



Harlow College

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT
2024 - 2025**

Author: Vice-Principal for Equality & Diversity
Approved: 18 December 2025 (Corporation)
Review: December 2026

Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2024/25

Introduction

This report provides a summary of the work the College has undertaken in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and provides information on the profile of staff and students by protected characteristics for the year 2024/25. The first section of the report refers to the profile of staff, the second section to students and the third section objectives for 2025/26.

Highlights from 2024/25

Our key focus during 2024/25 for staff has been continuing our work with Investors in Diversity (IiD) and driving forward our EDI action plan to embed positive change across the College. A new group of EDI Ambassadors has been appointed and we have maintained engagement through feedback sessions with IiD.

Key Actions Taken

- Continued support for staff networks and support groups
- Appointment of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors
- Ongoing feedback sessions with Investors in Diversity
- Monitoring and analysis of staff profile data

Staff Profile and Recruitment

The staffing profile remains broadly consistent with previous years and continues to reflect the 2021 ONS Census data for Harlow. There has been a 1% increase in the recruitment of ethnic minority staff, against an initial target of 2%. Positive work is ongoing to attract applicants from diverse groups and detailed staffing profile data is provided below.

The College continues to utilise our Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to provide HR with reviewable data to support informed decision-making and monitor progress against EDI objectives.

Student Profile

The College has continued to collect and monitor the student profile data to support improvements in student achievement and to help provide an inclusive environment for all learners to succeed.

24/25 has seen improvements in achievements for most students including those from ethnic minority groups and those learners with additional learning needs. In addition, female learners have outperformed males for the first time in five years.

Through the College's journey to achieve the Investors in Diversity Award, the College has worked with students to provide learning opportunities beyond the curriculum that encourage inclusivity and celebrate diversity through initiatives including:

- A diverse and accessible enrichment offer
- Student Inclusion Ambassador programme
- Bali trip '26

Section 1 – Staff Profile

1. Ethnicity

1.1 Ethnic Profile of Staff

As at the 31st July 2025, the ethnic profile of staff at the College was 86% (447) White and 14% (71) Ethnic Minority Groups, compared to 87% (426) White and 13% (63) Ethnic Minority Groups as at the 31st July 2024. This profile shows a small increase in Ethnic Minority Groups. HR Services continues to gather exit data from staff choosing to leave the College. Reasons for leaving are not believed to be related to issues of race.

The 2021 ONS Census shows the Ethnic Minority Groups population for Harlow was 15.5%, White 82.7% and Other 1.8%¹. Nationally in FE colleges 78.4%² of employees are White – British. Comparing these figures to the College's workforce profile, the College has a higher proportion of white employees.

1.2 Ethnic Profile of Managers

The ethnic profile of managers has not changed compared to last year. As at 31st July 2025, 89% (68) White and 11% (8) Ethnic Minority Groups, compared to 89% (65) White and 11% (8) Ethnic Minority Groups as at 31st July 2024. Nationally in FE colleges 91%³ of managers are white.

1.3 Staff Turnover by Ethnicity

The ethnic profile of staff leaving the College has changed in 2024/25, with 87% (66) White and 13% (10) Ethnic Minority Groups, whereas in 2023/24 76% (87) White and 24% (17) Ethnic Minority Groups.

1.4 Staff Recruitment by Ethnicity

In 2024/25 vacancies continue to rise with 165 job vacancies, compared to 114 vacancies in 2023/24. We appointed to a total of 127 jobs, compared to 98 in 2023/24.

We had a total of 606 job applications of which;

- 67% (405) were from White groups,
- 24% (146) were from Ethnic Minority Groups,
- 6% (35) Unknown and;
- 3% (20) preferred not to say,

This compared to a total of 549 job applications in 2023/24, of which;

- 73% (403) were from White groups,
- 24% (132) were from Ethnic Minority Groups and;
- 3% (14) preferred not to say.

¹ Harlow Council Harlow Population Profile 2021 Census

² FE College Workforce Data for England 2023/24

³ FE College Workforce Data for England 2023/24

At offer stage;

- 78% (72) were from White groups
- 18% (17) were from Ethnic Minority Groups
- 1% (1) Unknown and
- 3% (3) preferred not to say.

This Compared to;

- 78% (90) from White groups,
- 18% (20) were from Ethnic Minority Groups and
- 4% (5) preferred not to say in 2023/24.

1.5 Ethnicity Pay Gap (EPG)

Whilst reporting on our Ethnic Pay Gap (EPG) is still not a mandatory requirement, the College again this year undertaken a review of its EPG (as of 31st March 2025), using a similar method of calculation as used when calculating the Gender Pay Gap.

The mean EPG for 31st March 2025 was 3.24%, for 31st March 2024 was 3.14% and for 31st March 2023 was 2.16%. The median EPG was 31st March 2025 was 5.66%, for 31st March 2024 was 0% and for 31st March 2023 was 0%. The EPG (median) in the UK for 30th September 2024 was 14.8%.

2. Gender

2.1 Gender Profile

As at 31st July 2025, the gender split at the College was 38% male and 62% female. This has remained the same for the past three years. Nationally in FE colleges 65.5% females, 33.5% male, 0.1% identifies in another way and 0.9% prefer not to say⁴.

2.2 Gender Profile of Managers

As at 31st July 2025, the gender split for managers at the College is 39% male and 61% female which is similarly to last year which was 38% male and 62% female. Nationally in FE colleges 62% females, 36.4% male, 0.1% identifies in another way and 1.5% prefer not to say⁵.

2.3 Gender Pay Gap Data (GPG)

The mean Gender Pay Gap for 31st March 2025 was 2.98%, 31st March 2024 was 4.25% and for 31st March 2023 was 3.85% The median Gender Pay Gap was 31st March 2025 was 10.99%, for was 31st March 2024 was 13.54% and for 31st March 2023 was 13.51%. The Gender Pay Gap continues to be low compared to the mean national average of 13.1% in 2024 (according to the Office for National Statistics)

2.4 Staff Recruitment by Gender

The College had a total of 606 job applications, of which 58% (349) were female, 40% (243) were male, 0.5% (3) were non-binary and 1.5% (11) preferred not to say. Compared to a total of 549 job applications, of which 55% (302) were female, 44%

⁴ FE College Workforce Data for England 2023/24

⁵ FE College Workforce Data for England 2023/24

(240) were male, 0.5% (3) were non-binary and 0.5% (4) preferred not to say for 2023/24.

At offer stage, 52% (48) were female and 48% (45) were male. Compared to 56% (64) were female, 39% (46) were male, 1% (1) were non-binary and 4% (4) preferred not to say in 2023/24.

3. Age

3.1 Age Profile of Organisation

Again, this year the majority of staff at the College fall into the 51 – 60 (125) age bracket, with the next highest groups being the 41 - 50 (120). Nationally in FE colleges the majority of staff fall into 50 – 59 age bracket followed by the 40 – 49 age bracket⁶.

Whilst the age profile of staff is typical of most FE colleges, it could affect the College's ability to operate so it is actively monitored and addressed by the Principalship as part of a succession planning process.

3.2 Age Profile of Managers

The majority of College managers in 2024/25 fall in the 41 - 50 (26), which was the same as last year. Nationally in FE colleges the majority of managers fall into 40 - 49 age bracket followed by the 50 - 59 age bracket⁷.

3.3 Staff Recruitment by Age

The College had a total of 606 job applications, of which 9% (58) were 16 -21, 25% (155) were 22 - 30, 25% (153) were 31 – 40, 20% (120) were 41 – 50, 14% (84) were 51 – 60, 4% (21) were 61+ and 3% (15) preferred not to say.

Compared to 549 job applications, of which 11% (61) were 16 -21, 24% (135) were 22 - 30, 24% (131) were 31 – 40, 22% (118) were 41 – 50, 12% (65) were 51 – 60, 6% (32) were 61+ and 1% (7) preferred not to say for 2023/24.

At offer stage, 9% (8) were 16 -21, 27% (25) were 22 - 30, 27% (25) were 31 – 40, 15% (14) were 41 – 50, 17% (16) were 51 – 60 and 5% (5) were 61+.

Compared to 7% (8) were 16 -21, 21% (24) were 22 - 30, 22% (26) were 31 – 40, 26% (30) were 41 – 50, 9% (10) were 51 – 60, 11% (13) were 61+ and 4% (4) preferred not to say in 2023/24.

4. Religion and Belief

4.1 Profile Across College

The three largest religious groups are Not Disclosed (37%), Christian (30%) and None (25%). This is very similar to last year. Data from the 2021 Census shows that 44.7% of Harlow residents are Christian, 43.4% recorded they had no religion and 5.4% did

⁶ FE College Workforce Data for England 2023/24

⁷ FE College Workforce Data for England 2023/24

not state their religion. The remaining 6.5% comprised of Sikh 0.1%, Muslim 4%, Jewish 0.3%, Hindu 1%, Buddhist 0.4% and Other 0.7%⁸.

4.2 Profile of Managers

The profile of religion amongst managers categorises as: Not Disclosed 39% (30), Christian 37% (28), None 18% (14), Other 3% (2) and Muslim 3% (2).

4.3 Staff Recruitment by Religion and Belief

The College had a total of 606 job applications, of which 1% (5) were Buddhist, 33.5% (203) were Christian, 2% (14) were Hindu, 9% (53) were Muslim, 0.5% (1) were Sikh, 43% (264) have no religion, 3% (20) other and 8% (46) did not wish to disclose.

Compared to 549 job applications, of which 1% (3) were Buddhist, 32% (177) were Christian, 2% (14) were Hindu, 7% (40) were Muslim, 1% (1) were Sikh, 45% (246) have no religion, 3% (17) other and 9% (51) did not wish to disclose in 2023/24.

At offer stage, 1% (1) were Buddhist, 20% (19) were Christian, 3% (3) were Hindu, 7% (6) were Muslim, 62% (57) have no religion, 2% (2) other and 5% (5) did not wish to disclose.

Compared to 1% (1) were Buddhist, 25% (29) were Christian, 1% (1) were Hindu, 4% (5) were Muslim, 0% (0) were Sikh, 51% (58) have no religion, 4% (5) other and 14% (16) did not wish to disclose for 2023/24.

5. Disability

5.1 Disability Profile of all Staff

The disability profile of staff has remained the same as last year. Currently there are 12% of staff with a disability. 7.5% of Harlow's population are classed as disabled under the equality act⁹. Nationally in FE colleges 8% staff are classed as having a disability¹⁰

5.2 Disability Pay Gap Data (DPG)

This year the College has again voluntarily published its Disability Pay Gap (DPG) to help demonstrate its ongoing commitment to embedding inclusivity into its culture and workforce. For the purpose of this report, disability has been categorised as staff that have self-declared themselves as having a disability, which includes physical and learning disabilities.

The DPG for the College as of 31st March 2025 was 0.37% Mean and 5.66% Median. This compares to a mean DPG of -3.67% Mean and 5.66% Median in 2024. The median DPG for the UK in 2023 was 12.7% so the College is below this.

6. Sexual Orientation

⁸ 2021 Census Data for Harlow from Office for National Statistics

⁹ 2021 Census Data for Harlow from Office for National Statistics

¹⁰ FE College Workforce Data for England 2023/24

6.1 Sexual Orientation of all Staff

There has been a small change in the sexual orientation of staff at the College. As at the 31st July 2025, 89% Heterosexual, 8% not disclosed, 1% Gay/Lesbian and 2% Bisexual.

6.2 Staff Recruitment by Sexual Orientation

The College had a total of 606 job applications, of which 86% (522) were heterosexual, 3% (16) were bisexual, 3% (16) were lesbian or gay man and 8% (52) did not wish to disclose. Compared to 549 job applications, of which 83% (458) were heterosexual, 6% (33) were bisexual, 2% (10) were lesbian or gay man and 9% (48) did not wish to disclose for the year 2023/24.

At offer stage, 89% (83) were heterosexual, 3% (3) were bisexual, 2% (2) were lesbian or gay man and 6% (5) did not wish to disclose. Compared to 82% (94) were heterosexual, 6% (7) were bisexual, 1% (2) were lesbian or gay man and 10% (12) did not wish to disclose in 2023/24.

7. Staff Training

The College currently ensures that every new employee undertakes equality and diversity training as part of their staff induction programme. This is a mandatory aspect of this programme and is undertaken within 4 weeks of commencement in the job.

Since August 2024, there have been five CPD days, where over 130 sessions have been delivered to both service and delivery teams. Keynote themes were around People, Place and Planet with 100% of staff in attendance during the August CPD days

Over 53 cross-College sessions have been delivered during the CPD days focusing on the craft of teaching. The main focus being around formative assessment, challenge and connection before correction. There have been 12 sessions focused on ED&I with the College looking to work on its Investors in Diversity action plan.

Other sessions have included:

- UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Relational development practice and leadership
- Accessibility with your iPad
- Essex Cyber Prevent and Protect Officer Essex Police
- Deaf awareness training
- Apprenticeship sequencing and Scope of Works
- Introduction to Bodyswaps
- Mental Health First Aid Training

8. Key Findings and Future Goals in Relation to the Staff Profile

- The College maintains an exceptionally small pay gap across all categories, performing strongly against benchmarks and a future goal is to continue to monitor pay equity and explore initiatives to further strengthen transparency and fairness in remuneration practices.

- Recruitment of ethnic minority staff has increased by 1%, and while this is slightly below the College's 2% target, the College remains committed to further progress. The College is actively exploring positive action measures and enhancing the diversity of its advertising channels to better reflect the local community we serve. A future goal is to implement targeted outreach, develop partnerships with community organisations.
- The gender profile remains stable and aligned with trends across the wider FE sector, demonstrating consistency in representation. A future goal would be to promote gender balance in leadership roles.
- The staff disability profile continues to exceed the local census profile, which is a positive achievement. To sustain this, the College has implemented the Disability Confident Scheme, reinforcing its commitment to inclusion. The College would look to maintain this strong position while enhancing accessibility measures, removing barriers and supporting career progression for staff with disabilities.
- Profiles relating to sexual orientation and religion remain consistent, with no significant changes. At this stage, no additional targeted actions are required, however the College will continue to monitor and support inclusivity in these areas. The College will strengthen awareness and inclusion through staff training and engagement activities that celebrate diversity.

9. Strategic Objectives

- Achievement of Investors in Diversity Silver Award. Continue progression towards securing the Investors in Diversity Silver accreditation, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement in equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- To work collaboratively with Equality and Diversity Ambassadors to ensure full implementation of the Investors in Diversity Action Plan, embedding best practice across the College.
- Strengthen the collection, analysis and reporting of staff and student demographic data to inform decision-making and identify areas for improvement.
- Review and optimise advertising methods and platforms to attract a wider and more diverse pool of candidates, ensuring recruitment processes support equality of opportunity.
- Improvement staff engagement and sense of belonging and build trust across the College.
- Continue to measure, monitor, and report on pay gaps relating to gender, disability, and ethnicity, and implement targeted actions to address any disparities identified.

Section 2 – Student Profile

The following section of the report addresses the data collected on students enrolled at the College and analysed at enrolment level. This focuses on all programme types including apprenticeships and English and maths. This is analysed by ethnicity, sex and disability.

10. Ethnicity

10.1 Overall achievement

Achievement rates have continued to improve overall for both White learners and learners from other ethnicities and are the highest they have been in the last five years for both defined groups. However, the achievement gap has increased from 3.8% to 6% with a greater improvement among White learners. This gap can be attributed to achievement rates among adult ESOL learners which have fallen to 45%, a 6% drop from 23/24 and in contrast to ESOL 16-18 learners where achievement is more positive at 77%.

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
All other Ethnicities					
Leavers	1721	2188	2478	2637	2521
Achievement %	79.5%	81.0%	77.4%	80.1%	84.2%
White					
Leavers	7089	7130	6583	6770	6743
Achievement %	81.0%	83.1%	79.1%	83.9%	90.2%
Not App/Known					
Leavers	220	128	259	283	284
Achievement %	68.2%	78.9%	73.4%	62.9%	82.0%
Total Leavers	9030	9446	9320	9690	9548
Total Achievement %	80.4%	82.5%	78.5%	82.2%	86.7%

Apprenticeship achievement rates for learners from Ethnic Minority Groups have exceeded those of their peers by 5%, a 17% improvement from the previous year. However, Ethnic Minority Groups only represented 10% of apprenticeship leavers.

11. Sex

Achievement rates for females have exceeded those of males for the first time in the last 5 years. This may in part be attributed to a 5% swing in female/male students, as well as comparatively strong outcomes for females in both English and maths. Please see the table on the following page.

The achievement rate for both male and female apprentices has improved significantly compared to the previous year. Female apprentices saw a 12.9% increase, bringing their achievement rate to 66.7%. Male apprentices experienced a 7.5% rise, with their current achievement rate at 61.9%. As a result, female apprentices now outperform their male counterparts. However, the number of female apprentices across the College is significantly lower than that of male apprentices. Last year, only 8 of the 73 achievers were female.

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Female					
Leavers	3567	3597	3896	3752	4093
Achieved	2732	2802	2931	3078	3560
Achievement %	76.6%	77.9%	75.2%	82.0%	86.9%
Male					
Leavers	5463	5849	5424	5938	5455
Achieved	4526	4995	4383	4889	4719
Achievement %	82.8%	85.4%	80.8%	82.3%	86.5%
Total Leavers	9030	9446	9320	9690	9548
Total Achieved	7258	7797	7314	7967	8279
Total Achievement %	80.4%	82.5%	78.5%	82.2%	86.7%

	Female	Male
ENGLISH - Sub Team		
Leavers	295	507
Retention %	89.8%	85.6%
Pass %	82.1%	78.5%
Achievement %	85.1%	79.5%
MATHS - Sub Team		
Leavers	475	481
Retention %	91.6%	88.8%
Pass %	89.7%	91.6%
Achievement %	82.1%	79.5%

12. Disability

Achievement for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has continued to improve, further narrowing the gap with their peers. There are a number of factors that can be attributed to this improvement, primarily driven by greater early identification and support planning in partnership with students, parents, carers, schools and existing support providers. This earlier and more reliable disclosure has enabled the SEND team to plan appropriate interventions from the outset. Please see table on the following page.

There has been an increase in achievement among High Needs Funded learners (aged 16-18) to 87.0% from 82.6%, which is 2.2% higher than that of all other learners and consistent with previous years despite a significant increase in HNF learners from the previous year (+24%).

The number of 'No information' learners relating to difficulty/disability is high and is being addressed as part of a move to digital enrolments.

Achievement for apprentices with a learning difficulty or disability is currently 50%, which is significantly lower than that of their peers (66%). This has been identified as a key area for development, with a focus on strengthening learning support in the classroom. Of the 73 apprentices who achieved last year, 14 had a formally diagnosed learning difficulty or disability. These apprentices are also more likely to be enrolled in English and/or maths as part of the condition of funding. Although English and maths are no longer a barrier to progressing through gateway and sitting their end point assessment, apprentices are still required to work towards achieving the required level in these subjects.

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Has difficulty/disability/health problem					
Leavers	2614	2898	3052	2885	2828
Achievers	2012	2352	2346	2360	2407
Pass %	84.9%	90.4%	88.2%	89.1%	93.7%
Achievement %	77.0%	81.2%	76.9%	81.8%	85.1%
No difficulty/disability/health problem					
Leavers	3538	4056	5264	4664	4202
Achievers	2863	3473	4261	3914	3697
Pass %	88.6%	92.1%	89.5%	92.0%	94.6%
Achievement %	80.9%	85.6%	80.9%	83.9%	88%
No information provided by the learner					
Leavers	2878	2492	1004	2141	2518
Achievers	2383	1972	707	1693	2173
Pass %	89.2%	90.9%	88.3%	88.1%	93.1%
Achievement %	82.8%	79.1%	70.4%	79.1%	86.3%

13. Actions Required

The College intends to develop this work further in the forthcoming year, by working with the National Centre for Diversity with the aim of obtaining Investors in Diversity Award.

Further actions:

- Close the achievement gap for apprentices with learning difficulties/disabilities (currently 50% vs. 66%).
- Reduce the achievement gap for learners from other Ethnic Groups to be in line with that of White learners.
- Reduce the achievement gap for looked after children compared to their peers.
- Close achievement gaps between learners on bursary and vulnerable learners, focusing on safeguarded learners as the highest priority.
- Improve outcomes for apprentices with disabilities and/or difficulties.
- To continue to move the ethnicity profile of students on apprenticeships (12%) closer to the ethnicity profile of other college learner groups and inline with the Harlow demographic (17%).

Section 3 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives for 2025/26

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives	Actions	Reporting Line
<p>To improve staff engagement and understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, in accordance with the values of the College.</p> <p>To foster and develop an inclusive and diverse workforce – supporting career aspirations and development.</p> <p>To achieve Investors in Diversity Silver Status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue our work with the National Centre of Diversity with the aim of achieving the Investors in Diversity Silver Award. • Continue to implement actions arising from the Investors in Diversity staff and student surveys. • Continue to monitor and improve management information and reports of staff profiles to ensure all protected characteristics are fully supported. • Continue to measure, monitor and report on Pay Gaps, acting on any issues arising. • Continue with the established Strategic group to oversee staff and students’ aspects to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. • Continue with and expand the staff support groups available. 	<p>Equality and Diversity Strategic and Operational Steering Committees.</p> <p>Resources Committee and Corporation.</p>
<p>The College will enhance the collection, monitoring and analysis of equalities data to inform all its actions and ensure it fosters inclusive practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve data collection to support identification of needs through student application and enrolment process. We want to ensure all protected characteristics are fully supported. 	<p>Standards and Curriculum Committee.</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Steering Committee.</p>
<p>The College will monitor and review attainment of students by</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close the achievement gap for apprentices with learning difficulties/disabilities (currently 50% vs. 66%). 	<p>Standards and Curriculum Committee.</p>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives	Actions	Reporting Line
protected characteristics to actively reduce any achievement gaps. We will strive to ensure all students achieve their potential and remove any barriers to their participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the achievement gap for learners from other ethnic groups to be in line with that of white learners. • Reduce the achievement gap for looked after children compared to their peers. • Close achievement and attendance gaps between learners on bursary and vulnerable learners, focusing on safeguarded learners as the highest priority. • Improve outcomes for apprentices with disabilities and/or difficulties. • To continue to move the ethnicity profile of students on apprenticeships (12%) closer to the ethnicity profile of other college learner groups and in line with the Harlow demographic (17%). 	Equality and Diversity Steering Committee.
To ensure our curriculum remains inclusive and reflects and meets the needs of our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure SEND staffing levels are maintained and increased during the first term for transition. • Ensure the College has an inclusive representation within the Student Ambassador group which informs curriculum, student voice and development. 	Standards and Curriculum Committee. Equality and Diversity Steering Committee.