

## Race Equality Commission: Sheffield

This document has been prepared by the Vice Principal Student Experience and the Head of Safeguarding and EDI, on behalf of the Sheffield College. The College's response to the Race Equality Commission was commissioned by the Chief Executive and Principal and Chair of the EDI Board.

The information and evidence provided within this report is intended to feed into the **Education** strand of the Race Equality Commission's work.

### Summary of findings

- There is good representation of ethnic minority students on our provision for young people (29%) and adults (59%) and there are no achievement gaps, with ethnic minority students achievement rates the same or higher than ethnic majority achievement rates on all provision types.
- The issue that we have identified is related to participation and social mobility as the representation of ethnic minority groups falls in our Higher Education provision (23%) and in our apprenticeship provision (9%)
- The pandemic has impacted on the online attendance of disadvantaged students more than their peers. As more ethnic minority students live in disadvantaged postcode areas, this has impacted more on ethnic minority students. This can be evidence through the online attendance of ESOL students, which started lower than normal but improved as the College delivered nearly 3000 devices to students.
- Ethnic minority students appear to use some support service less than their peers.
- Working with the National Centre for Diversity, and embedding our FRFEDIE culture has helped the College to develop an inclusive culture where ethnic minority students thrive educationally.

### Introduction

The Sheffield College is a further education college that provides academic, vocational and professional qualifications to more than 14,000 young people and adults. Its mission is to *transform your life through learning*. The College offers a broad curriculum that includes apprenticeships, vocational diplomas, A Levels, access courses, and foundation and honours degrees, and has four main campuses: City, Hillsborough, Olive Grove and Peaks as well as two centres at Fir Vale and Eyre Street.

More than 14,000 students and apprentices studied with the College during the last academic year 2019/20. Of those learners, around 2,700 were apprentices. The College works with approximately 2,400 employers and its economic impact on Sheffield City Region annually is approximately £282.5 million.

Source: EMSI Economic Impact Study 2019.

As one of the largest providers of education and the largest provider of Further Education in the region, we believe our submission is important to support the work of the Race Equality Commission.

### Evidence and Information

The College creates an annual Equality and Diversity Report, which is approved by Governors and available on the College's website.

Research undertaken during the preparation of this document highlights that in the 2019-2020 academic year 53% of students enrolled at the College lived in a disadvantaged postcode area.

However, when considering the Ethnic Minority cohort of students, it was found that 77% of them lived in such an area.

#### Social Deprivation: Sheffield College Student Community

	% students living in a 'disadvantaged postcode area'	% of students from EM groups living in a 'disadvantaged postcode area'
2019 – 20	53%	77%
2018 – 19	57%	78%
2017 – 18	53%	75%

#### Student Numbers: Young People

The College attracts a diverse student population on provision for Young People and provision for Adults. For Young People, students from ethnic minority groups totalled 29% of the student population in 2019-2020, a further 1pp increase on the previous year. On Adult provision, students from ethnic minority groups totalled 59% of the student population in 2019-2020, a further 8pp increase on the previous year. The majority of ethnic minority adult students are ESOL students.

	Ethnic majority	Ethnic minority	Prefer Not to Say / Not Declared
<b>2019 – 20</b>	3799 (71%)	1496 (29%)	36 (1%)
<b>2018 – 19</b>	3924 (72%)	1526 (28%)	21 (0%)
<b>2017 – 18</b>	4033 (73%)	1452 (26%)	22 (0%)

#### Student Number: Adults

	Ethnic minority	Ethnic majority	Prefer Not to Say / Not Declared
<b>2019 – 20</b>	1827 (39%)	2790 (59%)	69 (1%)
<b>2018 – 19</b>	2803 (48%)	2965 (51%)	69 (1%)
<b>2017 – 18</b>	3176 (53%)	2812 (47%)	45 (1%)

#### Student Numbers: Higher Education

The College has been successful in its objective to increase the proportion of students attracted to our Higher Education programmes from ethnic minority groups. In 2019 – 2020, 23% of the cohort were from ethnic minority groups, an increase of 4pps.

	Ethnic Majority	Ethnic Minority	Not Provided
<b>2019 – 20</b>	314 (77%)	93 (23%)	1 (0%)
<b>2018 – 19</b>	370 (80%)	89 (19%)	1 (0%)
<b>2017 – 18</b>	375 (76%)	114 (23%)	2 (0%)

However, when you consider that 29% of the Young People cohort is from ethnic minority groups, it appears that less students from such groups are progressing through to our Higher Education

provision as the proportion reduces to 23% of the cohort. This is a focus of our social mobility work and one of the reasons this is a measurable EDI objective.

### **Ethnicity Profile for Apprentices Completing in Year**

In addition, the proportion of apprentices from ethnic minority backgrounds increased is only 9% of the cohort. This is up 1pp on the previous year but that only equates to an additional 14 apprentices.

	<b>Total Apprentices</b>	<b>Total Ethnic Majority</b>	<b>Total Ethnic Minority</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>2019 – 20</b>	983	887 (90%)	93 (9%)	3 (0%)
<b>2018 – 19</b>	1034	952 (92%)	79 (8%)	3 (0%)
<b>2017 – 18</b>	870	797 (92%)	70 (8%)	3 (0%)

There appears to be barriers to accessing apprenticeship provision for ethnic minority students. Despite objectives set to do so, neither figure yet represents a significant increase, nor is representative of Sheffield’s population. Therefore the College continues to implement new strategies to ensure our apprenticeship offer is attractive and accessible to all. We also work with employers to ensure any barriers that may prevent them from employing apprentices from diverse backgrounds are removed.

### **Achievement**

#### **% Achievement Rates: Young People**

The 1pp achievement gap between ethnic minority and ethnic majority students closed as the achievement rate for ethnic minority students increased by 1pp whilst the achievement rate for ethnic majority students increased by 2pps. When considering specific ethnicities there are also very few achievement gaps, however students who declare as Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi make-up 1% of this student cohort and achieved 6pps below their peers.

	<b>% Achievement ethnic minority</b>	<b>% Achievement ethnic majority</b>	<b>Gap</b>
<b>2019 – 20</b>	79	79	0
<b>2018 – 19</b>	78	77	1
<b>2017 – 18</b>	72	71	1

Any achievement gaps are in favour of ethnic minority students achieve higher than ethnic majority students on our Adult provision, Higher Education provision and Apprenticeship provision

### **Impact of COVID**

COVID has had impact on students, however, with students studying remotely online for large proportions of time since March 2020 we believe the pandemic had potential to impact on poorer communities more. Given that 77% of ethnic minority students live in disadvantaged postcode areas, it seems logical that our ethnic minority students would be at a greater disadvantage than ethnic majority students overall. For example, the digital divide will have accentuated this as students were more likely to be sharing IT devices or not have access to one and/or live in an area with poor internet connection or have no internet at home.

We saw the online attendance of our ESOL students persistently lower than other students until such time as the College was able to send nearly 3000 devices out into the community, after which we saw a clear rise in online attendance for those students.

### **Accessing Services**

Our safeguarding disclosure data indicates that students from ethnic minority cohorts use our safeguarding team support less than ethnic majority students. Anecdotally, we believe this to be a cultural issue as matters are either not regarded as safeguarding or are private. Relative to the student population, we have a very small number of safeguarding disclosures so it is important to note that these statistics are not reliable, it could also just be that more ethnic majority students have safeguarding concerns.

### **Tackling Racial Inequalities**

In 2019, we set out to achieve the Investors in Diversity Award (achieved June 2020) and in 2020 set out to achieve Leaders in Diversity, making a firm commitment to the key principles embodied by FREDIE:

**Fairness** – Being reasonable, right and just.

**Respect** – Having due regard for feelings, wishes and rights of others.

**Equality** – Where every person has equal rights and every person has a fair chance.

**Diversity** – Diverse means different. We are all different so diversity includes us all. The concept of diversity encompasses understanding, acceptance and respect.

**Inclusion** – Where every person feels respected, valued and that they fit in with the organisational culture.

**Engagement** – Two-way commitment and communication between an organisation and its employees.

### **Positive Action**

We continue to take positive action to encourage the recruitment of Ethnic Minority (EM) students on all courses and to close any gaps in achievement. Our curriculum and extra-curricular activities raise awareness of and enable students to gain respect, self-esteem and confidence, preparing them to live in a racially diverse society. The College celebrates diversity and through developing such a culture is successful at retaining students at College once they start.

We continue to seek to increase the number of staff from EM groups and encourage links with supportive professional bodies such as the Network for Black Professionals. We are working closely with the National Centre for Diversity and together we are developing our EDI action plan which will support this commitment. We work to develop role models through our body of students, our community and our employer network and recognise the contribution they can make to students' aspirations.

We work to secure the fullest participation of EM students and staff in our planning and decision-making processes. Our Student Voice, Staff and Employer Engagement Strategies and policies such as our complaints policy and will help us to hear what students, staff, parents and employers from different racial groups and backgrounds tell us and we will act upon these views to further improve our College.

## **Expectations**

Setting out our behavioural expectations and values from the outset is key. We expect our staff and students to adhere to FREDIE values. Our expectations are clear, we are determined to eliminate unfairness whenever we find it and we will address discrimination directly and relentlessly pursue the creation of a culture that does not tolerate it any form. Our documentation, such as our Equality Scheme is clear regarding our zero tolerance approach to discrimination

## **Education**

We believe that working with students to provide education regarding racial equality and is vital to give all students knowledge and understanding on contemporary matters. Our personal development (tutorial) programme called SHAPE has five strands including Equality Matters learning about racial inequality has been built into the curriculum.

## **EDI Board (Working Groups & Task and Finish Groups)**

Four working groups and eight task and finish groups have been commissioned by our EDI Board. One working group is working on our EDI objective to develop the diversity of the College's workforce. Our workforce does not reflect the population of Sheffield or our student population so positive action is being taken to address this. We also have an ethnic minority staff working group who help the College to ensure the culture is inclusive and to help celebrate diversity.

One of our task and finish groups have been working on our communications and marketing in terms of encouraging more people for ethnic minority groups to consider and undertake apprenticeships. Another task and finish group has been looking at who to embed understanding about racial equality into learning across the College. This has looked at developing learning in all our teacher training programmes, CPD for all of our staff and new educational resources to be included in our SHAPE tutorial curriculum.

## **Partnerships and Fostering Good Relations**

We aspire to be a leader in diversity as an organisation, part of this ambition drives the College to develop key relationships. For example we work closely with community groups and charities to foster good relations. For example we work with the Dialogue Society and sit on the city wide equality leads group. Working in this way brings in external expertise to help us and improves the College's reputation in the community.

## **Working with NCFD**

We have been working with the National Centre for Diversity for nearly two years. Working with them have helped us to provide training and develop EDI actions that have impact and bring about improvements. We have secured Investors in Diversity and are working towards Leaders in Diversity. This work has really helped to drive our FREDIE culture throughout the organisation and is making the College a more attractive and inclusive place to work and learn.

## **Staff training and CPD**

Ensuring that staff have EDI training, including regarding racial equality is an important aspect of tackling racial inequalities. We need to ensure staff are aware of unconscious biases and are equipped to deal with any such issues. Ensuring staff have confidence to discuss contemporary issues is important.

**Understanding our Community and Celebrating Diversity**

We continue to collect data, we do this so we understand the make-up of our student population and staff population. We can advise staff of events that might impact on student mood or performance, for example staff knowing when Ramadan is and understanding what students are doing in the period is important.

**Student Participation: Youth Commission for Racial Equality**

Four students, the maximum permitted, have been selected to be part of the Youth Commission for Racial Equality. They bring their experiences and learning back into College.

**Monitoring Data for Social Mobility**

We monitor in-year retention and attendance data to spot any emerging gaps and to put in strategies to ensure they do not become equality achievement gaps. The Social Mobility Working Group monitors this and recommends actions and strategies. The group reports into EDI Board. Monitoring this data helps to alert the College Leadership to any emerging issues and then investigate any potential causes and fix them.