



Equality Mainstreaming Report 2019

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1. Introduction

This report provides an update on the College's progress against our 2017 Equality outcomes and reflects upon how we can improve our impact on equality issues, going

forward.

The Report also contains updated employee data for 2017 and 2018 to bring these sets up to date.

We also publish our gender and disability pay gap information with associated comment.

The report contains evidence of some mainstreaming activity which helps us to address the general equality duty.

2. Progress against Equality Outcomes 2017 - 2021

In common with many other institutions, the College recognised that the first cycle of outcomes was very much a learning experience. We did not fully recognise the longer-term strategic focus of outcomes in respect of the requirement to try to achieve a more holistic and pan-societal impact. This is something we have tried to provide for more effectively with the new outcomes;

- We will develop closer working relationships with schools in order to break down gender barriers for certain vocational groups
- We will work more closely with Disability Groups to produce positive outcomes for disabled staff, students and job applicants
- We will create a more inclusive learning environment

The new outcomes are much less specific, concentrating on more general and long term changes across most protected characteristics. There are a number of action plans which underpin this work, including;

- Gender Action Plan
- Access and Inclusion Plan

- Athena Swan Action Plan (University-owned)
- Corporate parenting Action Plan
- Funding Council outcomes

We have found it difficult to manage the number and potential overlap of the various plans, in aggregation, and are currently prioritising key aspects across all plans.

A key theme of the new approach is to identify those “influencers” whom we need to work more closely with to help us effect change. We do not believe that we can progress the changes required by intervening *solely* at the point of entry to College. The key life/career decisions have, in the main, already been established by that point.

We believe, therefore, that we can best influence the choices made by young people by finding a way to influence them, and the other influencers, at an earlier intervention point. The strategy for doing this more effectively is currently under discussion.

3. Governance and Leadership

North Highland College UHI recognises that we have not managed to achieve a gender-balanced board throughout the period covered by this report (see table). This reflects the difficulty the College has experienced in recruiting and retaining female members.

Year	Male	Female	Vacancies
June 2015	12	1	5
June 2016	12	5	1
April 2017	12	5	1
April 2018	10	6	2
April 2019	10	4	4

The maximum number of Board members, in line with the provisions of the Post 16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013, is 18 for assigned, incorporated colleges.

Promotion of greater diversity

The North Highland College UHI Board of Management is committed to meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty and the actions we will take to continue to improve the diversity of the North Highland College Board of Management will include:

- The development of a succession plan which will include the use of data on protected characteristics.

Progress – Our Succession Plan has now been created and outlines the Board plan to prepare for future recruitment and to attempt to increase the awareness of the Board.

- The use of an appropriately diverse range of media to attract candidates with protected characteristics, for example promoting vacancies through Changing the Chemistry (<http://changingthechemistry.org/>) and encouraging members of the Highland Business Women's Club (<http://hbw.scot/>) to apply. In addition, we have advertised vacancies on new web-based platforms to include;
 - Public Appointments
 - The Federation of Small Businesses
 - Changing the Chemistry
 - The Caithness Chamber of Commerce
 - The Highlands Business Women's Club
- We have expanded our use of Social Media to appeal to and engage with more diverse groups. This has included Facebook and Twitter.
- We are using positive imagery by promoting the profiles of current female board members on the College website and in other media during recruitment campaigns
For example, one of our female members wrote a promotional piece in support of our most recent recruitment drive. This was placed on Social media platforms.
Board member profiles are available on NHC website.
- Holding an open evening during recruitment campaigns, where potential applicants can meet board members, learn about the role and about the College as well as asking questions in an informal setting
- Proactively encouraging applications from under represented constituencies.

We acknowledge that the imbalance is proving extremely difficult to address and that we have, to date, been unable to make the required impact. However, this has certainly not been for lack of effort.

4. Mainstreaming Activity

We have made significant progress in the delivery of a modernised **Occupational Health Service** for employees. This now covers a much-wider range of activity than before. Our Occupational Health Service provision (delivered in partnership with NHS Highland) now includes;

- The provision of occupational health advice in relation to the **recruitment** of employees who have declared a disability
- The assessment of employees who are **absent from work**, and whether the absence is linked to an underlying health issue/disability
- The provision of advice about whether **ill-health retirement** *may* be appropriate for employees who are on long term absence and who may be unable to return to work
- The provision of assessments for employees who are **experiencing difficulty at work because of a disability** or because they are absent from work and a disability or other health issue prevents or delays a return to work, including reasonable adjustments
- **Training** of managers and staff in relation to appropriate occupational health or related issues, e.g. DSE issues
- **Environmental Assessments** – e.g. HAVS, Noise etc.

Our attendance management policy has been updated to reflect the enhanced support available to employees with disabilities where this has an impact upon their ability to attend work satisfactorily. This has resulted in a far more efficient process in achieving outcomes for employees with disabilities who are absent from work, in particular.

We have achieved **Disability Employer** status as part of the Government's **Disability Confident** Scheme. This status was achieved *largely* upon the quality of provision available to disabled employees.

As part of the University of the Highlands and Islands, we have adopted the actions required to participate and achieve bronze award-status for the Athena Swan programme. Our focus here has been to enable female researchers to return to work following pregnancy and this has been successful in enabling us to retain key staff, going forward.

5. Equal Pay Statement 2019

Our Equal Pay Statement is published here <https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/NHC-Equal-Pay-Statement-2019.pdf> and updates our previous statement to reflect developments relating to the National Scheme of Job Evaluation, as determined via the National bargaining mechanism.

6. Employee Data

The College has recently (separately) published the following employee data;

- Staff Profile 2017

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/Current-staff---1-Dec-2017.pdf>

- Staff Profile 2018

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/Current-Staff-Breakdown---2018.pdf>

- Recruitment 2017

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/about-us/equality--diversity/>

- Recruitment 2018

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/about-us/equality--diversity/>

- Retention 2017

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/Leavers-Breakdown---2017.pdf>

- Retention 2018

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/Leavers-Breakdown---2018.pdf>

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- Continuous Professional Development 2017

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/CPD-Breakdown-2017.pdf>

- Continuous Professional Development 2018

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/CPD-Breakdown-2018.pdf>

- Gender Pay Gap 2018

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/Publication-Gender-Pay-Gap.pdf>

- Pregnancy and Maternity 2017

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/Pregnancy-and-Maternity-2017.pdf>

- Pregnancy and Maternity 2018

<https://www.northhighland.uhi.ac.uk/t4-media/one-web/north-highland/about-us/equality-diversity/Pregnancy-and-Maternity-2018.pdf>

7. Next Steps

We have identified that we cannot effectively manage the aggregation of activity (in terms of the volume of actions) as set out in the many action plans we are currently producing. We will work to prioritise these plans to better support the achievement of our Equality Outcomes. We are not yet in a strong position to use our employment information to better perform the general equality duty. There are several factors which have led us to this situation.

The very large geographic area covered by a very small College – this makes analysis of any available statistical information, e.g. census data, very complicated.

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- Being a small College, we do not have specialists able to focus on and analyse data to a high level.
- The North Highlands does not have a typically diverse race population, making it especially difficult to recruit certain ethnic minorities.

It is our aim to develop the use of a limited range of data to enable us to effect better outcomes for disabled people within our workforce and community.