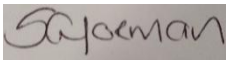
Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Siobhan Gorman Telephone: 02882250109 ext. 3692 Email: siobhan.gorman@swc.ac.uk
• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above ☒ Name: Telephone: Email:
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	SWC People Plan 2025 - 2029 SWC Values Guide
Signature:	

Contact details:

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2025 and March 2026

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

1 In 2025-26, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

During the 2025-26 reporting period, South West College continued to embed equality of opportunity and good relations across policy development, service delivery, workforce development and community engagement in line with its Section 75 duties and Equality Scheme commitments. Key developments included implementation of the refreshed People Plan 2025-2029, enhancement of equality screening and monitoring arrangements, review of the Disability Action Plan 2025-2030, expansion of accessibility initiatives and the continued delivery of targeted education, skills and employability interventions for groups experiencing barriers to participation.

College monitoring data continues to demonstrate significant engagement from under-represented and disadvantaged groups, with almost half of learners coming from the two highest deprivation quintiles and substantial support provided to learners with disabilities and long-term health conditions. Collectively, these developments improved access to education, training and employment opportunities, strengthened staff capability and awareness, enhanced accessibility, increased participation among under-represented groups, and promoted positive engagement between people from different backgrounds and communities.

During the reporting period, the College also launched its refreshed People Plan 2025-2029, reinforcing the College's commitment to creating a values-led, inclusive culture based on being Respectful, Accountable, Engaging and Committed. The Plan promotes fairness, inclusion, staff wellbeing, engagement and continuous improvement, and supports the mainstreaming of equality considerations across recruitment, induction, performance management, staff development and College decision-making. The Plan also aligns with the College's commitments to engagement, monitoring, accessibility, training and annual reporting, ensuring that equality of opportunity and good relations remain embedded across all areas of College activity.

Workforce Planning, Staff Development and Recruitment

The College delivered a targeted programme of staff development focused on equality, inclusion, learner support, leadership and wellbeing. Training undertaking during this reporting period included mandatory SENDO and

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training for all, including staff learner anxiety (38 staff), ADHD awareness (25 staff), Autism Impact Award training (16 staff), Understanding Autism (8 staff), the OCN Autism Champion Award (3 staff), JAM Card awareness (49 staff), dyslexia awareness (10 staff), Sign4Life deaf awareness and communication support (14 staff) and accessibility training (10 staff).

In addition, 17 members of lecturing and support staff successfully completed the Open University's Leadership: External Context and Culture programme, which was designed to enhance leadership capability, resilience and College effectiveness. Staff feedback indicated that the programme strengthened their ability to lead effectively, make informed and equitable decisions, and contribute positively to the College's culture and strategic objectives.

The College also enhanced its support for staff and learners through the introduction of a dedicated Quiet Room. The facility provides an accessible, low-stimulation space for individuals who may require a calm environment to support their wellbeing, mental health, sensory needs or personal reflection. This initiative contributes to the College's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all.

These learning and development opportunities, alongside improvements to facilities and support measures, supported the College's Equality Scheme commitments by increasing staff awareness, knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. Feedback and evaluation forms demonstrated that the training enhanced staff confidence in recognising and responding to individual needs, conducting discussions regarding reasonable adjustments, and implementing inclusive practices where appropriate. Collectively, these initiatives have contributed to the creation of accessible, welcoming and supportive learning and working environments, enabling staff and learners to participate fully, wherever reasonably possible.

The College's recruitment, workforce planning and staff development activities supported equality of opportunity by promoting fair, transparent and inclusive recruitment practices, widening access to employment and professional development opportunities, and ensuring staff possessed the knowledge and skills required to meet the diverse needs of learners and colleagues. Through enhanced understanding of neurodiversity, disability inclusion, communication support and accessibility, staff were better equipped to identify and reduce barriers to participation and improve the learner and employee experience.

Collectively, these measures contributed to a more inclusive College culture, strengthened compliance with Section 75 responsibilities and supported positive outcomes for staff, learners and stakeholders across the Section 75 categories. The College will continue to monitor workforce data, participation in learning and development activities, and recruitment outcomes to identify emerging trends,

inform future workforce planning and support continuous improvement in equality, diversity and inclusion practices.

Inclusive Recruitment Practices

The College is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection processes are accessible, fair and inclusive for all applicants. Measures implemented include:

- Providing reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment and selection process for applicants who identify with a disability.
- Offering alternative application formats on request.
- Ensuring interview rooms and assessments are fully accessible.
- Providing candidates with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the interview environment, including room layout and arrangements, in advance where appropriate.
- Allowing additional time during the process where this is identified as a reasonable adjustment.
- Providing interview questions in accessible formats during interviews and, where appropriate, sharing questions in advance as part of agreed reasonable adjustment arrangements.

To support consistency and fairness, the College's Recruitment and Selection Training is reviewed and updated every two years. This ensures recruiting managers and panel members remain informed of current legislation, best practice and the College's commitments under Section 75 including the College's Code of Practice.

Leadership, Culture and Inclusion

The College continued to embed its core values of being Respectful, Accountable, Engaging and Committed through leadership development, coaching initiatives, TeamSWC activities and staff engagement programmes, supporting a positive, inclusive and values-driven culture.

Opportunities for staff and learners to engage with College leadership were strengthened through team meetings, learner forums, appraisals, regular staff briefings, Connect and Plan Days, and leadership visibility initiatives. During the reporting period, Principal and Chief Executive Celine McCartan led 10 Informal College Conversations across all campuses, providing opportunities for staff to share feedback, raise issues and contribute to discussions on College priorities. These arrangements supported meaningful engagement, strengthened communication, and promoted openness and transparency across the organisation.

The College also delivered a wide-ranging programme of activities to promote inclusion, wellbeing and a positive workplace culture. These included Equality Awareness events, Good Relations activities and Culture Day initiatives led by the Social Inclusion Department; Autism NI Impact Award activities and mandatory autism awareness training for staff and Governing Body Members to support informed decision-making and inclusive practices; and JAM Card awareness initiatives. Leadership and professional development were further supported through a range of coaching programmes, including the Coaching for Growth programme, which was undertaken by all College managers to support the embedding of a coaching culture and enhance leadership capability across the organisation. In addition, a coaching tool was introduced to the wider staff body to encourage effective communication, collaborative problem-solving and development-focused conversations with colleagues and learners.

Staff engagement and wellbeing initiatives included Beat the Blues Monday, Knockmany Forest walks, Connect and Plan Days, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, International Women's Day and International Men's Day events, the Step Challenge, SWC Ramblers activities, Time to Talk events, the menopause awareness event See Her Thrive, Action Cancer's Big Bus visits across all campuses, and a range of family and community engagement initiatives.

Wellbeing, Flexibility and Support

The College continued to develop and promote flexible working arrangements and wellbeing initiatives through its HR policies and the People Plan 2025-2029. These measures supported staff with disabilities, caring responsibilities and other individual needs, helping to create a more inclusive, accessible and supportive working environment.

During the reporting period:

- 14 flexible working requests were submitted and approved.
- 1 career break request was approved.
- 2 requests for unpaid leave were approved.
- Approximately 550 staff utilised the College's hybrid and flexible working arrangements.
- 48 staff accessed wellbeing support through the Lena wellbeing platform.
- 97 staff participated in the menopause awareness event See Her Thrive, promoting greater understanding and support for women's health in the workplace.

- In partnership with Action Cancer, 63 staff accessed breast screening services through the Big Bus initiative and 33 staff participated in MOT health checks.

Improved Equality Screening and Impact Assessment Processes

The College continued to strengthen its equality screening and impact assessment arrangements, ensuring that equality considerations remained integral to policy development and decision-making. During this reporting period, a centralised Policy Repository was established to improve access to policies, support a consistent approach across the organisation, and enhance corporate oversight. Additional guidance and support were provided to policy owners to assist them in meeting their Section 75 responsibilities and completing high-quality screening assessments.

In collaboration with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the College reviewed and updated its equality screening template, supporting a more robust and consistent approach to assessing potential impacts across all policy areas.

The Policy Repository now contains 96 policies, with 23 policies screened during the reporting period. No policies were identified as requiring an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). The screening process enabled the College to consider the potential effects of policies on Section 75 groups at an early stage, identify any areas of concern, and implement mitigating measures where necessary to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

Monitoring and Data Collection Enhancements

The College strengthened its equality monitoring framework through the introduction of enhanced processes for collecting, analysing, reporting and submitting Section 75 monitoring information. A significant improvement was made to the College's EBS system, with the equality monitoring dashboard redesigned to display Section 75 information more clearly and accessibly. This has improved the quality and visibility of equality data, supporting more effective monitoring, reporting, policy screening and evidence-based decision-making. The enhanced arrangements provide a stronger basis for identifying trends, assessing participation across Section 75 groups, and meeting the College's Equality Scheme commitments.

In addition, Section 75 monitoring data relating to staff was collected, analysed and reported for the first time. This represented a significant piece of work, involving the gathering, verification and consolidation of equality information to establish a more comprehensive profile of the College workforce and will support future workforce planning, policy development and equality reporting.

Collectively, these improvements have strengthened the evidence base available to support policy screening, Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) and strategic decision-making. They have also enhanced compliance with the College's Equality Scheme commitments by promoting more robust, accurate and readily accessible equality information, supporting greater transparency, accountability and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations across all areas of College.

Key Policy and Service Delivery Developments

During the 2025-26 reporting period, South West College reviewed and updated its Disability Action Plan 2025-2030, reinforcing its commitment to the disability duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and strengthening arrangements to promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. The updated Plan provides a clear framework for advancing accessibility, inclusion and meaningful participation across all areas of College activity.

The College also launched its refreshed People Plan 2025-2029, which embeds the values of being Respectful, Accountable, Engaging and Committed. The Plan supports a culture of inclusion, accessibility, staff development, wellbeing and engagement, while promoting fairness, diversity and staff voice. By integrating equality considerations into workforce planning, College development and decision-making processes, the Plan supports the mainstreaming of equality across the College.

To support the delivery of these commitments, the College continued to invest in disability awareness and inclusion initiatives. Disability awareness training was delivered across the organisation, including Autism Awareness training for members of the Governing Body, helping to strengthen understanding of disability-related issues at both operational and strategic levels. These initiatives have increased awareness, confidence and capability in supporting students, staff and visitors with a range of needs and disabilities.

Accessibility was further enhanced through the continued promotion of AccessAble, providing students, staff and visitors with detailed information on campus accessibility features before their visit. During the reporting period, The Workhouse campus in Enniskillen was independently audited and added to AccessAble, expanding the availability of comprehensive accessibility information across the College estate. Ongoing accessibility monitoring and engagement activities also helped identify and address physical and procedural barriers, supporting a more inclusive environment for all users.

The College continued to promote awareness of the JAM Card scheme across its campuses, helping staff better understand and respond to the needs of individuals with communication barriers, autism, learning disabilities and hidden

disabilities. This has contributed to a more accessible, supportive and welcoming environment, enabling individuals to seek assistance with greater confidence when required.

The College also promoted equality of opportunity through a range of targeted education, training and social inclusion initiatives designed to address barriers to participation and progression. Programmes including Skills for Life and Work, REAP, ESOL, WRAP and Youthscape+ supported a diverse range of learners and communities. These initiatives provided opportunities for individuals from a number of Section 75 categories, including persons with disabilities, people of different age groups, individuals from minority ethnic communities through ESOL provision, women returners through WRAP, and people with dependants through flexible and accessible learning opportunities. Collectively, these programmes enhanced access to education, skills development, employability and lifelong learning.

In promoting good relations, the College strengthened engagement with people with disabilities through consultation, working groups and collaboration with disability organisations and stakeholders. This helped ensure that the lived experiences of people with disabilities informed policy development, service design and decision-making. The College also fostered good relations through extensive partnership working and cross-community and cross-border engagement. Through participation in PEACEPLUS-funded programmes, including Youthscape+, STRIDE, GRASP and PRISM, learners from different community backgrounds engaged in shared learning, collaborative projects and community-based activities. These initiatives promoted mutual understanding, challenged stereotypes and created meaningful opportunities for positive interaction between people from different traditions and backgrounds. International opportunities through the Turing Scheme further broadened learners' experiences by encouraging engagement with different cultures, perspectives and communities. During the reporting period, 32 students participated in international placements, with 10 travelling to Iceland, 10 to Aruba and 12 to Canada. In addition, 10 staff members supported these schemes, enhancing both learner and staff understanding of diverse cultural and educational environments.

As a result of these policy and service delivery developments, the College strengthened its capacity to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across its services and operations. Staff awareness and confidence in supporting people with disabilities increased, accessibility information became more readily available, and barriers to participation were reduced. Opportunities for people with disabilities to influence decisions affecting them were enhanced through ongoing engagement and consultation mechanisms. These developments have contributed to a more inclusive learning and working environment, improved access to opportunities and services, and strengthened social inclusion,

community cohesion and positive engagement across the communities served by the College.

Increasing Access to Skills and Employment Pathways for Under-Represented Groups

During 2025-26, the College continued to deliver a range of targeted skills, training and employability programmes designed to improve access to education, training and sustainable employment opportunities for groups that can experience barriers to participation. This included programmes such as **Skills for Life and Work (SFLW)**, **Traineeships**, **Apprenticeships NI**, **Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA)**, **Women Returners Access Programme (WRAP)** and the **Disability Access Route to Education and Employment (DARE)**.

Across these programmes, a total of **14,407 individuals** participated during the reporting period. Key areas of participation included:

- **1,431 individuals** participating in Apprenticeships NI.
- **600 individuals** participating in Higher Level Apprenticeships.
- **582 individuals** participating in Traineeships.
- **153 individuals** participating in Skills for Life and Work.
- **39 participants** engaging through the DARE programme, designed to support people with disabilities into education and employment pathways.
- **47 participants** engaging through WRAP, supporting individuals returning to the labour market following caring or other career breaks.
- **378 participants** engaged in flexible skills fund programme.

These programmes made a significant contribution to the College's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity under Section 75 by addressing barriers experienced by a range of under-represented groups. Dedicated interventions such as DARE provided tailored support for individuals with disabilities, while WRAP enabled women returners to rebuild confidence, develop new skills and re-engage with employment opportunities. Flexible learning provision and targeted support mechanisms also helped remove barriers for individuals who were unemployed, economically inactive, facing financial hardship, or balancing caring responsibilities with education and employment aspirations.

The programmes supported progression at multiple stages of the learner journey, providing clear pathways from entry-level skills development through to vocational training, apprenticeships, higher-level qualifications and employment.

This approach helped increase participation, enhance social mobility and support individuals in achieving sustainable educational and employment outcomes.

In addition to promoting equality of opportunity, these programmes contributed to the promotion of good relations by creating inclusive learning environments where individuals from different community, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds could learn and work together. Through shared educational experiences, participants developed skills, confidence and positive relationships, helping to foster mutual understanding, respect and inclusion across the communities served by the College.

As a result, the College continued to improve access to skills development and employment pathways, enabling individuals from under-represented groups to participate more fully in education, training and economic life while supporting broader equality, inclusion and social mobility objectives.

SEN Work Placement Programme

The SEN Work Placement Programme continued to provide meaningful workplace experiences for learners with additional support needs, helping to build confidence, independence and employability skills.

Key outcomes included:

- 85 students successfully completed work placements.
- Placements were supported by approximately 70 employers, including internal College departments.
- One employer supported three students, demonstrating a strong commitment to inclusive employment practices.
- Two students were unable to complete placements due to health-related circumstances.
- Two students progressed directly into paid employment following their placement experience.

Outcome	**Number**	**Percentage**
Students successfully placed	85	**97.7%**
Students unable to finish due to health	2	**2.3%**
Students progressing into employment	2	**2.3% of 87**
Employers involved	70	—

Students developed a range of skills including communication, teamwork, confidence, workplace behaviour, problem-solving, timekeeping and independence, while achieving individual placement objectives aligned to their personal development goals.

Overall, the College's programmes have contributed to:

- Increased participation in education and training.
- Improved employability and progression opportunities.
- Greater social inclusion and economic participation.
- Reduced barriers for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups.
- Enhanced equality of opportunity for people across the Section 75 categories.
- Positive engagement and interaction between individuals from different backgrounds through shared learning and workplace experiences.

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2025-26 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Review and updating of the Disability Action Plan

The College reviewed and updated its Disability Action Plan 2025-2030 to strengthen its arrangements for promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encouraging participation by people with disabilities in public life and decision-making processes.

Outcomes

- Disability Working Groups continued to include staff and students with disabilities, ensuring lived experience informed policy development and service delivery.
- Disability awareness and inclusion training was delivered across the College, including Autism Awareness, JAM Card Awareness, Deaf Awareness and Accessibility Training.
- Accessibility information was enhanced through continued promotion of AccessAble and the addition of the Workhouse Campus to the AccessAble platform.

Impact

- Increased staff knowledge, confidence and capability in supporting people with disabilities and implementing reasonable adjustments.
- Improved accessibility of services, facilities and information for students, staff and visitors.
- Greater involvement of people with disabilities in College consultations, working groups and decision-making activities.
- Enhanced experiences and inclusion for individuals with disabilities through more accessible and responsive service delivery.

Embedding an Inclusive Culture through the People Plan 2025-2029

The launch of the refreshed People Plan 2025-2029 reinforced the College's commitment to equality, inclusion, wellbeing and staff engagement through its values of being Respectful, Accountable, Engaging and Committed.

Outcomes

- Delivery of a range of staff engagement and wellbeing initiatives, including College Conversations, Connect and Plan Days, Equality Awareness events and wellbeing programmes.
- Increased opportunities for staff to contribute feedback and engage with College leadership.

- Greater promotion of equality and inclusion through values-based behaviours and recognition initiatives, including the Living Our Values Awards.

Impact

- Stronger staff engagement and participation in College activities and decision-making.
- Improved sense of belonging and inclusion across the workforce.
- Increased awareness of equality and good relations issues.
- A more positive and inclusive working environment that promotes respect and supports diversity.

Improving Equality Monitoring and Screening Arrangements

The College enhanced its equality screening, monitoring and reporting arrangements through the introduction of a centralised Policy Repository, revision of the Equality Screening Template and improvements to Section 75 monitoring systems.

Outcomes

- New Policy Repository identified ninety six policies are within the College.
- Twenty-three policies were screened during the reporting period.
- A revised equality monitoring dashboard improved access to Section 75 information in the Student EBS.
- Staff equality monitoring information was collected and analysed for the first time.

Impact

- Improved evidence-based decision-making and policy development.
- Earlier identification and mitigation of potential adverse impacts on Section 75 groups.
- Increased consistency and quality of policy screening across the College.
- Enhanced compliance with Equality Scheme commitments and greater College accountability.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Please provide any details and examples:

Yes. The application of the College's Equality Scheme commitments resulted in a number of changes to policy development, procedures and service delivery during the 2025-26 reporting period. These included the introduction of enhanced equality screening arrangements, revision of the Equality Screening Template in partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, implementation of a centralised Policy Repository, and improvements to Section 75 monitoring and reporting processes. In addition, the Positive Behaviour Policy was reviewed and revised as a Disciplinary Policy, ensuring greater consideration of individual circumstances, including the needs of learners with disabilities and additional support needs. The College also enhanced accessibility arrangements through the expansion of AccessAble information, the inclusion of the Workhouse Campus on the AccessAble platform, and increased disability awareness initiatives across the organisation. These developments have strengthened the integration of equality considerations into decision-making, policy development and service delivery.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

The changes introduced during the 2025-26 reporting period have strengthened the consideration of equality and individual circumstances across policy development, decision-making and service delivery. Improved equality screening arrangements and enhanced monitoring processes have helped ensure that potential impacts on Section 75 groups are identified and addressed at an earlier stage. This has supported fairer, more inclusive and evidence-based decision-making. The development of a Policy Repository has also supported and strengthened this element.

Learners and staff with disabilities and additional support needs have benefited from greater consideration of reasonable adjustments and individual circumstances through revised policies and improved accessibility arrangements. The expansion of AccessAble information and continued promotion of disability awareness initiatives have improved access to information, facilities and services for people with disabilities.

In addition, the introduction of the Redeployment Policy will support staff affected by require redeployment as a result of disability-related reasonable adjustments

or changes in working capacity. The policy provides a fair, transparent and consistent process for identifying suitable alternative employment opportunities and ensures that individual circumstances are appropriately considered. This is expected to have a positive impact on employees across the Section 75 categories, particularly people with disabilities, those with caring responsibilities, older workers and individuals experiencing health-related challenges. By supporting staff to remain in employment where possible, the policy promotes equality of opportunity, reduces potential disadvantage and contributes to a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture.

A dedicated Quiet Room was established at the Omagh campus to provide a safe, accessible and inclusive space for staff and students. The facility supports individuals who may require a quiet environment for reasons relating to disability, mental health, sensory sensitivities, neurodiversity, religious observance, wellbeing or personal circumstances. This has enhanced the College's ability to respond to diverse needs and has contributed to a more supportive and inclusive environment for people across a number of Section 75 categories, particularly those with disabilities and those from different religious backgrounds.

Enhanced equality monitoring arrangements provide a stronger evidence base for identifying barriers and inequalities affecting people across all Section 75 categories, including age, religious belief, political opinion, racial group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and dependants. This enables the College to better target actions, improve participation and promote equality of opportunity for under-represented groups.

The implementation of the People Plan 2025-2029 and associated engagement initiatives has also supported a more inclusive working and learning environment by promoting respect, participation, wellbeing and positive relations among people from different backgrounds and communities.

Overall, these initiatives have strengthened the College's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where the diverse needs of staff and learners are recognised, understood and accommodated, helping to advance equality of opportunity and good relations across all Section 75 groups.

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

☒ As a result of the organisation’s screening of a policy *(please give details):*

The change was prompted by the Equality Scheme's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and by the changing needs of the College to ensure fair, transparent and consistent employment practices. The introduction of the Redeployment Policy aims to support employees affected by College change by providing a clear and equitable redeployment process, helping to minimise

potential adverse impacts across all Section 75 equality categories while ensuring that redeployment opportunities are managed fairly and consistently.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2025-26
reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes, organisation wide

Please provide any details and examples:

Yes. Section 75 responsibilities are incorporated within relevant job descriptions, particularly those with responsibility for policy development, leadership, management, HR, student services and governance. Staff are expected to contribute to the College's equality obligations, participate in equality training and support the implementation of the Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan. Equality and inclusion responsibilities are reflected within recruitment documentation and role profiles where appropriate.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2025-
26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes, organisation wide

Please provide any details and examples:

During the 2025–26 reporting period, Section 75 statutory duties were embedded within performance plans for key staff, particularly those involved in policy development, review, and implementation.

This included:

- Eighteen Policy Owners and the Equality Office are responsibility for screening new and revised policies and procedures for potential equality impacts.

- Staff with oversight of service delivery and strategic planning, ensuring that equality considerations were reflected in operational decision-making, including participation in governance meetings.

Performance objectives for these roles included the timely and effective completion of equality screenings, the use of appropriate templates, and the documentation of outcomes. These responsibilities were monitored through our Policy Repository Database.

6 In the 2025-26 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

☒ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan

Please provide any details and examples:

During the 2025-29 reporting period, Section 75 statutory duties were considered as part of the development of the College's new Corporate Plan. Equality of opportunity and good relations considerations were incorporated into the planning process to ensure that strategic objectives, priorities and associated actions align with the College's Equality Scheme commitments and Section 75 responsibilities. Equality screening and impact assessment processes continue to support the integration of these duties into decision-making and service planning.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

1. Development and implementation of the Redeployment Policy.
2. Development and implementation of a centralised Policy Repository to monitor, track and review College policies.
3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training delivered through the College's CPD programme.
4. Accessibility review of the Workhouse Campus, Enniskillen, with actions identified and implemented through AccessAble.
5. Enhancement of Educational Business System (EBS) Section 75 monitoring and reporting arrangements, including development of an improved equality dashboard.

Actions ongoing:

1. **Ongoing Equality Screening**

   Screening all new and revised policies to assess potential impacts on Section 75 equality categories and identify mitigating actions where required.

2. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training**

   Providing ongoing training and awareness sessions for staff and managers on equality responsibilities, Section 75 duties, and inclusive practices.

3. **Student Experience**
   Improving accessibility of learning materials, campuses and digital platforms.
   Ongoing engagement with students from Section 75 groups to identify barriers to participation.
   Monitoring student outcomes and participation rates across equality categories.

Actions to commence:

1. **Monitoring the Redeployment Policy**

   Reviewing the implementation and outcomes of the Redeployment Policy

2. **Report / monitor activities from the training plan/programme** (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during that reporting year.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

N/A

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

X Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality

X Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way

The College will continue existing equality actions relating to policy screening, monitoring, accessibility and staff development whilst also introducing enhanced approaches through the revised Disability Action Plan, improved Section 75 monitoring arrangements and the development of the Policy Repository.

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

☐ All the time

x Sometimes

☐ Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2025-26 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The College continued to promote meaningful and inclusive consultation in line with its Equality Scheme commitments. Good practice included engaging with staff, sector working groups, students and external stakeholders throughout the review of the Disability Action Plan 2025-2030, ensuring that the views and experiences of people with disabilities informed the development of planned actions and priorities. The College's Disability Working Groups provided opportunities for staff and students with disabilities to contribute directly to discussions on accessibility, inclusion and service improvement.

Staff and learner engagement was further supported through learner forums, College Conversations, team meetings, staff surveys and other feedback mechanisms. During the reporting period, the Principal and Chief Executive facilitated a series of College Conversations across campuses, providing opportunities for staff to raise issues, share feedback and contribute to College discussions. These arrangements promoted participation, transparency and inclusion and helped ensure that decisions were informed by the views of those affected.

The College also worked in partnership with disability organisations, NOW Group, Autism NI, Disability Action, Access to Work, Mencap and Cedar Foundation NI community groups to improve accessibility and promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This collaborative approach helped strengthen relationships, improve understanding and support more inclusive environment and service delivery.

12 In the 2025-26 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently <u>used</u> by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

x Face to face meetings

x Focus groups

x Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

x Questionnaires

x Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

x No

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

x Yes

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

23

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2025-26:

23 Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

0 Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

0 Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

All policies screened during the reporting period were screened out and listed on the College's

website as part of the College's commitment to publish its Quarterly Return

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes x No concerns were raised ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes ☐ No x Not applicable

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes x No, already taken place

☐ No, scheduled to take place at a later date ☐ Not applicable

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes ☐ No x Not applicable

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2025-26 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

During the 2025-26 reporting period, the College enhanced its equality monitoring arrangements through improvements to the EBS Section 75 reporting system and the development of an improved equality monitoring dashboard. These enhancements increased the availability, quality and accessibility of equality data relating to learners and staff, supporting more effective analysis of participation, representation and outcomes across the Section 75 categories.

The College also collected, analysed and reported staff Section 75 monitoring data for the first time, creating a more comprehensive profile of the workforce. This information has strengthened the evidence base available to support workforce planning, policy development, equality screening and College decision-making.

Monitoring information has been used to inform 23 policy screenings, identify potential barriers to participation, assess the impact of policies and services on different Section 75 groups, and support the development of targeted actions where inequalities may exist. The improved availability of equality and good relations information has enhanced the College's ability to make evidence-based decisions, promote equality of opportunity and ensure that services and policies are responsive to the needs of diverse communities.

In addition, the establishment of a centralised Policy Repository has strengthened oversight of policy review and screening activity, ensuring that equality information is readily available to policy owners and decision-makers and supporting greater consistency, accountability and compliance with the College's Equality Scheme commitments.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2025-26, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During the 2025-26 reporting period, the College delivered a programme of equality, diversity, inclusion and disability awareness training in line with the objectives of the Equality Scheme. Training included Autism Awareness, ADHD Awareness, JAM Card Awareness, Dyslexia Awareness, Deaf Awareness and Communication Support, Accessibility Training and Autism Champion development programmes. A total of 173 staff participated across these programmes. Evaluation feedback indicated increased awareness of equality responsibilities, improved understanding of disability and neurodiversity, greater confidence in implementing reasonable adjustments, and enhanced ability to support diverse learner and staff needs. These activities contributed to the Equality Scheme objective of ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfil the College's Section 75 responsibilities.

25 Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

During the 2025-26 reporting period, a range of equality, disability awareness and inclusion-related training programmes were delivered across the College. Examples of training that demonstrated positive outcomes included Autism Awareness training, Cedar Foundation – Understanding Autism, JAM Card Awareness, Deaf Awareness and Communication Support (Sign4Life), Dyslexia Awareness, Accessibility Training and ADHD Awareness training.

Feedback from participants indicated increased knowledge and understanding of disability, neurodiversity, communication barriers and inclusive practices. Staff reported greater confidence in identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments, communicating effectively with individuals with additional needs and creating more inclusive learning and working environments.

The effectiveness of the training was demonstrated through the increased use of inclusive practices across College services, enhanced awareness of accessibility requirements and improved support provided to learners, staff and visitors with disabilities. In addition, the delivery of JAM Card Awareness and Sign4Life training helped staff respond more effectively to individuals experiencing communication difficulties, contributing to a more accessible and welcoming environment.

Leadership and inclusion-focused development programmes also contributed to strengthening equality awareness and inclusive decision-making across the organisation.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2025-26, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

During the 2025-26 reporting period, the College continued to improve accessibility and inclusivity across its services and facilities in response to feedback, identified needs and ongoing monitoring activities. Following consideration of the needs of students, staff and visitors, a dedicated Quiet Room was established to provide a calm and accessible space for individuals who may require a low-stimulation environment. This enhancement supports individuals with disabilities, mental health needs, neurodiverse conditions, religious observance requirements, and those requiring a private space for wellbeing purposes.

Breastfeeding facilities, continued to be made available across a number of campuses and departments to support staff, students and visitors.

Accessible parking arrangements were reviewed and enhanced to support staff and visitors with disabilities and improve access to College facilities.

The College participated in an AccessAble audit review, with recommendations identified and incorporated into ongoing accessibility improvement plans.

Disability support arrangements were further enhanced through continued engagement and partnership working with organisations including the Cedar Foundation, Disability Action, Workable (NI) and Occupational Health services. These partnerships have supported improved access to employment, learning opportunities and reasonable adjustments for staff and students with disabilities.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2025-26?

0

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The College reviewed and updated our Equality Scheme in 2026. Reviewed and approved by Equality Commission NI.

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

During the next reporting period, the College intends to focus on further strengthening equality screening and consultation arrangements, embedding the revised Equality Scheme, enhancing Section 75 monitoring and reporting processes, increasing staff awareness through targeted equality and inclusion training, reviewing accessibility across all campuses with the support of AccessAble, and progressing actions within the Disability Action Plan 2025-2030. Particular attention will be given to improving the use of equality data to inform policy development and decision-making and to expanding opportunities for stakeholder engagement and consultation.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

X Nothing specific, more of the same

Continue to work closely with the Sector on best practices, guidance and support in relation to Equality Scheme implementation, equality screening, monitoring arrangements, Disability Action Plans and examples of emerging best practice across the public sector.

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this **reporting period** that have been:

ACTION MEASURES	Timescales	Performance indicators / intended outcome	Responsible / Owner
The Colleges will engage with the Department for the Economy to promote and encourage the inclusion of disabled people on the Governing Body of the Colleges.	On an ongoing basis and when vacancies arise.	The Governing Body will include members with disabilities.	Secretary to the Governing Body (Lead) Director of People & Organisational Development / HR (Support)
Continue to encourage the participation of disabled people on committees, student representatives' roles on the Governing Body and groups across the Colleges.	Reviewed annually Year 1 – Year 5.	Membership of committees and groups to demonstrate participation of those with disabilities.	Equality & HR Officer Head of Student Services Group Chairpersons / Committee
Encourage students with disabilities to participate more fully in College life.	Annually as part of induction and ongoing throughout the year. Year 1 – Year 5.	Increased participation in student focus groups, student surveys, Student Union membership and where applicable non-curricular activities such as Students	Head of Student Services (Lead) Student Engagement Team Learning Support Team

		Union events and sporting activities etc.	
Increase awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities	Ongoing.	Increased awareness and understanding among staff and students of barriers experienced by people with disabilities.	Equality & HR Officer (Lead) Advanced Practitioner Teaching and Learning Head of Social Inclusion and Employability Programmes Head of Student Services
Promote the use of AccessAble website to encourage participation of prospective students and staff.	Annually and on-going Year 1 – Year 5.	Benchmark usage of AccessAble webpage.	Equality & HR Officer (Lead)

2. Please outline below details on all **actions that have been fully achieved** in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs[i]	Outcomes / Impact[ii]
National[iii]	Encouraged the participation of people with disabilities in public life through engagement with sector-wide disability networks,	Ongoing engagement with organisations including Disability Action, Autism NI, Mencap, NOW Group and Cedar Foundation.	Improved understanding of barriers experienced by people with disabilities. Disability perspectives were incorporated into College policy development,

	consultations and collaboration with external disability organisations.	Participation in sector working groups and consultations relating to disability inclusion and accessibility.	accessibility planning and service improvement. Strengthened partnerships supporting disability inclusion across the Further Education sector
Regional[iv]	Supported the participation of staff and students with disabilities through Disability Working Groups and consultation exercises relating to the Disability Action Plan 2025-2030.	Disability Working Groups met throughout the reporting period. Staff and students with disabilities contributed to the review and update of the Disability Action Plan 2025-2030. Consultation opportunities provided to disability stakeholders and representatives.	Increased participation by people with disabilities in decision-making processes. Lived experience informed the development of actions and priorities within the Disability Action Plan. Enhanced accessibility and inclusion measures across the College.
Local[v]	Encouraged students with disabilities to participate in learner forums, student representative structures, feedback mechanisms and College consultations.	Opportunities provided through learner forums, student surveys, focus groups and consultation exercises. Ongoing engagement with learners receiving disability support. Participation of learners with disabilities in discussions relating to accessibility, support services and campus facilities. Including	Increased opportunities for learners with disabilities to influence decisions affecting their educational experience. Improvements made to accessibility arrangements, including enhancement of AccessAble information and establishment of a Quiet Room on the Omagh campus.

		the implementation of 'Student and Staff Passport – Get to Know You Better'. With the support of Autism NI and the Cedar Foundation.	

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Disability Awareness and Inclusion Training (Autism Awareness, ADHD Awareness, Dyslexia Awareness, JAM Card Awareness, Accessibility Training and OCN Autism Champion Award)	Training delivered to staff across the College, including 25 staff completing ADHD Awareness training, 16 staff completing Autism Impact Award training, 49 staff receiving JAM Card Awareness training, 10 staff completing Dyslexia Awareness training and 10 staff undertaking Accessibility Training.	Increased staff knowledge and understanding of disability, neurodiversity and communication barriers. Staff reported greater confidence in supporting students and colleagues, implementing reasonable adjustments and promoting inclusive practices.
2	Deaf Awareness and Communication Support Training (Sign4Life)	14 staff completed Sign4Life Deaf Awareness and Communication Support training.	Improved staff awareness of the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals and increased confidence in communicating effectively with people experiencing communication barriers. This enhanced accessibility and customer service across the College.
3	Leadership and Inclusion Development Programmes	17 members of lecturing and support staff successfully completed the Open University's Leadership: External Context and Culture programme.	Participants reported increased confidence in leadership, decision-making and inclusive practice. The programme supported the development of a values-led culture and strengthened staff capability to make fair, informed and equitable decisions.

4	Autism Working Group	The Autism Working Group continued to meet throughout the reporting period, bringing together staff, learners and key stakeholders to discuss autism-related issues, share experiences and identify opportunities to improve support and accessibility across the College.	Increased awareness and understanding of autism across the College. The Group provided a forum for lived experience to inform decision-making, supported the development of inclusive practices, development of new student and staff passport 'Get to Know you Better' contributing to improvements in learner and staff support arrangements. Working closely with the Cedar Foundation to deliver lunch time training session to better inform staff reducing barriers to participation.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Promotion of Disability Awareness and Inclusion Campaigns	The College promoted disability awareness through Autism Awareness activities, JAM Card Awareness initiatives, Accessibility Training and disability-focused events delivered throughout the reporting period. Information was shared through internal communications, staff engagement activities and awareness campaigns.	Increased awareness and understanding of disability, neurodiversity and communication barriers among staff and learners. Contributed to a more inclusive and supportive College culture and encouraged positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.
2	Promotion of Accessibility Information through AccessAble	Continued promotion of AccessAble across College campuses, including the addition of the Workhouse Campus in Enniskillen. Accessibility information was made available to	Improved awareness of accessibility needs and demonstrated the College's commitment to removing barriers for people with disabilities. Increased confidence for individuals accessing College facilities and services.

		staff, students and visitors before attending campus.	
3	Autism Working Group and Disability Engagement Communications	The Autism Working Group and Equality Working Groups provided valuable opportunities for staff and learners to share experiences, identify barriers and communicate the needs of autistic individuals and people with disabilities across the College. Feedback gathered through these groups informed discussions, influenced decision-making and helped shape service improvements and support arrangements. These engagement activities promoted a greater understanding of autism and disability through the sharing of lived experiences. They also increased awareness and visibility of disability-related issues within the College, supporting more informed decision-making, greater inclusion and more positive attitudes towards diversity and accessibility. To further enhance awareness and understanding, a series of lunchtime training and information sessions was delivered throughout the year in partnership with the Cedar	These initiatives contributed to a more inclusive College culture, improved engagement with staff and learners with disabilities, strengthened understanding of neurodiversity and disability-related issues, and supported the College's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and fostering positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.

		Foundation and Disability Action. The lunchtime format proved effective, enabling a wider range of staff to participate while minimising disruption to operational activities. These sessions provided practical information on disability inclusion, reasonable adjustments, accessibility and supporting individuals with additional needs, helping to build staff confidence, knowledge and awareness in creating a more inclusive environment for both colleagues and learners.	

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to '**encourage others'** to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Partnership Working with Disability Organisations	The College continued to work with organisations including Autism NI, Disability Action, Cedar Foundation, NOW Group, Mencap and Access to Work to promote disability inclusion, accessibility and participation.	Strengthened collaborative working and encouraged external partners to support and promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. Increased awareness of disability issues and improved access to support services.

2	JAM Card and Disability Awareness Initiatives	Disability awareness campaigns, JAM Card awareness activities and autism-related initiatives were promoted across campuses, involving staff, learners and visitors.	Encouraged staff and learners to recognise and respond positively to the needs of people with disabilities and communication barriers, contributing to a more inclusive College environment.
3	Autism and Disability Working Groups	The College facilitated Autism and Disability Working Groups involving staff, learners and stakeholders, providing opportunities to share experiences and identify improvements.	Encouraged participants to act as advocates for disability inclusion and accessibility within their areas of work and study, helping to embed positive attitudes and inclusive practices across the College.

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Establishment of a Dedicated Quiet Room at Omagh Campus	A dedicated Quiet Room was established to provide a calm, accessible and low-stimulation environment for staff, learners and visitors. The facility is available for wellbeing, sensory regulation, personal reflection and religious observance.	Improved accessibility and inclusion for individuals with disabilities, neurodiverse conditions, mental health needs and sensory sensitivities. Enhanced wellbeing and supported greater participation in College life.
2	Accessibility Review and AccessAble Enhancement	The Workhouse Campus, Enniskillen, was independently audited and added to the AccessAble platform, providing detailed	Improved access to information for students, staff and visitors with disabilities, enabling informed decisions before attending campus and reducing barriers to participation.

		accessibility information across College sites.	
3	Enhanced Equality Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements	The College implemented improvements to its Section 75 monitoring processes, including a redesigned equality dashboard within EBS and the collection and analysis of staff equality monitoring data for the first time.	Strengthened the evidence base for decision-making, policy development and equality screening. Improved the College's ability to identify barriers, monitor outcomes and promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.