credits delivered to females [2]	38,980	41,811	40,375	42,244	42,244	42,244	42,244
Proportion of Credits delivered to females [2]	46%	48%	48%	49%	49%	49%	49%
Volume of Credits delivered to males [2]	45,412	45,772	45,897	43,970	43,790	43,790	43,790
Proportion of Credits delivered to males [2]	54%	52%	52%	51%	51%	51%	51%
Volume of Credits delivered to Care Experienced Learners	1,597	1,578	1,613	N/A	1,700	1,800	1,900
Proportion of Credits delivered to Care Experienced Learners	2%	2%	2%	N/A	2%	2%	2%

4. Impact of Approach on intake and outcomes of Priority Access Groups (PAGs)

We've outlined in point 2 how we currently utilise ELS funds and in point 3 the current outcomes for PAGs. This section outlines our *ambitions* for the utilisation of A&I funds to improve outcomes for PAGs

What we want to achieve *(targets)*	Key things we will do to meet these targets	How	When	Who

What we want to achieve *(targets)*	Key things we will do to meet these targets	How	When	Who
Improve student information and data collection for all protected characteristics as well as extended monitoring requirements, e.g., carers; care experienced	• Extend positive declaration environment through use of online systems	• Development of online ASN to include wider PAGs • Linked by student ID to College MIS • Available on all FVC platforms • Develop mechanism for student to agree to their information to be updated throughout time at college	May 17 – Aug 17	IS team EILS
	• Encourage disclosure of non-education needs, e.g., chaotic lifestyle, mental health, carer	• Awareness raising campaign • Be part of Carers Trust 'Going Higher' campaign • Confidence to make and evidence flexible funding decisions for PAGs • Establish clear package of flexible support available for PAGs and communicate to applicants, students and staff	May 17 – ongoing	Comms & Marketing EILS Student Services Student Funding
	• Support staff with caring responsibilities	• Achieve Carer Positive standard	Dec 17	HR
	• Work with partners to improve transition info	• '2-way' Data portal development • Establish clear package of flexible support available for PAGs and communicate partners	Ongoing	IS team Student Records

What we want to achieve *(targets)*	Key things we will do to meet these targets	How	When	Who
Successful outcomes for Care experienced young people	• Create enhanced flexible support package and publicise this • Partnership working • Publish Corporate Parenting plan • Appropriate information sharing pathways developed across different groups of staff e.g., support staff and teaching staff & external partners	• Awareness raising campaign • Forth Valley College website page including information flyers • Maintain database of contacts who support care experienced young people • Identify care experienced young people via Enquirer in order for staff to better support them • Staff training • Improved data usage • Use of reporting by Learning Development Workers and Learner Advisors to CMs and guidance developed on appropriate internal information sharing protocols • Monitor and report on learner destinations • Monitor, evaluate and report on statistics as part of the Outcome Agreement	From April 2017	SMT AP Learner Advisers LDWs
FVC digitally inclusive for students and staff	• Implement Creative Learning and Technology Strategy 2017-2022	• Within Equalities and Inclusion team: equipment loan bank enhanced for students with specific learning support needs	2017-2022	All staff
Successful outcomes for students on Price Group 5 courses	• Review Price Group 5 curriculum provision • Review partnership working to improve transitions	• Curriculum review processes	Ongoing	Department of Access & Progression

What we want to achieve *(targets)*	Key things we will do to meet these targets	How	When	Who
Improve support available for students with mental health needs	• Develop map of information and support services across FVC • Develop whole College strategic response to needs of students with MH difficulties • Develop approaches to building resilience in young people in College	• Implement externally funded Wellbeing project and action/outcomes plan • Recruit Wellbeing Officer • Increase counselling service hours • Implement appropriate training for staff • Increase working between Learner Adviser team and LDFs • FVSA training of Mental Health First Aiders • Liaise with Mental Health officers in Clackmannanshire secondary schools • Liaise with external agencies to support our learners with mental health support needs (e.g., Social Work, FDAMH, Central Advocacy Agency) • Monitor students who have MH needs and their retention/achievement/progression • Consider development of Mindfulness pilot project to support students mental wellbeing	March 2017- March 2018	Student Services EILS LDWs SMT TDs

What we want to achieve *(targets)*	Key things we will do to meet these targets	How	When	Who
Gender underrepresentation **Improve retention – reduce the number of students who are not retained**	• Extend use of data to examine male and female representation, success, completion/retention across subject and course areas	• Reports on Cognos for curriculum staff • Mandatory analysis and action as part of self-evaluation and curriculum planning • Increase specific information on why students leave – move away from 'reason unknown' by use of LDWs • Clear direction of travel developed to work with regional partners on STEM activity	From April 2017	CMs Teaching departments LDWs
	• Develop Gender Action Plan to improve underrepresentation at subject level		July 2017	CMs
	• Positive action in target setting	• Training/awareness on need for positive action • Training in unconscious bias for staff who interview potential students	From Summer 2017	EILS CMs/TDs
	• Staff – increase usage of staff data, analyse trends in recruitment and CPD information for male and female employees as per equality duty • BoM representation (Good Governance) • Identify data gaps • Consider intersectionality of PCs	• Highlight male/female representation at different levels in college • Develop HR systems further	From April 2017	HR

What we want to achieve *(targets)*	Key things we will do to meet these targets	How	When	Who
Student employment outcomes – reduce unemployment for specific groups	• Examine outcomes for disabled students and BME students – destinations/employability outcomes • Partners Transition planning	• College representation on CPPs and LEPs in Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire to improve CIAG • Work Placement Co-ordinator supports learners on Employability courses at Stage Two • Apply for external funding in order to create a role specific to supporting ASN • Work with the Action Group in Falkirk to support students with ASN to access opportunities Improve the transition process for sharing information to better support students in their education, employment or training	Ongoing	AP ?
Reduce need for specific adjustments for additional learning needs by 10% in 2017-18	• Teaching Departments increase inclusive learning and teaching approaches • Provide meaningful information/data to Teaching Departments on the profile of their students & their needs	• Teaching departments implement top 5 most commonly recommended adjustments (from Learning Support team) for their programmes as standard practice • Use of Moodle – develop agreed standard of what 'accessible resources' looks like • Increase recording of demonstrations/classes for revision purposes	April 2017 - ongoing	IS EILS Teaching departments C&Q
Gain improved intelligence on future students	• Improve external transition planning processes	• Improved use of data • Develop approaches and resources to analytics	From April 2017	SMT IS team Student Records EILS Student Services

What we want to achieve *(targets)*	Key things we will do to meet these targets	How	When	Who
	• Improve internal transition planning processes • Identify mechanisms to report undisclosed/undiagnosed needs to partners • Gain information in advance on potential students support requirements	• Explore whether SDS data hub for 16-24 year olds can feed information 'back'		AP
Decrease number of students who are at risk of not achieving	• Early identification and interventions for students most at risk of not achieving • Consider new ways of approaching student support to meet increasing number of disclosures • Address needs to increase achievement • Review use of remission to conduct ELS work in TDs	• 1-1 support, e.g., from Learning Mentors, continues for specific learning needs within broader inclusive environment • The LDW role will intervene when students are at risk of failing by utilising the Absence Monitoring Policy and procedures and contact the appropriate Curriculum Managers • Utilise appropriate 'flagging' systems to track students who have needs met and measure impact of support on their retention/achievement/progression • Awareness raising for teaching staff on how to use information regarding identification of vulnerable students • ELS Facilitators in Teaching Departments log how they utilise their ELS time • Teaching Departments can evidence and use ELS hours for subject support where there is clear need		EILS LDWs TDs IS team

What we want to achieve *(targets)*	Key things we will do to meet these targets	How	When	Who
Respond to BSL Act	*(see attached)*			
Establish levels of ethnic minority representation in College courses	• Determine requirements of Government Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030 • Develop appropriate Equality Outcomes for race/ethnicity	• Compare regional data with College data • Review information gathered through review of existing equality outcomes	April 2017 - ongoing	SMT EILS CMs
Improve use of EQIA across College to underpin data analysis and activity in relation to protected characteristic groups and PAGs	• Implement findings of 2016 EQIA project	• Build into self-evaluation process considering new Education Scotland quality framework • develop Human Rights within EQIA approach • develop EQIA practice at BoM/SMT level • Review FVC policies and practices • CPD for staff	April 2017 - ongoing	SMT EILS Heads of Service Heads of TDs

It is vital that the actions outlined above are embedded within existing strategic and operational planning processes:

- All FVC strategies will link and cross reference each other
- Responsibilities and actions will be assigned and evidenced through teaching department and service area operational plans and self-evaluation processes and team evaluations
- SMT have overall responsibility for Access and Inclusion – must ensure key actions/milestones for access and inclusion plans and Equality activities are monitored regularly
- There is a need to implement a cross-College steering group for Access and Inclusion
- Approval of all strategies by the Board of Management