



“Scotland’s Life-Changing College”

***Challenging discrimination, advancing equality and
celebrating diversity***

**Mainstreaming Equality Progress Report
April 2015**

1. Purpose of the Report

This report outlines the progress the college has made in making the general equality duty integral to the exercise of all our functions. It covers the period from April 2013 to June 2015. The general equality duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristics and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Mainstreaming the equality duty allows us to make equality part of our structures, behaviours and organisational culture. It allows us to demonstrate how we, as a college, are promoting equality and helps contribute to continuous improvement and better performance.

2. Context: the organisation and its structure

As Scotland's national transformational adult education residential college, located within an 11th century heritage site in Dalkeith, Midlothian, we are uniquely positioned to provide a challenging and intellectually stimulating curriculum within a supportive environment to adult learners and young people at the point of transition. We recruit learners from across Scotland, the wider UK and from several countries across the world. Many of our students are from the most marginalised social groups.

Our small and distinctive college operates under a Governing Deed of Trust set up in 1937 by Philip Kerr, 11th Marquis of Lothian, when he gifted Newbattle and its 125 acre estate to the Scottish nation, to be used as a residential adult education college. The College Trustees include the Principals and Vice Chancellors of the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, is the current Chair of Trustees. The Trustees have responsibility for maintaining the ownership of Newbattle Abbey College for the Trust purposes.

Newbattle Abbey College was incorporated in 2004 to become a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The Company is responsible for the delivery of the Trust's educational and other purposes. The college is governed by a Board of Directors, elected annually from Company membership. Both membership and Directors are drawn from a range of institutions and organisations across Scotland, reflecting national interests.

The core activities of the College are those that relate to the learners and the curriculum. The students that the college targets are those with no or low qualifications and a third of the current profile of students come from a background of social and/or economic disadvantage. The core activity of the college is supported by the commercial activities of a Business Park, the use of the college as a training and conference centre for outside bodies, and the use of residential facilities.

The current situation with the Scottish Government's post -16 education reforms and the move to college regional groupings have acknowledged the unique position of Newbattle Abbey College and it has been designated a single college regional grouping. In common with all other regional college groupings, the College has agreed outcomes and priority impacts with the Scottish Funding Council in relation to efficient regional structures, meeting the 16-19 guarantees for young people and student number targets.

Newbattle Abbey College has a particular focus on access, equity and transition and this is set out in our vision, mission and values.

3. Mission and Values

Mission

To be a national residential learning community which:

- promotes lifelong learning
- raises aspirations
- supports learners in transition
- enables learners to change their lives

Values

Newbattle Abbey College has always been committed to the ideals of democracy and social justice. Staff have a policy of achieving equality of opportunity for all students and staff and eradicating discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, class or any other irrelevant distinction

In the delivery of our mission we will:

- empower individuals
- promote quality
- act with integrity and mutual respect
- promote equality and diversity

4. Responsibilities and Leadership

Every employee and student is required to assist the College to meet its commitment to promote and advance equality and diversity, foster good relations and avoid unlawful discrimination. The Staff and Student Induction Handbooks

outline the rights and responsibilities of all staff and students in relation to equal opportunities.

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that policy and procedures to promote equality, diversity and inclusiveness are in place and working effectively.

The Principal is responsible for the management of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy, Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes. The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for ensuring the operation and effectiveness of these policies, reports and procedures.

The Equalities Committee, chaired by the Principal, is responsible for advising the Senior Management Team (SMT) on the development and monitoring of policy and procedures concerned with equality, diversity and inclusiveness. It is also responsible for monitoring and reporting on equalities to the SMT.

The Administration Manager is responsible for applying these policies and procedures as it relates to all aspects of human resource management including staff recruitment, pay and conditions, staff development and training.

The Depute Principal is responsible for applying these policies and procedures as they relate to:

- Programme design
- Curriculum management
- Academic guidance
- Support for Learning

In addition, all College Committees and Groups have responsibility for applying these policies and procedures as they relate to their functional responsibility

The Board of Directors takes its role and responsibilities very seriously, supported by College's Scotland's *Guide for College Board Members* which sets out the key principles in relation to College Governance, Board Membership and Succession Planning. In addition, the Guidance stipulates the role of the Board in relation to equality and diversity. This includes meeting both the general and specific duties within the Equality Act 2010. The Guidance states that: "*Equality and Diversity is a central responsibility of the Board of Management and is a critical feature underpinning all of the activities of the College.*"

The current board of seventeen members is comprised of ten men and seven women.

The Board provides for its training and development needs through a structured programme organised by College Development Network and Colleges Scotland and undertakes annual self-evaluation activities in relation to good governance, roles and responsibilities and the Board as an employer. Equal opportunities

monitoring and statutory compliance is included within the self-evaluation framework.

At each Board meeting, the Principal provides a report and minutes and reports are received from various college committees. The Board has ultimate responsibility for endorsing college policies.

5. Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the College

Contractual or other service provision arrangements made on behalf of the College are within general and specific requirements of equality and diversity as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The College seeks to ensure that equality principles are detailed in service specification, contracts or agreements.

6. The mainstreaming duty in practice

Policy, Procedures and Plans

The College's Strategic Plan 2014-2016 sets out six strategic themes:-

1. Learning Community:- cultivating a vibrant learning organisation where learners develop skills, achieve qualifications, enhance their personal development and improve employability.
2. Partnerships:- working with partners to develop new initiatives
3. Valuing our people:- engaging our staff, students and key external stakeholders in everything we do is critical to our success
4. Resources and sustainability:- aiming to be financially sustainable
5. Governance and leadership:- aiming to achieve long-term financial stability through improved efficiency, the highest standards of corporate governance and effective risk management
6. Learning environment:- continuing to maintain and enhance the college estate and facilities to meet the aspirations of present and future learners.

Equality and diversity are included within these key themes, particularly in relation to the embedding of equality, inclusiveness and diversity as fundamental principles throughout our community.

In line with other colleges throughout Scotland, Newbattle Abbey College has produced an Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council which covers the period 2014-2017 and demonstrates the impact of the college and its contribution to meeting Scottish Government priorities.

The College has a robust Equalities Impact Assessment procedure and a timetable so that all college policies and procedures undergo an impact assessment. Data generated by this assessment informs amendments to policies and procedures in order to raise awareness of equalities issues among all stakeholders and ensure equality of provision to recipients of that provision.

The College Equalities Committee completes an annual self-evaluation exercise, The Equality and Fairness Checklist, which gave indicators in relation to good employment practice.

In addition to the Equalities Committee, the College has a number of key committees in relation to Planning and Resources, Learning and Teaching and Health and Safety where equality and diversity issues are discussed.

Monthly team meetings are held to discuss matters relating to: academic issues; administration; course awards; catering and events; e-safety; estates and facilities; housekeeping and co-ordination; ICT and marketing which provides regular opportunities for equality and diversity matters to be raised.

Partnerships and Networks

The Equalities Committee, chaired by the Principal, is responsible for advising the College on how best to eliminate discrimination and promote equality and diversity.

Representation from staff, students and from external stakeholders and agencies is important for effective engagement, involvement and consultation on equality matters. The Equalities Committee currently has representation from “Forward Mid”, a disability rights campaigning organisation located in Midlothian and this year an equality consultant with experience of the post-16 education sectors. The Committee is seeking to expand its membership to include other equality groups and networks.

The College works in partnership with a range of local, regional, national and international organisations to further the vision of the college. Support on equality matters is provided by Colleges Scotland, College Development Network and an equality consultant.

As a small, Specialist College, the importance of strategic partnerships is understood and actively promoted by the College, Board of Directors, the Principal and the Senior Management Team. The College has developed an excellent reputation for productive collaboration with an extensive range of agencies to extend and enhance the curriculum for all students. Newbattle is an active member of our local community planning partnerships in East and Midlothian where we have shared our outcome agreement.

Since 2011 we have received funding from The Robertson Trust to extend our Rural Skills Programme to three priority groups of marginalised learners: adult offenders; adults with mental health issues; and young people out with mainstream education. The programme includes short programmes offering an introduction to basic gardening and estate maintenance, core skills and careers advice. All of the courses are delivered in our college estate and community garden. Students also become involved in college community events and festivals. Many students from these three priority groups have successfully completed the programme and a number have progressed to further learning in the college. All student gained in confidence and wellbeing. Staff in the college have also gained additional skills in working with different client groups. From November 2014, the project was extended to involve students from Deaf Action Scotland.

We are committed to the delivery of “*Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce*” and work well in partnership to address the needs of S4/5 pupils through the delivery of a part-time National Certificate (NC) in Rural Skills. The requirements of Curriculum for Excellence Senior Phase are addressed through a one-year part-time NC Rural Skills Course for S4/S5 pupils. This is delivered as a ‘taster course’ in partnership with Dunedin School, for young people out with mainstream education.

We also have a high success rate in delivering programmes to adult offenders to support their progression into employment or further education. This is particularly effective in rural skills where many students have progresses from taster courses to the full-time NC programme at Newbattle and to other specialist courses at Scotland’s Rural University College (SRUC).

We have developed good links with employers to include them in the design of relevant programmes and to improve the employability of our students. This has been especially effective in the NC Rural Skills programme, developed in partnership with national bodies, including LANTRA (Land- based and Environmental Industries Sector Skills Council). The rural skills programmes include significant works experience and are delivered in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS). As an employer ourselves, we provide the context for work experience for rural skills students in our grounds.

We hosted two National Adult Learning Conferences in April 2013 and 2014 and influenced the establishment of the National Strategic Forum for Adult Learning, playing a lead role in the launch of the Adult Learning in Scotland: Statement of Ambition.

We have extended our partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council’s Gaelic Implementation Group and attend the National Gaelic Education Strategy Group. As part of our Gaelic Plan, we offer a full-time NC Celtic Studies course in partnership with Sabhal Mor Ostaig.

We offer an Associate Student Scheme in partnership with Queen Margaret University for a 1 year full-time HNC Social Science.

We have developed the National Adult Achievement Awards in partnership with a national steering group which is jointly chaired by SCQF and Education Scotland. The award will be offered at SCQF Levels 3, 4 and 6 and has been credit rated by Napier University. The Awards will be launched in May 2015 and pilots for the award will commence in September 2015.

Staff Development

All members of staff, committee members and members of college groups and teams carry out annual self-evaluation activities as individuals and in groups, in order to reflect on the impact of equality on their particular job role and responsibilities. This reflective activity results in action planning for improvement with SMART objectives being set and systematic monitoring in place in order to judge progress towards achieving these objectives. In 2014-15 staff received deaf awareness training by Deaf Action Scotland and Brite in preparation for the extension of the Rural Skills Programme to deaf students and an annual equality update by the College's equality consultant.

In addition, clear guidance is now provided to staff on how to deal with discrimination or harassment within different learning and teaching situations, and staff continue to be trained in safeguarding issues.

In consultation with the Equality and Diversity Committee, the Senior Management Team appointed a consultant to assist in conducting Impact Assessments of a range of college policies in relation to equality and diversity. This resulted in the enhanced promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum and in several policies and cross-college practices. In addition, the college website, course information and promotional material were reviewed and updated in line with Equality legislation.

Learning and Teaching

We are developing the breadth and depth of our curriculum to widen access to a broader range of students in line with current Government policy, whilst staying true to our heritage and core purpose.

Our main funded provision is our Arts and Humanities full-time award programme which continues to run successfully.

The student profile for 2012-13 and 2013-14 is as follows:

AGE	2012-13	2013-2014
Under 16	3%	0%

16-19	16%	22%
20-25	37%	27%
26-40	27%	30%
41 and over	17%	22%

The proportion of students aged 16-19 has increased substantially from 4% in 2011-12 to 22% in 2013-14. However, there are still more students in the 20-25 and 26-40 age groups than in the 16-19 age group. The 26-40 group is the group that contains the highest proportion of students in 2013-14. This is in keeping with the purpose of the college to be “*second chance to learn*” establishment for adults.

We have seen an increase of 23% more males from 2011-12 and a reduction of 23% female students.

GENDER	2012-13	2013-14
Male	62%	73%
Female	38%	27%

In 2012-13 the majority of students (52%) came from one of the four lowest ranked postcode areas in Scotland, according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SMID). In 2013-14, 44% of students came from one of the four lowest ranked postcode areas in Scotland. This is a decrease of 8% on the 2012-13 figures but an increase on 2011-12 figures by 14%.

Success, retention and progression

In full time FE programmes in 2013-14, 66% of students completed successfully with a further 3% completing with partial success. The proportion of students completing successfully in 2013-14 is 9% lower than in 2012-13, however it is higher than the 2011-12 figure.

The partial success rate is considerably lower than in 2011-12 and is 8% below the national sector performance.

Just under one third of students withdrew from their programmes in 2013-14, with 13% of all students withdrawing early and 19% being classified as further withdrawals. This is a higher overall rate of withdrawals than in the previous two years, and both early and further withdrawal rates are above the national average

The introduction of National Group Awards and multi-level teaching and assessment has proved particularly challenging for some student’s and we are investigating ways to address this.

Retention and attainment at subject level

The proportion of students completing their programmes successfully in the full-time FE Rural Skills programme for 2013-14 is 1% below national sector performance for this subject. Nine of the 13 learners (69%) completed successfully. The remaining learners withdrew from the course, with three learners (23%) being early withdrawals and one (8%) as a further withdrawal.

The proportions of learners completing their programmes successfully in the full time FE Arts and Humanities Access to Higher Education programme for 2013-14 are in line with success in the top performing colleges. 33 of 51 students (65%) completed successfully, with a further two learners completing with partial success. This is in line with the high performing colleges for this subject. Five students (10%) withdrew early from the course with a further eleven students (22%) withdrawing later.

We are aware of issues relating to attainment for the Arts and Humanities course and have introduced measures to address this. We have introduced a more rigorous procedure and code of conduct for students regarding attendance and punctuality. This code is enforced consistently which has had a positive impact on learning and achievement. Our teaching staff recognise that 2013-14 was less successful than 2012-13 in terms of student achievement. Last year was particularly challenging because student withdrawals were higher than previously due to mental health and personal issues.. However, within our programme reviews, teaching staff have analysed performance and identified support mechanisms that have been put in place to support students in 2014-15, and while it is still early days these measures seem to have been effective and early withdrawal rates are low.

Equalities breakdown of success.

The numbers represented here are very low overall and therefore distort any percentage comparison.

Success rates in 2013-14 are higher than in 2011-12, and lower than 2012-13 for most age groups. The exception to this is in the 41 and over age group which has a higher rate of success in 2013-14 than either of the two previous years. However, in all the age groups, the success rate in 2013-14 was below the national average. The 26-40 age group had the lowest success rate at 58% and was 17% below the national figure while the 41 and over category had the highest success rate (79%) and was two percentage points below the national figure.

Success for both male and female learners in 2013-14 was greater than in 2011-12, but lower than in 2012-13.

In 2013-14, there were 11 students with a disability at the college, 17% of the overall student population. All of these students were enrolled on a programme leading to a recognised qualification. Their 73% success rate is 2% above the sector average.

Four students at the college were from a minority ethnic background in 2013-14, all of whom were on a programme leading to a recognised qualification. The success rate of 50% is 17% below sector performance for BME students.

Success for students in decile 1-4 of SIMD was 52% which is 18% below the sector performance average. However, deciles 5-10 of SIMD are 81% which is 5% above the sector performance average.

In order to address an increase in students with complex needs, we have appointed a Student Liaison Officer to support their transition, guidance and progression and improve their retention and attainment. The role complements the extensive

Induction

Induction sessions for new students include discussion about equality and anti-discrimination. This explicit reference at induction provides a clear signal to students of how seriously the College takes issues of equality and anti-discrimination. Students are informed about the College equality policies and the support available to students, including how to report discrimination or harassment. Equality and anti-discrimination provisions are written into learning contracts and classroom etiquette guidelines. In addition, guidance tutors are given appropriate information throughout the year to pass on to students. Equality statements are now included in student handbooks. The Student Handbooks have a very clear statement on the front cover regarding the College's commitment to equality and diversity: *"Newbattle Abbey College is committed to the pursuit of equality of opportunity, promoting diversity and challenging discrimination."*

Support for Learning

Recruitment, interviewing and induction, and assessment of additional support needs has been evaluated and new processes put in place to ensure appropriate learning with relevant support for all our students. Impact has been variable and we are continuing to work with students to identify solutions.

Teaching staff have adapted timetables to facilitate the particular needs of carers and this has had a positive benefit for these students. Teaching staff are more confident in applying the recruitment and selection procedures. Whilst mindful of equitable admissions, they take a fitness to study approach in order to identify students who are unlikely to benefit from

the programme and/or are likely to disrupt the learning of others. This ensures that we remain true to our principles of offering a second chance to those with few, if any, qualifications.

Support for learning is addressed at both pre-induction and induction activities and is reviewed throughout the academic year. Personal Learning Support Plans and Personal Emergency and Evacuation Plans are also put in place for students who need them. Reasonable adjustments are discussed with students and staff are advised of the requirements. The College's commitment to widen access and promote learning to adults with few or no qualifications; the supportive atmosphere that a small college provides and the holistic nature of a residential experience mean that the percentage of students with additional support needs can be high compared to other colleges.

Induction programmes for all courses are evaluated by staff and students. On the whole students reported that they were made to feel welcome and that the guidance groups were helpful in enabling them to settle into the academic side of college life. The best things about induction week for the students were meeting new people and the easy-going, friendly atmosphere. Helpful, friendly staff who made an effort with team-building and helping students to settle in were also commended. These evaluations allow staff in the College to plan ahead and improve their plans for successful induction.

Equality, inclusiveness and the promotion of cultural diversity in classroom displays continues to be a priority in developing new learning and teaching materials. The college curriculum is also mapped to Curriculum for Excellence and teaching staff promote different cultures in the classroom and ensure that students develop a culture of respect and valuing individuals. This includes challenging remarks made by students in class. The Arts and Humanities Access to HE Course is a good vehicle for meaningful academic exploration of these topics in a national, international, historical and contemporary context. Extra-curricular activities include celebration of cultural diversity and sharing of experience within a multi-cultural and mixed nationality learner group.

In order to address an increase in students with complex needs, we have appointed a Student Liaison Officer to support their transition, guidance and progression and improve their retention and attainment. We have a range of students with additional support needs:- mental health issues encompassing anxiety, depression, Bipolar Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive disorder; dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mobility issues.

The role complements the extensive support services we provide directly and in partnership with external agencies.

Due to the size of the College informal discussions with students take place on a regular basis. However, the College elects a Student Representative Council every session and has appointed a Student Liaison Officer to take forward student participation and engagement.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Newbattle Abbey College's annual cycle of self-evaluation activities involves the Senior Management Team, all college teams, all college committees and groups, students and a range of external stakeholders.

Four cross-college Quality Days were held in October 2013, February 2014, October 2014 and March 2015. These included a mixture of reviewing, planning and preparation for past, present and future activities as well as reviewing self-evaluation action plans by college teams.

There have been many examples of reflective practice leading to practical changes which have improved the student experience, including a consistent approach to guidance for students across the curriculum; improved recruitment practices in support of student retention; better heating of practical areas for rural skills students; and an improved system for residential students to raise issues regarding facilities and accommodation. This year we have established a Sanctuary Room for students of all faiths and none.

The annual engagement visit by Education Scotland in December 2014 confirmed that the points of action from the external review concerning arrangements for the disclosure of staff and the promotion of equality, diversity and sustainability within the curriculum had been actively taken on board and implemented throughout the college. They commented that the college's self-evaluation process was well-developed and effective in identifying areas for improvement and enhancement of the learner experience. Education Scotland highlighted an example of excellent practice within the college involving the extension of the Rural Skills Programme to three priority groups of marginalised learners: adult offenders; adults with mental health issues and young people out of mainstream education.

Estates and Facilities

The College is set in 125 acres of parkland. The main College premises are in an A listed building; a historic 16th century house which occupies the site of a former Cistercian monastery. The main teaching accommodation is on a multi-level site and accessible for those with restricted mobility. Campus residential accommodation consists of 30 single and 7 twin ensuite bedrooms, a number of which are fully accessible. Appropriate parking is provided. The College is committed to doing everything it can to improve accessibility without destroying the character of the grade "A" listed building.

The college is a heritage venue for conferences, meetings and weddings as well as the site of the College Business Park which is home to 32 SMEs. We have a partnership with OSCARS International for Summer School programmes and Off Season Group programmes which offer high quality English teaching and rich cultural activity programmes to students from Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, Spain, Hong Kong China and Greece.

Each year we organise a series of events by and for students and the community around the general themes of celebrating equality and diversity and sustainability. Evaluations for the 2013 Christmas event were very positive with a big increase in the number of wheelchair users.

7. Employment information

The College currently collects data on the age, disability, ethnicity and sex of its staff and continues to work towards improving the monitoring systems of employment data to enable it to judge the impact of a protected characteristic on all its employment functions and use that information to better perform its responsibilities as an employer under the equality duty. The College sends a staffing return each year to the Scottish Funding Council.

We have a total of 30 staff: - 8 teaching staff, 3 senior management and 19 support staff. 13 staff are full time whilst the remainder are all part-time. Of the teaching staff, five are male and three female. The three senior management posts are all female and of the 19 support staff, 5 are male and 14 female.

However, as the College has only a small number of people working for it, it is mindful of the level of employment detail it is able to provide publicly in order to avoid a situation where individuals could be identified. We are therefore exempt from publishing employee information as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

In addition, the College is committed to promoting the benefits for staff of disclosing a disability. Monitoring of staff usually requires that they indicate a disability, rather than indicate the access or other requirements that they may need to support them in working effectively.

The College is seeking to further improve the collection and analysis of future equalities data in partnership with the Scottish Funding Council and other colleges across Scotland.

8. Monitoring and Review

This mainstreaming report will be reviewed no later than 30 April 2017. However, College reporting mechanisms in relation to learning and teaching, quality and data collection are on an annual basis and any issues highlighted

will be dealt with as soon as is practically possible. Staff and senior management are quick to respond to both student and staff concerns.

9. Communications and Publication

This mainstreaming report will be made available on the College intranet and website and will be made available in alternative formats for anyone who requests it.