



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2024/25

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report – 2024/25

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Gateshead College's Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) Annual Report highlights our key achievements throughout the 2024/25 academic year, covering the period from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025.
- 1.2 This report explains the EDIB work we've carried out to positively impact our objectives set in the previous year's report, focusing on staff, learners and partners. We'll also share the College's objectives and priorities for the current academic year, 2025/26.
- 1.3 This report should be read alongside the staff and learner data in Appendices 1 and 2, which provide important context about our staff and students. These datasets help us understand representation, identify any gaps and ensure our EDIB activity is informed by accurate and meaningful evidence.

2 Our Public Sector Duties

- 2.1 The public sector equality duty (PSED) is a legal requirement for all public authorities and any organisation delivering public functions. Its purpose is simple: to make sure we actively think about how we improve society and promote equality in everything we do.
- 2.2 This means we must regularly consider – and keep reviewing – how equality is reflected in:
 - Our decision-making
 - The policies we use internal and externally
 - The way we procure goods and services
 - The services we deliver
 - How we recruit, develop and manage our people
- 2.3 Under the Equality Act, individuals are protected from discrimination. Unfair treatment based on certain personal characteristics is against the law. These 'protected characteristics' are:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Disability

- 2.4 We also have duty to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity for all
 - Foster good relations between different groups

3 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging: Our Commitment and Objectives

- 3.0.1 In 2025, the College updated its EDIB commitment statement and objectives.
- 3.0.2 Our commitment directly supports the College's PSED obligations and the four key themes – Culture, Curriculum, Campus and Community – ensure inclusion is embedded holistically across the College, with:
- Inclusive leadership, policies and decision-making that support equity.
 - Clear reporting processes for discrimination and harassment.
 - Staff and learner training to promote understanding and representation.
 - Data-driven action plans to track progress and improve impact.
 - Stronger partnerships to promote inclusion beyond the College.
- 3.0.3 By aligning our objectives with the PSED, the College is embedding inclusion into every aspect of the College experience and ensuring compliance with our legal obligations.

3.1 Commitment Statement

- 3.1.1 At Gateshead College, we are committed to creating a culture where diversity is celebrated, inclusion is embedded and everyone – learners, staff and partners – feels they truly belong. We take proactive steps to remove barriers, create opportunities and ensure that every individual is valued, heard and supported to achieve their full potential.
- 3.1.2 Playing a vital role in our local community, we champion equity and inclusion within our college and beyond, ensuring our people and partners thrive in an environment of fairness, respect and opportunity.

3.2 Objectives

Our objectives are themed around four key areas: Culture, Curriculum, Campus and Community and set out our intentions for equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging at Gateshead College.

They provide a clear direction and are underpinned by an annual college action plan with specific, measurable actions and deadlines. The action plan will track progress and assign accountability while allowing flexibility to adapt over time. This approach keeps our goals ambitious while making sure we take practical steps to deliver real change.

3.2.1 Culture – A Place Where Everyone Belongs

Objective: Build a college culture that celebrates differences and makes sure everyone feels respected, valued and able to succeed, advancing equity for each protected characteristic.

We will:

- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion into policies and procedures, leadership and decision-making, with clear accountability and regular progress updates.
- Strengthen and promote clear, accessible reporting systems for discrimination, bullying and harassment, ensuring action is taken so everyone feels safe and supported.
- Train staff and leaders to confidently address bias, foster inclusion and understand different perspectives.
- Celebrate diversity through events, campaigns and initiatives that promote understanding and challenge bias.
- Develop a workforce plan that champions fairness, transparency and teamwork and supports us to reflect the diversity of our community by improving recruitment, progression and retention practices.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for staff and students to give feedback, share lived experiences and influence improvement and change.
- Use data to track progress and inform actions to close equity gaps, particularly for those with multiple disadvantages.

3.2.2 Curriculum – Learning That Reflects Everyone’s Stories

Objective: Make sure that what we teach and how we teach it reflects the diverse world we live in, giving everyone the chance to succeed and feel represented while promoting positive values and behaviours.

We will:

- Make sure lessons and materials reflect the world around us and include voices, ideas and histories from a wide range of people and cultures.
- Use student data to close equity gaps, including for those with multiple disadvantages and systemic barriers and develop strategies to support those who need it most. We will measure the effectiveness of our teaching practices and adjust where needed to ensure fairness and inclusivity.
- Support teachers with training and resources to create inclusive, engaging lessons that reflect different lived experiences and promote positive behaviours and values.
- Promote diverse career paths and connect students with mentors and role models who can guide and inspire them, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.

3.2.3 Campus – A Space for Everyone

Objective: Make our campus a welcoming, accessible and safe space where everyone feels they belong.

We will:

- Provide inclusive, accessible and welcoming spaces for everyone. We will make sure our buildings, classrooms and digital spaces are easy to use no matter what your needs or abilities and make sure we keep this under review.

- Gather feedback from students, staff and visitors to identify and fix any barriers to inclusion or accessibility.
- Use clear signs, helpful tools and visible campaigns to show that equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our college.

3.2.4 Community – Working Together to Make Things Better

Objective: Build strong partnerships with local groups, employers and communities to make a real difference together.

We will:

- Partner with local organisations and businesses to create opportunities that benefit everyone and help us better understand and meet the needs of learners, staff and the community.
- Identify and strengthen partnerships with local organisations and employers to promote inclusion and opportunity, showing how colleges can champion equality, diversity and inclusion in the wider world.
- Increase outreach with diverse communities and underrepresented groups, bringing people together and attracting staff and students from all backgrounds to enrich our college culture and strengthen inclusivity.

This report outlines the progress made on our 2024/25 EDIB objectives in the "Key Initiatives and Achievements" section below.

The priorities for the 2025/26 academic year are listed in the "Priorities" section of this report.

4 Key Initiatives and Achievements

4.0.1 Our EDIB work this year has focused on strengthening belonging, widening access and building the foundations needed to deliver our new EDIB commitment statement and objectives. The work below is organised under the four themes of Culture, Curriculum, Campus and Community, reflecting the structure of our approach.

4.1 Culture – A Place Where Everyone Belongs

4.1.1 Embedding inclusive leadership and governance: Our EDIB Steering Group meets termly, bringing together colleagues from curriculum, student support, People and our EDI Link Governor to drive the delivery of the new EDIB objectives. The Steering Group agreed the EDIB Action Plan to underpin the objectives and complete half-termly progress reviews to track delivery and impact.

4.1.2 Growing the Staff Inclusion Group: Formed in 2024 and expanded this year, the group now represents a wider range of staff and completed an external Employee Network Leadership Programme to strengthen its impact. Members contributed to policy development, events and EDIB projects.

- 4.1.3 Strengthened reporting and decision-making: A refreshed Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process was launched, with training rolled out to the Senior Management Team and policy owners. This ensures decisions are inclusive, consistent and aligned to the Equality Act and best practice.
- 4.1.4 Raising awareness and challenging bias: Staff development days featured sessions on racism, neurodiversity, mental health, inclusive teaching and the impact of online misogyny. These activities deepened understanding of lived experience, bias and inclusion.
- 4.1.5 Campaigns and celebrations: An EDIB culture and wellbeing calendar was delivered, including activity around Pride, Black History Month, Ramadan and Menopause Awareness.
- 4.1.6 Strengthening inclusive recruitment: Recruitment materials were refreshed using more inclusive imagery and language. Equal opportunities data and recruitment dashboards helped us track reach and monitor diversity at each stage of selection.
- 4.1.7 Wellbeing recognised at the highest level: We retained the Maintaining Excellence level of the Better Health at Work Award, reflecting our commitment to mental health, physical wellbeing and early intervention.

4.2 Curriculum – Learning That Reflects Everyone’s Stories

- 4.2.1 Power BI intersectionality dashboards: A new dashboard now provides curriculum teams with real-time insight into ethnicity, SEND, socio-economic indicators and other characteristics. This is helping teams target support early.
- 4.2.2 Learning Journey Review (LJR): The College completed planning for a cross-College LJR on EDIB, designed to understand how inclusion influences learner experience, engagement and achievement.
- 4.2.3 Embedding inclusive teaching practice: January’s whole-College EDIB curriculum sessions provided teachers with tools for adaptive teaching, inclusive assessment design and use of diverse case studies.
- 4.2.4 Tackling sexual harassment: In line with the Office for Students condition E6, we sourced training for HE learners on sexual harassment and consent. This included testing understanding and signposting support.
- 4.2.5 Targeted intervention to close gaps: Our Business curriculum team delivered a case study in addressing achievement gaps for learners from ethnic minority backgrounds—leading to improved outcomes through parental engagement, adapted curriculum content and aspirational target-setting.
- 4.2.6 Promoting inclusive career pathways: Through employer partnerships and case studies (including women in construction and diverse role models), learners saw a wider range of careers and progression routes.

4.3 Campus – A Space for Everyone

- 4.3.1 Accessibility and belonging: We reviewed prayer/quiet rooms across campuses to ensure suitable, accessible space for reflection and religious observance.
- 4.3.2 Visible inclusion: New signage, campaigns and library displays celebrated cultural events and raised awareness of inclusion. The Library team continued to champion diversity through collections, creative sessions and safe spaces.
- 4.3.3 Enhanced wellbeing support: Our Welfare & Wellbeing Team supported over 400 students and staff accessed improved counselling provision through an upgraded Employee Assistance Programme, including up to eight face-to-face sessions.
- 4.3.4 Safety and climate of inclusion: A new Safe To Be Myself survey was introduced to understand psychological safety for students.

4.4 Community – Working Together to Make Things Better

- 4.4.1 Partnerships that make an impact: We continued to collaborate with Out North East, ReportOUT, Pride Action North and Society Matters. The College was a venue partner for the global LGBTQ+ summit "Safer to Be Me," with staff and students volunteering.
- 4.4.2 Visibility across the FE sector: Through AoC's EDI Charter network, we shared practice and collaborated on emerging themes and sector challenges.
- 4.4.3 Wider community engagement: Our charity partnership with the Red Sky Foundation helped raise awareness of heart health. We maintained close links with Gateshead Foodbank, Andy's Man Club, health providers and local employers to strengthen our support offer.

5 Networks

5.0.1 Our networks play an important role in creating spaces where people feel heard, respected and connected. They help bring our EDIB commitments to life by creating trusted spaces for dialogue, amplifying lived experience and shaping inclusive practice across the College.

5.0.2 This year, our focus has centred on the Staff Inclusion Group (SIG) and our LGBTQIA+ Student & Friends Group which has continued to provide an important learner-led space for support, creativity and belonging.

5.1 Staff Inclusion Group

5.1.1 The Staff Inclusion Group (SIG) was our primary staff network focus in 2024/25. Over the year, members completed a specialist Employee Network Leadership Programme to strengthen confidence, skills and influence. They contributed lived-experience insight to key policy reviews, including inclusive language updates and strengthened accessibility considerations and supported College-wide EDIB campaigns while helping to shape cultural and wellbeing activity planning. SIG also influenced the development of the new EDIB Commitment Statement and began shaping a three-year plan to ensure its work has sustained and meaningful impact. Through this activity, the group has become a central mechanism for staff voice on inclusion and will continue to play a key role in 2025/26.

5.2 LGBTQIA+ Student & Friends Group

5.2.1 This weekly learner-led group continued to provide a safe, inclusive and creative space for LGBTQIA+ students across the College. Supported by the Library and Student Engagement teams, the group met weekly throughout the year and offered a trusted environment where learners could explore identity, belonging, language and LGBTQIA+ history. The group enabled students to connect with peers, build confidence and contribute directly to learner voice activity, helping shape elements of curriculum and EDIB planning. Creative activities such as crafting, reflective discussions and story-sharing further strengthened the group's role as an important source of community, support and visibility for LGBTQIA+ learners.

6 Priorities for 2025/26

6.0.1 Our priorities for the year ahead are directly tied to the EDIB commitment statement, objectives and our four themes.

6.1 Culture – A Place Where Everyone Belongs

- Embed and promote the updated EIA process across all decision-making.
- Launch updated mandatory EDI and sexual harassment training.
- Strengthen inclusive recruitment practices through improved guidance, training and data insight.
- Build leadership capability through EDIB training for the Board, Executive Team and SMT.
- Deliver a full calendar of cultural and wellbeing events shaped by staff and learner feedback.
- Strengthen the Staff Inclusion Group's role and launch its three-year plan.
- Launch the new wellbeing portal, ensuring content reflects current staff needs (e.g., bereavement, menopause, mental health).

- Expand departmental staff absence dashboards and provide managers with tools to identify trends and intervene early.

6.2 Curriculum – Learning That Reflects Everyone’s Stories

- Deliver the cross-College EDIB Learning Journey Review and implement its recommendations.
- Enhance inclusive teaching practice through focused CPD, adaptive teaching support and strengthened curriculum resources.
- Continue developing intersectional learner dashboards and build support strategies to close gaps.
- Improve learner education on safety, sexual harassment and healthy relationships.

6.3 Campus – A Space for Everyone

- Improve accessibility of spaces and information across all campuses.
- Strengthen visibility of safe spaces and signposting to support services.

6.4 Community – Working Together to Make Things Better

- Strengthen partnerships with local and national organisations to widen access, opportunity and visibility.
- Increase community outreach campaigns, particularly for underrepresented groups.
- Refresh the College’s EDIB communications to celebrate diverse voices and community impact.
- Expand work with employers to model inclusive practice and provide diverse role models for learners.

Appendix 1: Staff Data

Staff Data Analysis

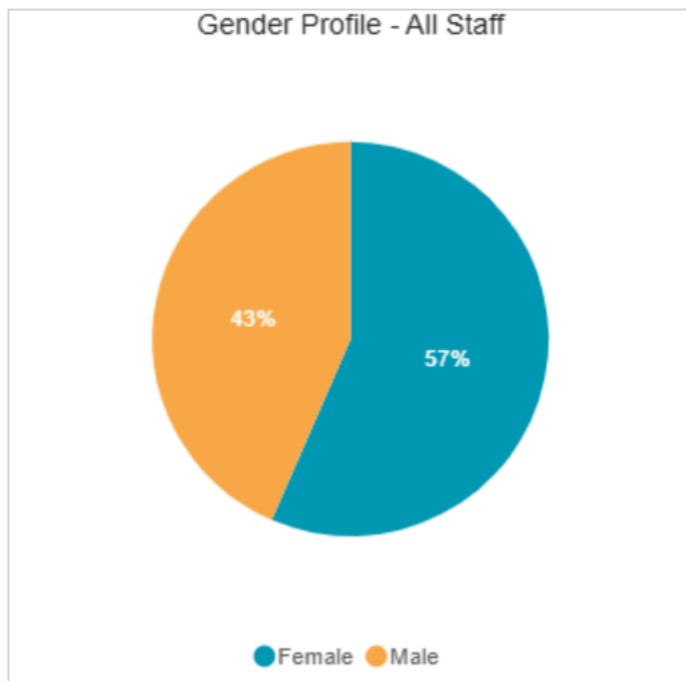
This section presents a summary of current Gateshead College staff data, providing insight into representation and diversity across key demographics.

Understanding workforce demographics through an EDIB lens enables the College to identify representation gaps, monitor trends over time, and shape inclusive policies and practices. This evidence-based approach informs strategic decision-making and workforce planning, helping to ensure that recruitment, retention and development strategies are inclusive, equitable and aligned with organisational goals.

Gender

Gateshead College's gender distribution remains broadly consistent, with a slight shift: female staff now represent 57% of the workforce, up by 1%, while male representation has decreased to 43%. This is below the national FE average of 65.5% female. While not a concern, this may prompt reflection on how gender representation varies across roles and departments, and whether further action is needed to support balance and inclusion¹⁴.

Figure 15: Gender profile – all staff



Gender distribution varies across different areas of the workforce. In curriculum roles, females represent 54% of staff and males 46%, a slight increase in female representation from 52% last year. In professional services, females make up 61% of the workforce, down from 63%, while males account for 39%. These shifts are small but consistent with previous patterns, with professional services continuing to show a stronger female majority. This may prompt consideration of how gender

representation aligns with role types and whether further action is needed to support balance across all areas.

Figure 16: Gender profile – curriculum and professional services

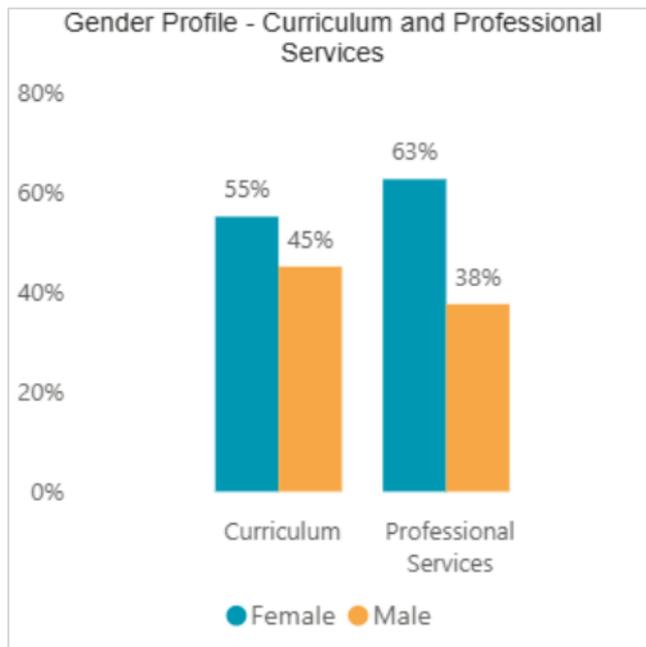
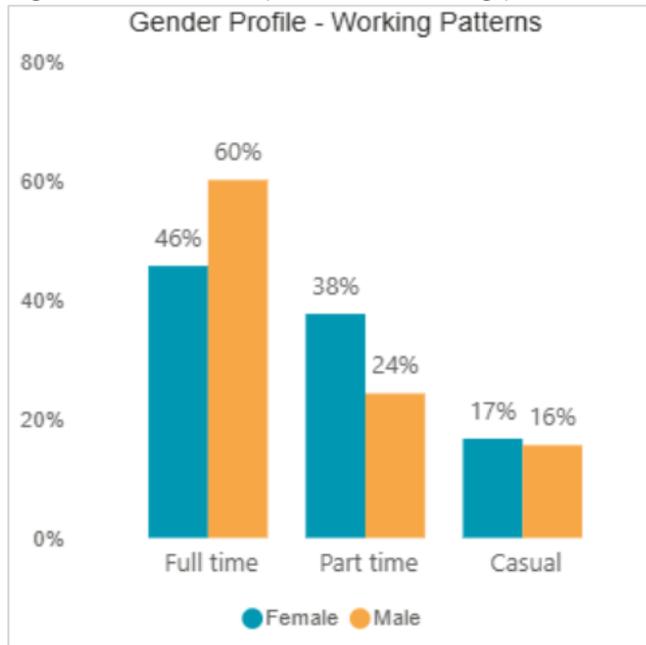


Figure 17 illustrates the working patterns of female and male staff as a proportion of each gender group. Among female staff, 46% work full-time, 38% work part-time, and 17% are employed on a casual basis. For male staff, 60% work full-time, 24% work part-time, and 16% work casually. This indicates that male staff are more likely to work full-time compared to female staff, while female staff are more likely to work part-time. The proportion of casual workers is similar across both genders. gender differences in working patterns may be influenced by preferences for work-life balance and wider societal factors. National research supports this, showing women are more likely to work part-time or flexibly, often due to greater responsibilities for domestic and caring roles^{15 16}.

Throughout 2024/25, we supported managers with training and development to ensure consistent application of family friendly and flexible working procedures. In 2025/26 a working group will also be established to develop and pilot a college-wide approach to hybrid working as part of the pay award. This initiative aims to better meet the diverse needs of staff, making it easier for employees with caring responsibilities to access full-time work and progress in their careers, while balancing personal commitments.

Figure 17: Gender profile – working patterns



Age

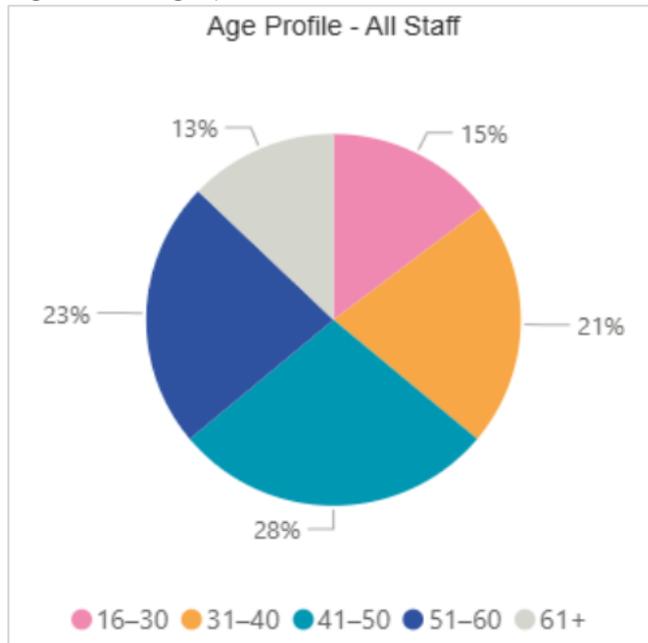
The age profile data shows a workforce that remains predominantly middle-aged, with the 41–60 age range making up just over half of the total headcount (51%). The largest individual group is 41–50 (28%), followed by 51–60 (23%). The proportion of younger staff (16–30) is 15%, similar to last year, while staff aged 61+ account for 13%, a slight decrease.

Compared to last year, the age distribution is broadly stable, with a small increase in the 31–40 and 41–50 bands and a minor decrease in the 61+ group. The national Further Education workforce age profile also remains unchanged, indicating that the College’s age distribution continues to align with sector norms.

The continued presence of a significant number of staff in older age brackets highlights the importance of succession planning, targeted learning and development (particularly in digital skills), and support for wellbeing and retirement transitions. The steady proportion of younger staff is positive, suggesting ongoing success in attracting early-career talent.

The age profile data in figure 19 shows that Professional Services continue to have a higher proportion of younger staff, with 19% in the 16–30 age band compared to 13% in Curriculum. This represents a slight decrease for Professional Services (down from 20% last year) and a small increase for Curriculum (up from 12%). This difference may reflect the time needed to gain qualifications or experience before moving into teaching roles.

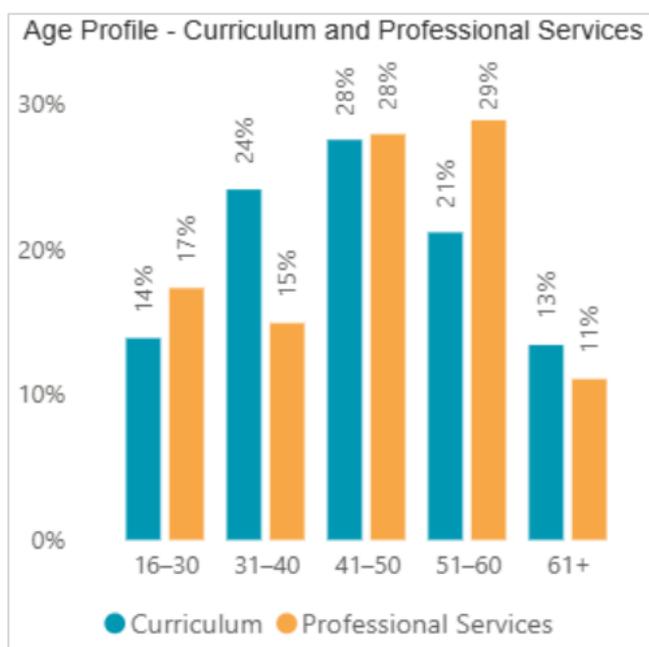
Figure 18: Age profile – all staff



In the mid-age bands (31–50 years), Curriculum staff make up 52%, a modest rise from 50% last year, while Professional Services are at 43%, up from 42%. The proportion of older staff (aged 51 and above) is similar across both areas, with Curriculum at 35% and Professional Services at 38%, unchanged from last year for Professional Services.

These patterns suggest that Professional Services roles may be more accessible to early-career staff, while Curriculum roles tend to attract or require more experienced individuals. In response, the College will continue to focus on recruiting a diverse workforce across all age groups, leveraging social media to engage candidates, and prioritising succession planning and staff development to address skill gaps as older employees retire.

Figure 19: Age profile – curriculum and professional services



Ethnicity

The staff ethnicity profile in figure 20 shows a predominantly White workforce at 93%, a decrease from 95% last year. Representation among Asian or Asian British staff has increased to 2.1% (from 1%), and Black or Black British staff to 1.2% (from 0.6%), with Mixed and Other Ethnic Groups remaining steady at 2.1% and 1.6% respectively.

It is encouraging to see a positive shift towards more ethnic diversity within the workforce, reflecting progress in representation. However, there is still more to do to ensure our staff profile better reflects the diversity of our learners and the wider community. Improving the disclosure rate remains a priority, as accurate data is essential for understanding and addressing diversity and inclusion. In 2025/26, the College will continue to reinforce messages of confidentiality and inclusion, use the staff inclusion group to support these efforts, and focus on further diversifying the workforce through inclusive recruitment practices.

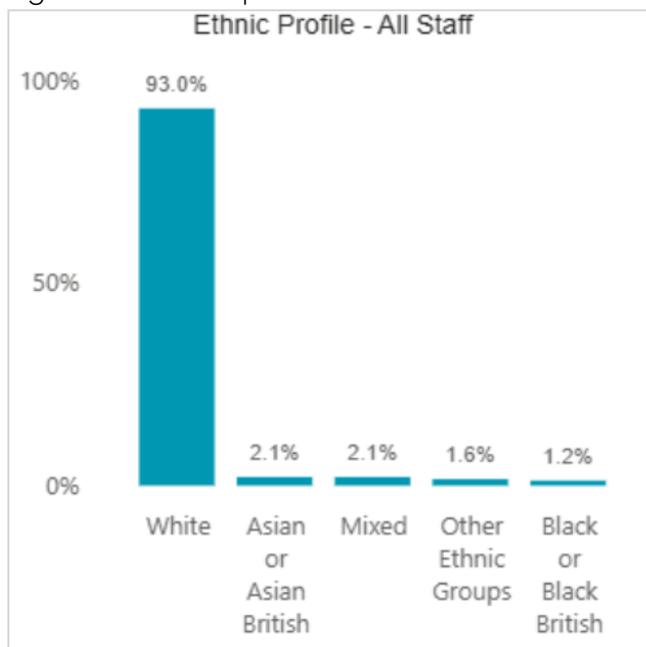
Nationally, 21.6% of the further education workforce identified as belonging to an ethnic minority group. In the North East, the most recent census data shows that 93% of the population identify as White, with 7% from Asian, Black, Mixed, or Other ethnic groups¹⁷. At Gateshead College, 93% of staff identify as White and 7% as belonging to an ethnic minority group, which closely matches the wider regional population. However, this remains significantly below both the national FE sector average and the increasing diversity of our learner population.

The College's learner population is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse—with the proportion of learners identifying as White British declining over the last four academic years. This shift in learner demographics highlights the importance of building a workforce that better reflects the diversity of our students. Not having staff who reflect the backgrounds of our learners can result in fewer role models for students and may limit the cultural competency among staff, potentially making it

more challenging to understand and address the diverse needs of the student population. This, in turn, can influence student engagement and success. By continuing to diversify our workforce, the College aims to provide relatable role models, strengthen cultural understanding, and ensure all students feel represented and supported throughout their educational journey.

While there is still a gap compared to the national FE average, this progress demonstrates the impact of ongoing efforts and the importance of maintaining momentum. In 2025/26, the College will further refine recruitment strategies to attract a broader range of applicants and address any barriers to entry. Enhanced equal opportunities monitoring will help measure the reach and effectiveness of these efforts. The staff inclusion group will play a key role in shaping and supporting inclusive practices, ensuring continued progress in building a workforce that truly represents the community we serve.

Figure 20: Ethnic profile – all staff



Disability

The disability profile shows that 17% of staff identify as having a disability, a 1% increase from last year. This distribution is consistent across both curriculum and professional services teams.

Nationally, 8.0% of the further education workforce identified as having a disability, meaning the College's figure is notably higher. This suggests Gateshead College may offer a more inclusive and accessible environment for disabled staff compared to the sector as a whole.

When benchmarked against the North East region, where 21.2% of the population are disabled¹⁸, the College's representation is lower than the local average.

These findings highlight the importance of continuing to promote accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that recruitment, retention, and workplace adjustments support disabled staff and reflect the needs of the wider community.

Among those who report a disability, conditions such as epilepsy, asthma, and diabetes are the most prevalent. Other significant categories include specific learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia), hearing impairments, and disabilities affecting mobility.

Figure 21: Disability profile – all staff

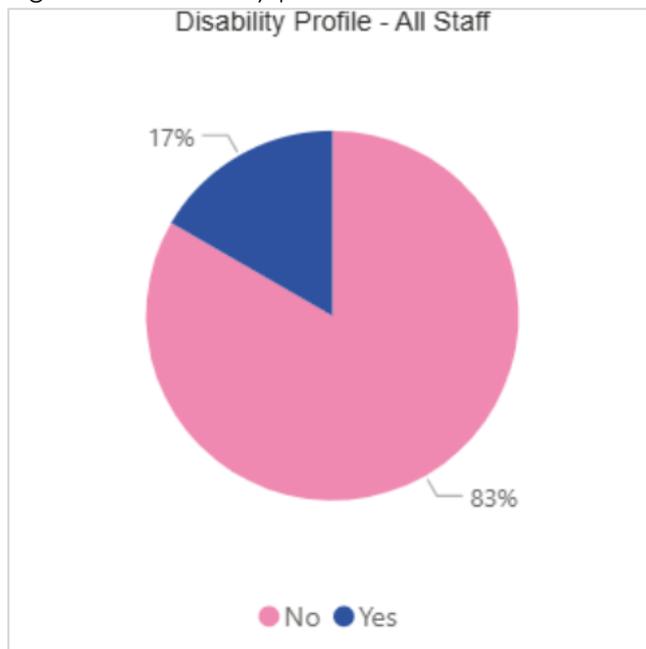


Figure 22 shows the percentage of staff declaring a disability by age group. Compared to last year, when disability disclosure increased with age and peaked in the 51–60 age group (28%), this year’s data shows a more even distribution across age bands. In 2024/25, the highest proportions of staff with a declared disability are found in both the 16–30 and 41–50 age groups (each 23%), followed closely by the 51–60 age group (22%). The 31–40 age band accounts for 19%, and the lowest proportion is among staff aged 61 and over (13%).

This shift suggests that disability disclosure is no longer concentrated in older staff but is now present across all age groups. Recent national research confirms a significant increase in disability among younger people, much of it¹⁹ and increased prevalence of mental health diagnoses and support needs among teenagers and young adults. Of the staff aged 16–30 who identified as having a disability, 57% declared their disability a neurodiverse condition.

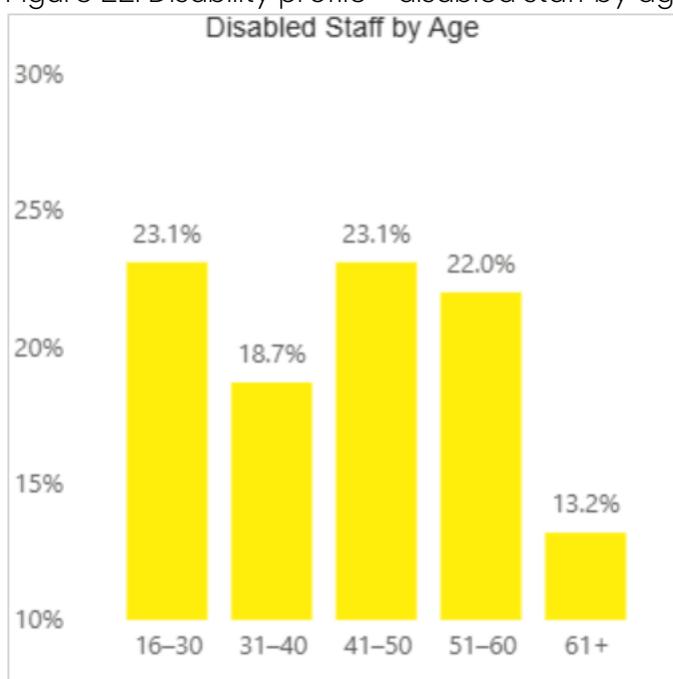
These findings highlight the importance of accessible mental health support and reasonable adjustments for younger staff, as well as ongoing monitoring of disability trends across all age groups.

Annual staff survey data indicates that the College is viewed as inclusive and supportive of staff addressing experiences of discrimination. The average score for

the statement, "the college is inclusive and effectively supports those with protected characteristics," rose from 8.7 in 2023/24 to 8.9 in 2024/25.

Moving forward, the College will continue to strengthen recruitment and selection processes to attract and support candidates with disabilities, ensuring that job adverts, application forms, and interview practices are accessible and inclusive. Line manager training throughout will be enhanced to build confidence and consistency in making reasonable adjustments, supporting staff with disabilities, and promoting a culture of openness around disclosure. In addition, the College will seek feedback from disabled staff via the staff inclusion group and monitor the effectiveness of support measures. These actions will help to increase disability diversity, ensure fair and consistent treatment, and create a working environment where all staff feel supported.

Figure 22: Disability profile – disabled staff by age



Gender Identification and Reassignment

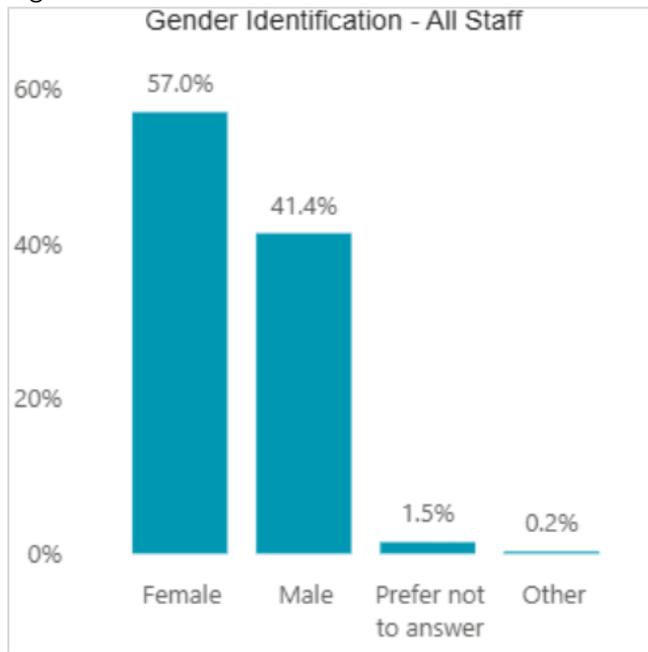
The College have recently started collecting data on gender identity (in addition to legal sex) and gender reassignment.

Gender Identification

In 2024/25, 0.2% of staff at Gateshead College disclosed that they identify in another way, with 1.5% preferring not to answer (figure 23). Nationally, the latest Further Education Workforce data shows 0.1% of staff identified in another way and 0.9% preferred not to say.

The absence of staff members identifying in another way and the proportion preferring not to answer is an area to explore further with the support of the staff inclusion group, to establish if there are barriers to disclosing gender identity.

Figure 23: Gender identification – all staff

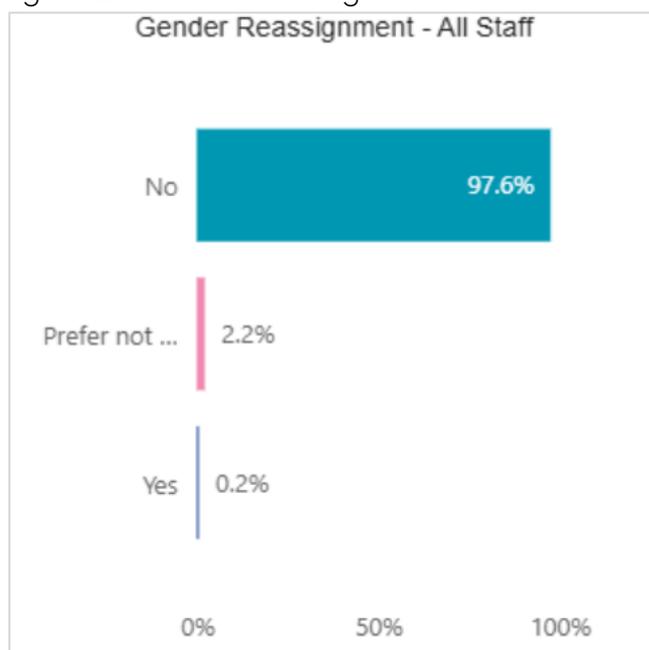


Gender Reassignment

Of those staff who disclosed information about gender reassignment, 0.2% reported that their gender had been reassigned (figure 24), while a further 2% preferred not to answer. Although this is a small proportion, it does represent individuals within our workforce.

As with gender identification, the low disclosure rate and the number preferring not to answer will be explored further with support from the staff inclusion group, to understand if there are barriers to sharing this information.

Figure 24: Gender reassignment – all staff



Although the proportion of staff at Gateshead College identifying in another way or having undergone gender reassignment is small, these figures are in line with national benchmarks and represent real individuals within our workforce. Even small numbers matter—each individual’s experience and needs should be considered in our policies and practices.

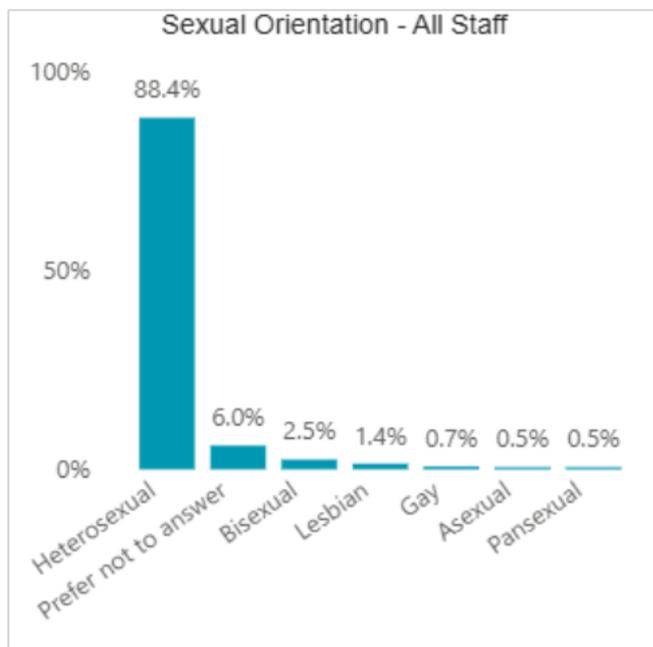
The presence of staff who prefer not to disclose this information highlights the importance of maintaining a culture of trust, confidentiality, and visible inclusion.

In 2025/26, the Staff Inclusion Group will play a key role in reviewing diversity and inclusion policies and supporting the implementation of the EDI action plan to deliver the College’s new EDI commitments and objectives. These steps will help foster an environment where all staff, regardless of identity, feel safe, supported, and comfortable being open about who they are.

Sexual Orientation

Figure 25 shows that the majority of staff at Gateshead College identify as heterosexual (88%), which, while still the predominant orientation, represents a 2% decrease from last year. The proportion of staff identifying as bisexual (2.5%) and lesbian (1.4%) has increased slightly, while the number of staff identifying as gay has decreased from 1% to 0.7% in 2024/25. 6% of staff have not disclosed their sexual orientation and could reflect generational changes in the workforce.

Figure 25: Sexual Orientation – all staff



Even small increases in the number of staff openly identifying as bisexual or lesbian are significant, as they suggest progress towards a more open and inclusive environment. However, the proportion of staff who prefer not to disclose their sexual

orientation suggests that some colleagues may still feel uncertain about confidentiality, the purpose of data collection, or may simply prefer to keep this information private.

The College will continue to promote a culture of inclusion and confidentiality, making it clear why sexual orientation data is collected and how it is used. The Staff Inclusion Group, which includes representation from LGBTQI+ staff, will play a key role in identifying and addressing barriers to disclosure, supporting staff, organising events, influencing policy development and providing resources for education and awareness. Policies, training, and staff networks will remain visible and accessible to all, including those who may not yet feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation.

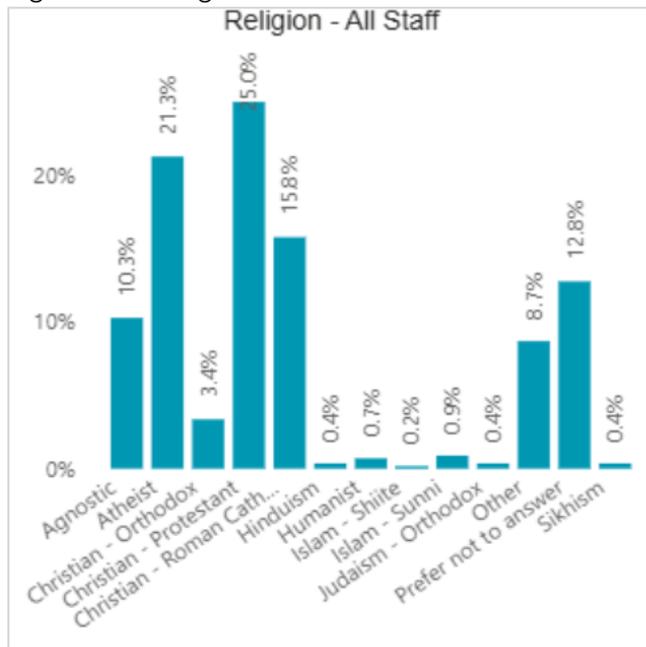
Intersectional data for 2024/25 shows that younger staff at Gateshead College (aged 16–30) are more likely to identify as bisexual, gay, lesbian, or pansexual compared to older age groups, with 10.5% of staff in this band identifying as bisexual alone. In contrast, the proportion of staff identifying as heterosexual increases with age, peaking at nearly 93% in the 61+ age group. Only 3.5% of staff aged 16–30 chose not to disclose their sexual orientation, whereas the rate of non-disclosure almost doubled across all other age groups.

This pattern closely aligns with recent ONS research²⁰, which found that younger people nationally are significantly more likely to identify as LGB than older people. The College's data supports this national trend, highlighting the importance of maintaining visible, age-inclusive support for LGBTQI+ staff and ensuring that diversity and inclusion strategies reflect the evolving profile of the workforce.

Religion and Belief

Figure 26 shows the religion and belief profile of Gateshead College staff. This year, 44% of staff identify as Christian (25% Protestant, 16% Roman Catholic, and 3% Orthodox), a decrease from 47% last year. Non-religious affiliations remain significant, with 21% identifying as atheist and 10% as agnostic, together making up 31% of the workforce – the same as last year. Other religions and beliefs, including Islam (1%), Humanist (1%), and Other (9%), account for a further 11%. Additionally, 13% of staff prefer not to answer, a 2% increase from last year, which may reflect personal preference or privacy regarding this information.

Figure 26: Religion and belief – all staff



The diversity of religious and non-religious beliefs among staff at Gateshead College reflects a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives. The decrease in staff identifying as Christian, alongside stable proportions of atheist and agnostic staff and a small but present mix of other faiths, highlights the importance of ensuring that College policies, practices, and events are inclusive of all beliefs. The proportion of staff who prefer not to answer may reflect a desire for privacy or uncertainty about how this information is used.

To support an inclusive environment, the College will continue to ensure that all staff feel respected and able to express their beliefs if they choose. This includes providing guidance and training for managers on religious inclusion, making reasonable adjustments for religious observance where appropriate, and ensuring that College communications and events are sensitive to the diversity of beliefs represented. Monitoring trends in disclosure and representation will help inform future actions and ensure that the College remains a welcoming and inclusive place for everyone, regardless of faith or belief.

Appendix 2: Learner Data

Learner Data Analysis

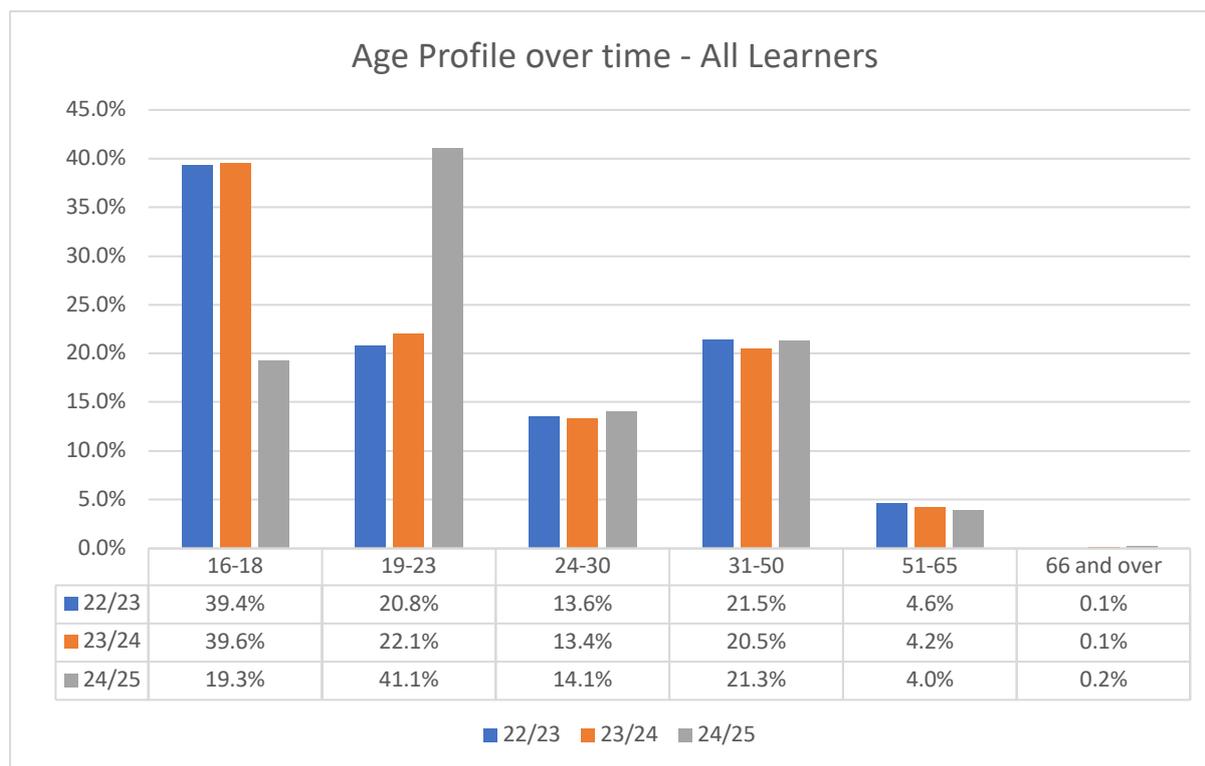
Understanding how our activities affect all our learners is important to us and a responsibility we take very seriously. That's why we regularly gather and analyse a variety of data which helps us see the impact of what we do, especially for learners with protected equality characteristics. When we notice differences, we are genuinely curious about the reasons behind them. We evaluate these as part of our Self-Assessment processes throughout the academic year and take necessary actions to address any issues.

Here is a sample of the data we've collected, accurate up to the end of the academic year 2023/24.

Age

Over the past three years, the age profile of our learners has remained fairly consistent with figures remaining within 3% of the makeup of our cohorts (figure 14). However we experienced a small increase in the proportion of learners aged 16-18 and a slight decrease in all other cohorts. This matches the "demographic bubble" experienced by many institutions in 24/25.

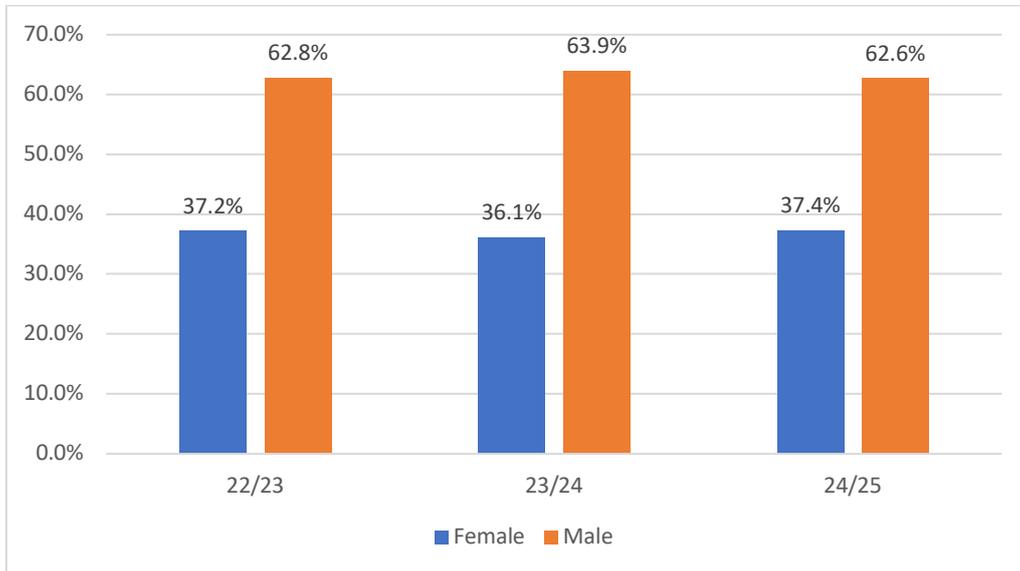
Figure 1: Age - 3-year trend



Sex and Gender Identity

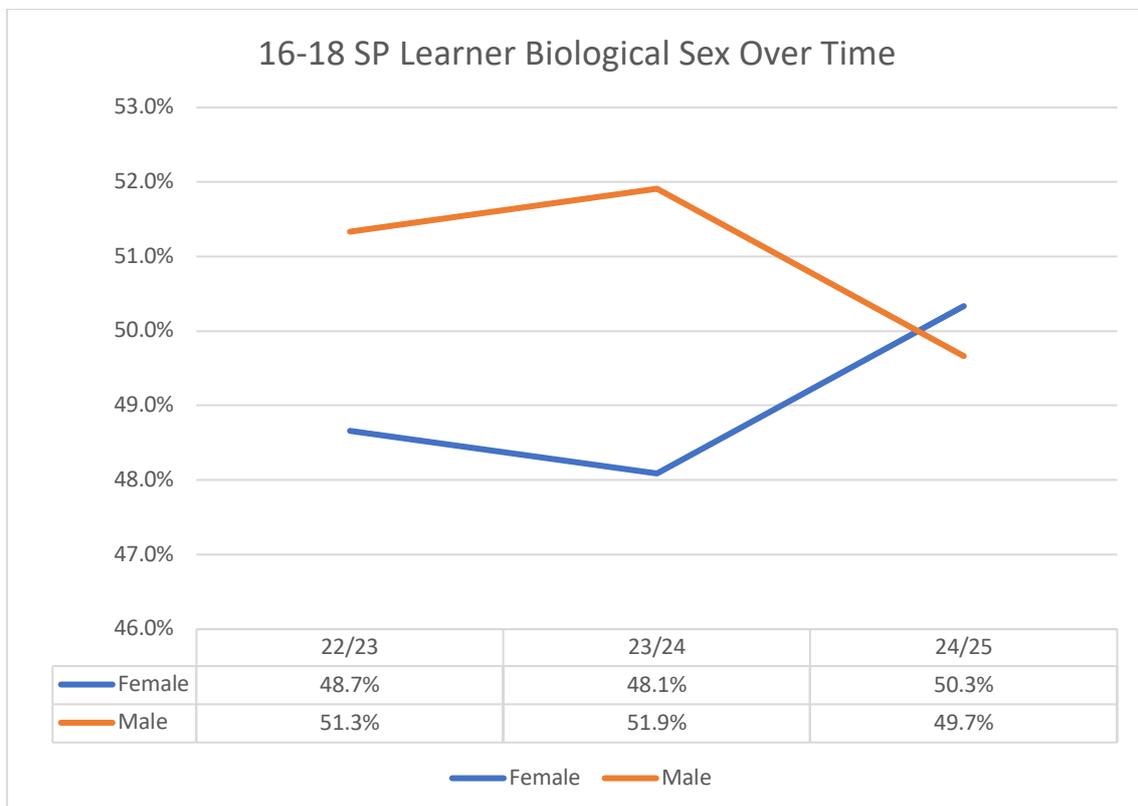
Figure 15: Biological Sex - 3-year Trend

Fig 2 All Learners Biological Sex



Overall 2/3 of our learners and apprentices are male, with many of the short adult programmes and apprenticeships in traditionally male dominated sectors such as construction, automotive, rail and engineering.

Fig 3 Study program learners biological sex



For Study Programme learners the Biological Sex Ratio is roughly equal between male and female, with slight variations, 2024/25 saw the first time we had slightly more female study programme learners compare to male.

Sexual Orientation

A large proportion (41.9%) of Gateshead College learners have not disclosed their sexual orientation (table 3), though this is a reduction of 10.1% on the previous years as more learners felt that they were able to disclose their sexual orientation.

For the whole learner population, 51.1% identify as heterosexual/straight, 2.1% as bisexual, and less than 1% in any other category. Additionally, 2.65% of learners preferred not to say.

Among those who disclosed their sexual orientation or stated they preferred not to say (58.4% of the population), 87.8% identify as heterosexual/straight, 3.6% as bisexual, 1% as a gay man, and 1.2% as a gay woman. 4.78% of learners preferred not to say.

Table 2: Sexual Orientation – All Learners

Sexual Orientation	22/23	23/24	24/25	Change from 23/24
Asexual	0.00%	0.12%	0.17%	0.05%
Bisexual	0.16%	2.09%	2.10%	0.01%
Gay Man	0.01%	0.52%	0.56%	0.04%
Gay Woman	0.06%	0.56%	0.67%	0.11%
Heterosexual/straight	4.29%	44.33%	51.07%	6.73%
Other	0.00%	0.06%	0.06%	0.00%
Pansexual	0.00%	0.18%	0.40%	0.22%
Prefer not to say	0.01%	0.13%	2.78%	2.65%
Queer	0.00%	0.01%	0.32%	0.31%
Unknown	95.46%	51.99%	41.86%	-10.13%

We recognise that a significant number of learners have not disclosed their sexual orientation and want to understand the reasons behind this, considering factors such as the effectiveness of data collection processes, the optional nature of the question, concerns about confidentiality, and individual preferences for privacy.

From those who have disclosed, we can see diversity in our learner population in terms of sexual orientation. This reflects the importance we place on better understanding and supporting our LGBTQIA+ community through our work and we will continue to focus on this.

Religion & Belief

The College has learners who follow a range of religions and beliefs. Data collection about learners' religion and belief is optional though we have seen a significant increase in the number of learners who choose to disclose this information over the last 3 years (an increase of 42.8%, with 56.4% of our learner population providing this information, of those that do, the single largest group are those who identify as non-religious (atheist, humanist) 58% with modest increase in the number of learners who identify as Muslim. Table 3 provides numeric details of how all learners define their beliefs, table 4 shows the population spread of those that have declared their religion or belief.

Table 3: Religion and Belief – All Learner data

Religion	22/23	23/24	24/25	Change from 23/24
Buddhist	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Christian	3.4%	13.8%	15.4%	1.6%
Hindu	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	-0.1%
Jewish	0.3%	0.5%	0.1%	-0.4%
Muslim	0.5%	5.0%	7.4%	2.5%
Non- religious (atheist, humanist)	8.0%	27.4%	32.7%	5.3%
Prefer not to say	1.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Sikh	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Unknown	86.4%	52.7%	43.6%	-9.0%

Table 4 - Religion and Belief population – disclosed data

Religion	22/23	23/24	24/25	Change from 23/24
Buddhist	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	-0.2%
Christian	25.0%	29.2%	27.4%	-1.9%
Hindu	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	-0.2%
Jewish	2.2%	1.0%	0.2%	-0.9%
Muslim	3.5%	10.5%	13.2%	2.7%
Non- religious (atheist, humanist)	59.2%	57.9%	58.0%	0.1%
Prefer not to say	9.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Sikh	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%

Disability

The number of learners who declare a learning difficulty or disability (LLDD) has remained steady over time, with about a quarter of our learners declaring a disability

or difficulty. We are committed to supporting these learners by continuously investing resources and making reasonable adjustments to meet their needs (table 5).

Table 5 - Proportion of learners with declared disability

Disability	22-23	23-24	24-25
No information provided	0.86%	1.40%	1.20%
No learning difficulty or disability	75.31%	74.80%	75.40%
Student has a learning difficulty or disability	23.83%	23.80%	23.30%

Ethnicity

Our college population is relatively ethnically diverse compared to the wider population of North East England – with roughly 25% of our learners coming from Global Majority ethnicities compare to roughly 8% of the population of the north east (and 16% of England as a whole).

Figure 18: Ethnicity – 3-year Trend

Ethnicity	22-23	23-24	24-25	change from 23/24
African	5.0%	4.3%	4.2%	-0.1%
Any other Asian background	2.6%	2.0%	2.4%	0.4%
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%
Any other ethnic group	4.0%	4.3%	3.7%	-0.6%
Any Other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	1.3%	1.1%	0.9%	-0.2%
Any Other White background	6.4%	5.1%	4.7%	-0.3%
Arab	1.8%	1.8%	2.0%	0.2%
Bangladeshi	1.0%	1.1%	0.8%	-0.3%
Caribbean	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Chinese	0.7%	0.6%	0.3%	-0.2%
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	70.0%	73.1%	75.3%	2.2%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Indian	1.2%	0.9%	0.7%	-0.2%
Irish	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Not provided	1.5%	2.1%	1.3%	-0.8%
Pakistani	1.1%	0.9%	1.1%	0.2%
White and Asian	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%	-0.2%
White and Black African	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%	-0.1%
White and Black Caribbean	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	-0.1%

Learner Voice

Learners are at the centre of what we do and we ensure that we reflect their views in our decision making. We gather this in a variety of ways, from our Student Governors to our Course Reps and Student Leadership Group, Learner Journey Reviews, focus groups and surveys. Feedback from our annual End of Year Survey showed the following over a 3 year trend (table 4):

Table 4: Learner Feedback – 3-year Trend End of Programme Survey

Year	The College is a safe place to learn, and I feel safe at college (%)	All students are treated fairly (%)	People of all cultures and backgrounds are valued here (%)	I feel free to be myself in college (%)	I am more resilient now that I was at the start of my course (%)
24/25	96.3	91.1	98.0	94.6	93.0
23/24	97.1	92.9	98.6	95.3	91.8
22/23	95.3	90.2	97.6	93.4	90.6

Pleasingly we continue to see very high rates of belonging with the vast majority of learners feeling they can be themselves and feeling that people of all backgrounds are welcome.

Narrowing Performance Gaps

The college actively monitors EDIB data for any achievement gaps and responds quickly where they are found. The follow sections outline achievement across a range of protected characteristics.

Age

Table 5: Learner Achievement Rates

	Level	Leavers	Achievers	Achievement Rate %	National Rates 2023-24	
					Provider NR %	Diff to PNR %
16-18	All Qual Levels	5297	4535	85.6	81.4	4.2
19+	All Qual Levels	6161	5429	88.1	86.8	1.3

Table 6: Apprentice Achievement Rates

	Achievement Rate %	Provider NR %	Diff to PNR %
16-18	61.4	50.8	10.6
19+	76.1	61.6	14.5

Qualification Levels

The college performs better than the national rates at levels 2 and 3 for all age groups for Education and Training programmes and departmental Quality Improvement Plans are in place to address the gap at Level 1 (table 7).

Table 7: Learner Achievement Rates by Qualification Level

Gateshead College 2023/24					National Rates 2022-23	
Age Group	Level	Leavers	Achievers	Achievement Rate %	Provider NR %	Diff to PNR %
16-18	Entry & 1	1664	1208	72.6	81.0	-8.4
16-18	2	1789	1635	91.4	81.8	9.6
16-18	3	1840	1688	91.7	85.2	6.5
19+	Entry & 1	4911	4349	88.6	89.4	-0.8
19+	2	1046	905	86.5	84.7	1.8
19+	3	198	170	85.9	77.8	8.1

All Apprentice levels are significantly above national Provider rates (table 8).

Table 8: Apprentice Achievement Rates by Qualification Level

Gateshead College 2023-24	Achievement Rate %	Provider NR %	Diff to PNR %
Level 2 - Intermediate	62.75	61.6	1.15
Level 3 Advanced	67.25	53.9	13.35
Level 4+ Higher	77.6	61.3	16.3

Gender

There is little difference between the achievement rates of female and male learners aged 16-18, with female learners performing marginally better than males. For adult learners, the achievement rates vary due to the higher number of males in high-performing short programmes and the greater number of females in challenging one-year Higher Education programmes. A summary by gender is displayed below (table 9):

Table 9: Learner Achievement Rates by Gender

Gateshead College 2024/25				
Age Group	Sex	Leavers	Achievers	Achievement Rate %
16-18	Female	2395	2062	86.1
19+	Female	2267	1914	84.43
16-18	Male	2902	2473	85.22
19+	Male	3894	3515	90.27

Disability/ Learning Difficulty

In 2023/24 those declaring a learning difficulty or disability achieved at a rate of 85%, compared to those who did not declare a learning difficulty or disability who achieved at a rate of 87.5%. The split by age group is shown below (table 10):

Table 10: Learner Achievement Rates by Learning Difficulty or Disability

Age Group	Achievement rate - With Learning Difficulty or Disability (%)	Achievement rate - With No Learning Difficulty or Disability (%)
16-18	82.8	88.3
19+	87.6	87.13

There were 549 leavers with an Education Healthcare Plan (EHCP) in 2024/25. These learners achieved their main programme at 90.4% which is 1.1% above the college average achievement rate for 16-18-year-olds.

Ethnicity

The achievement rates for different declared ethnicities are shown in table 11 (the enrolment numbers for some ethnicities is low):

Table 11: Learner Achievement Rates by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Leavers (Enrolments)	Ach Overall %
African	891	82.2
Arab	400	73.5
Bangladeshi	116	87.1
Caribbean	15	77.3
Chinese	128	86.7
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	12	91.7
Indian	101	91.1
Irish	14	92.9
Not Provided	96	87.5
Other	1023	83.1
Other Asian	556	83.6
Other Black	98	84.7
Other Mixed	247	82.6
Other White	735	86.9
Pakistani	130	93.9
White British	6569	89.7
White/Asian	194	79.9
White/Black African	81	82.7
White/Black Caribbean	52	71.2

The college has a large cohort of ESOL Learners (889 distinct learners in 2024/25), who have a significant diversity in educational backgrounds prior to joining us. The table below (table 12) shows the overall college average achievement for all ethnicities including ESOL provision. The table also shows the college average with ESOL excluded and the college average for all ethnicities excluding White British (Global Majority learners), it indicates that Global Majority learners achieve marginally better than the college average.

Table 12: Learner Achievement Rates - ESOL

All Ethnicities	Ach Overall %	Diff to College Average (%)
All Levels in ESOL (college average)	87.0	-
All Levels excluding ESOL	89.6	+2.6
ALL Levels - ESOL Only	78.9	-8.1
All Levels, all Ethnicities excluding White British & ESOL	88.0	+1

Areas of Disadvantage

We're committed to raising the aspirations and expectations of learners facing socio-economic barriers recognising the profile of our local area.

More than half of our learners come from the 20% most deprived areas according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The map below shows areas of deprivation by colour, with dark reds indicating the most deprived deciles (figure 19/20). We take targeted action to address this through our curriculum and support services and are very proud that we are high performing in terms of student achievement rates, especially considering the diverse backgrounds and barriers facing some of our learners.

Free College Meals

In 2024/2025, 534 learners were supported with free college meals bursaries at a cost of £168,457 from bursary funds.

Thresholds to qualify are high and can only be awarded when learners or parents/carers are in receipt of one of the below:

- Income support
- Universal credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per year (after tax and not including any benefits received)
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

- Child Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of less than £16,190 as assessed by HMRC. If in receipt of Working Tax Credits, you are not entitled for free meals, regardless of income amount.
- Working Tax Credit run-on paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit

81.4% of learners who were eligible for and in receipt of Free Meals achieved their programmes, which is 5.2% below the college average.

Higher Rate Bursary

108 learners were in receipt of the Higher Rate Bursary in 2024/25. These learners are often vulnerable due to their history or current status. This could include them being care experienced or a care leaver, receiving Income Support or both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments. £97,972 was spent in 2024/25 supporting these learners to travel to college and to provide resources.