

Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Report

- Date:** June 2025
Please note, due to the nature of data collation, the report refers to academic year 2023/2024 data.
- Purpose:** To meet Northampton College's statutory reporting obligations vis-à-vis the Equality Duty
- Author:** Jan Hutt – Vice Principal - People and Organisational Development
- Background:** In accordance with the general equality duty, in carrying out its functions the College has to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is supported by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations, which require public authorities (named on schedule 1 of the regulations, of which Northampton College is one) to publish:

- information to demonstrate their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty

This report ensures compliance with the aforementioned publication requirements.

Student Achievement

The College's commitment to each and every student is to identify, respond to, and support their individual needs in providing them with the opportunity to maximise their learning and personal development, recognising that a greater proportion of students enrolling with the College have lower starting points with respect to independent learning, social development, confidence and mental health wellness.

The range of methods the College's utilises to achieve this include:

- The use of robust and thorough initial and diagnostic assessment, target setting and progress monitoring at an individual student level
- The establishment, following the Covid pandemic, of the School of Academic and Vocational Support ensuring students receive high quality academic, vocational and pastoral support
- Continually evolving Wellbeing and Mental Health initiatives, including in 2023/2024:
 - Workshops on Recognising and Managing Anxiety
 - Mental Health Day with external agencies (available to talk to students about their services) including: Samaritans, The Lowdown, Enfold, MHST, Q-Space, Mind and Space to Talk.
 - Difficult Conversations (Samaritans) and Trauma Informed Practice
 - Tea and Talk (Mental Health Foundation) event
 - Three staff completed training with the Never Walk Alone Project (Bereavement Support)

- A broad range of tutorials, including:
 - Cultural Competence and Diversity Awareness
 - Citizenship
 - Prevent and British Values
 - Developing and Improving your Emotional Resilience
- The provision, by Student Services of support for vulnerable student groups, including those in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM), Children in Care (CIC), and Care Leavers (495, 117, and 69 students respectively). In recognising the additional barriers to education, progression and personal development, these students may face, the College has implemented a range of initiatives to promote their success and wellbeing, including
 - Dedicated pastoral and academic support staff for Children in Care and Care Leavers
 - Guaranteed access to bursaries and travel support for Free School Meal eligible students
 - Tailored careers advice, mentoring, and progression planning
 - Strong partnerships with local authorities, social workers, and virtual school heads
 - Early intervention strategies to monitor attendance, engagement, and achievement
- A focus on eliminating any gaps in performance linked to ethnicity has ensured ethnically diverse cohorts continue to thrive in College
- Extensive and bespoke learning support for students with a wide variety of support and learning needs, including those who are eligible for High Needs funding.

Impact - Student Outcomes

The on-going investment, post-pandemic, in specialist academic, pastoral and vocational support for students has ensured that after a 1.1% decline in overall retention immediately post pandemic, it has subsequently increased and remained very high and stable at 94.9%. Overall pass and achievement rates also remained very high at 96.2% and 91.3% respectively in 2023/24.

The focus on ensuring all students received the necessary pastoral and educational support was also evidenced in the outcomes for the College's Children in Care cohort in 2023/24, with an achievement rate of 91.7%, 0.4% higher than all students.

Likewise, the College's actions to support its High Needs students are reflected in consistently strong retention, pass and achievement rates, at 97.0%, 95.5% and 92.6% respectively.

The College's commitment to supporting those students who require additional learning support is reflected in achievement rates, at 90.1%, that are broadly equal to the overall College rate.

A focus on eliminating any gaps in performance linked to ethnicity has ensured that ethnically diverse cohorts continue to thrive in College. The achievement rate for ethnically diverse groups combined was 92.7% compared to 89.7% for White British students. The majority of ethnically diverse groups with significant numbers (50+) had greater than 90% achievement rates, illustrating good consistency in performance across the ethnic range. Exceptions were those students from Caribbean (88.5%), Pakistani (89.1%), White and Asian (87.5%) and White and Black Caribbean (87.2%) groups. In the apprentice cohort, the largest ethnic group other than White British was Any Other White Background, with eight apprentices. Therefore, it is difficult to identify any significant differences between groups.

Male students achieve slightly better than female students at 92.1% versus 90.7% respectively; similar is seen in apprenticeships where 69.9% of male apprentices achieved versus 64.6% of female apprentices.

Summary Achievement/Pass and Retention Rates for different student groups:

Overall Pass Rate	96.4%
Overall Retention Rate	94.9%
Overall Achievement Rate	91.3%

*Group	Pass Rate (%)	Retention Rate (%)	Achievement Rate (%)
Students with Learning Difficulties, Disabilities or Health Problems	96.0	93.9	90.1
Students with no Learning Difficulties, Disabilities or Health Problems	96.2	95.4	91.8

*NB Data not provided by 17 starters

Group	Pass Rate (%)	Retention Rate (%)	Achievement Rate (%)
Students eligible for Free School Meals	95.3	91.9	87.5
Students not receiving Free School Meals	96.3	95.2	91.7

Group	Pass Rate (%)	Retention Rate (%)	Achievement Rate (%)
Children in Care	98.6	92.9	91.7
Children not in Care	96.1	95.0	91.3

**Group	Pass Rate (%)	Retention Rate (%)	Achievement Rate (%)
Ethnically Diverse	96.2	96.4	92.7
White British	96.2	93.3	89.7

**NB Data not provided by 70 starters

Group	Pass Rate (%)	Retention Rate (%)	Achievement Rate (%)
Students with High Needs	95.5	97.0	92.6
Students without High Needs	96.2	94.8	91.2

Group	Pass Rate (%)	Retention Rate (%)	Achievement Rate (%)
Female	96.1	94.4	90.7
Male	96.3	95.7	92.1

Impact - Student Feedback

Student feedback is a highly valuable tool in understanding the students' experience and identifying areas for improvement. The below table denotes the responses received in 2023/2024 that relate to a sense of inclusion, equity and belonging.

Student Survey Feedback – Students on a Study Programme:

Statement	Study Programme	Adults	Apprentices
My teachers and academic coach / personal tutor give me the support I need with my studies	91%	98%	96%
I feel safe when I am at Northampton College	92%	100%	96%
I know the expectations the College has for me	96%	96%	96%
People treat me fairly and with respect at Northampton College	89%	100%	95%
I am able to give my views about things that affect me, and I feel listened to	87%	99%	93%

Promotional activities

The College utilises internal communication materials and campaigns to promote key milestones within the diversity calendar to complement the tutorial programme, which is easily accessible and visible to staff and students via social media, the video wall at Booth Lane and video screens at all College locations.

The College continues to promote inclusivity through, for example, the use of promotional materials denoting details of days of religious observance and key cultural milestones including:

- Black History Month
- Ramadan
- Diwali
- Easter
- Eid
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Remembrance Day
- LGBT+ History Month
- Navaratri

Website

The College website undergoes a quarterly audit to ensure that images, case studies and news stories are representative of the diverse student demographic. The website features an entire section dedicated to Student Support, which provides information for current students and applicants who require support with the following:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Health issues
- English, maths and language skills (including acceleration sessions)
- Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Sign language support
- Finances (including bursaries and support with childcare)
- Getting to college (including the College subsidised bus pass)
- Autism Spectrum conditions
- Mental health and wellbeing (including mentorship)
- Support for children in care and care leavers.

This 'Student Support' area of the website has attracted 4,985 visitors to its 'landing page', where visitors go on to explore the areas listed above.

Events

The College continues to grow participation and promote equality of opportunities within a variety of curriculum areas and careers. This is done primarily through the College's 'Ignite the Spark initiative', which has recently held events for local secondary schools based in the digital, green and STEM sectors. This is in addition to the College's annual 'Big Rig Low Carbon Challenge', which was also extended to internal students from ESOL and Foundation programmes as a valuable progression opportunity. Schools are encouraged to inspire female students to engage with these events.

The College's Construction department also held its annual 'Women in Construction themed week' consisting of workshops, talks from guest speakers, taster sessions and activities. This was supported by campaign materials, which were devised to promote different career pathways and spotlight local examples of women with successful careers within these industries.

The annual College Awards Ceremonies in 2024 celebrated the success of 115 students across all three campuses, highlighting students from across the diversity spectrum, including those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and serious illnesses as well as Children in Care and young carers.

Case studies

A diverse range of case studies featuring teachers from across the College enabled the College to celebrate, through its various staff recruitment campaigns, the expertise and achievements of its teachers.

To support the International Women's Day campaign, the College posted photos of female staff and students engaging with the campaign theme and encouraged members of the College community to have positive conversations about how to inspire inclusion.

Engage+ Programme in Partnership with Northampton Saints Foundation

The College is proud to partner with Northampton Saints Foundation to deliver the Engage+ programme - designed to support young individuals who require additional learning support or are at risk of becoming not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

Engage+ specialises in helping students who find traditional educational environments challenging. This programme is tailored to meet the diverse needs of our students, providing a flexible and supportive pathway to personal and academic growth.

There is a focus on boosting self-esteem, developing self-awareness, and enhancing employability skills. Students benefit from outstanding work experience and enrichment opportunities, thanks to our partnership with Northampton Saints Foundation and its network of local and national business partners.

Diversity Data - Employee population

There is a lack of contemporary sectoral benchmarking data available from reputable sources that align with the reporting period as the AoC Workforce Survey, which provided extensive comparative data, has not been published since 2020/2021. Likewise, data pertaining to the local population (West Northamptonshire) is drawn from the 2021 census and as such is not contemporary. However, it does provide, in the absence of other meaningful data, a method of beginning to

understand the diversity of College's employee community as compared to West Northamptonshire, particularly when recognising that the vast majority of employees live in this geographical area.

- The College continues to have a higher proportion of female employees versus male with a ratio of 64.4:35.6. This compares to the West Northamptonshire population demographic ratio, female to male, of 50.5:49.5 as denoted in the 2021 Census Area Profile¹. The College's term-time and flexible hours contracts provide opportunities for people with caring responsibilities to achieve the work-life balance they require. As such, it is unsurprising that the College has a higher proportion of female than male employees, given that females continue, for the most-part, to be the primary carers. This is particularly reflected in the College's Professional Services demographic, where term-time only and flexible contracts are more prevalent, with 69.3% of the population being female.
- The percentage of female managers at the College has, in the last ten years, always correlated with the total percentage of females in the organisation. 2023/2024 is the first year, within the ten-year period, the percentage of female managers has fallen below 60. Given the record of equality of opportunity, as demonstrated by the previous ten years data, it is unreasonable to conclude, based on one year's data versus the previous ten years, that this is due to a sudden reduction in opportunities for career progression for females.
- In 2019/2020, 5.07% of College employees declared a disability compared to 7.45% in 2023/2024. Whilst this arguably demonstrates that employees have become more willing to disclose a disability, 7.3% of College employees have stated their preference not to provide a response in this regard. However, whilst we have employees that have not disclosed, we do know that some of these have a disability through the work we have done with them on an individual basis. The College continues to strive, as an inclusive employer, to collect meaningful data in respect to disability (and other diversity strands) as this enables a pro-active approach to supporting any employees who would benefit, in delivering their role responsibilities to the best of their ability, from reasonable adjustments.
- 87.1% of the employee population identify as being of White ethnicity (White British 79% and White Other 8.1%), as compared to West Northamptonshire's White ethnicity demographic of 85.9%. 8.3% of the employee population identify as being ethnically diverse as compared to 14.1% for West Northamptonshire, with 4.6% of the employee population preferring not to disclose their ethnicity. The Asian employee population forms 5.1% of the College's employee community as compared to 5.3% of West Northamptonshire's community. The Black employee population forms 2.5% of the College's employee community as compared to 4.9% of the West Northamptonshire population. The Mixed or Multiple ethnic group percentage of the employee population is 0.7% as compared to 2.8% of the West Northamptonshire community.
- With regards to national identity, 9.5% of the employee population have declared their nationality as being non-British, with a diverse range of nationalities represented, including South Korean, Canadian, Hungarian, Egyptian, Albanian, Belgian, Brazilian, Polish, African, Russian, Italian, Moldovan, Swedish, Indian, French, Pakistani, Spanish, Portuguese, and Greek.
- The mode age band for Northampton College employees is 60+; the percentage of employees in this age band having reduced slightly (2.9%) year-on-year as against its own population. The next most prevalent age group is 50-54, followed by 55-59. However, the College has also seen a year-on-year increase in the 24 or less and 25-29 age groups, with increases on their own populations of 10.1% and 27.8% respectively. This is not an unsurprising demographic when

¹ [Nomis - 2021 Census Area Profile - West Northamptonshire Local Authority, East Midlands Region and England Country](#)

considering the well-documented ‘aging population’ in the UK. Whilst the data set for West Northamptonshire covers all age groups, the primary age groups clearly reflect a population with an older demographic. The College focuses on retaining employees with this extensive experience through the use of flexible contracts, flexible retirement and flexible working. In summary, the primary reason for employees leaving the College is not retirement but career progression, which speaks to a different challenge in terms of employee retention.

- The College has seen year-on-year incremental increases, over the last five years, in the number and percentage of employees citing either Islam or Hindu as their religion. The College’s overall employee population, in this regard, fundamentally reflects the religious population in West Northamptonshire.
- When comparing College data to that of the West Northamptonshire community (aged 16 and over), the College’s employee population has a greater proportion of people citing their sexual orientation as being non-heterosexual.

Recruitment and Selection Conversion Data

In considering diversity data, it is important to note the headline figure for all applications, in that the percentage of applications shortlisted is 69% and overall figures for candidates receiving a job offer after attending a selection process is 36.3%.

- Gender: 68.1% of males and 70.1% of females have their applications shortlisted. However, the percentage of females whose applications convert from a selection process to a job offer is 39.6% compared to 30.6% of males.

- Age:

Age	%age of applications shortlisted	%age of shortlisted applications converting to a job offer
Under 25	55.4	39
25-29	66.4	28.4
30-34	63.9	35.9
35-39	67.4	39.6
40-44	66.7	33.3
45-49	79.5	45.7
50-54	78.7	40
55-59	67.7	38.1
60+	81.5	27.3

- Sexual Orientation: non-heterosexual applicants had 68.8% of their applications shortlisted compared to 72.5% of heterosexual applicants. The percentage conversion from a selection process to job offer was 32.4% for non-heterosexual applicants and 37.4% for heterosexual applicants.
- Ethnicity: 74.3% of applications from White British candidates were shortlisted as compared to 60.1% for Ethnically Diverse candidates. The conversion rate from the selection process to a job offer for White British candidates was 42.2% compared to 29.5% for Ethnically Diverse candidates.
- Disability: 73.3% of applications from candidates with a disability are shortlisted as compared to 68.3% who do not declare a disability. The conversion rate from the selection process to a job

offer for candidates with a disability was 34.3% compared to 36.6% for candidates who do not declare a disability.

- Religion:

Religion	%age of applications shortlisted	%age of shortlisted applications converting to a job offer
Atheist	70.6	48.8
None	74.8	41.6
Christian	67.5	32.0
Buddhist	58.3	14.3
Hindu	50.0	23.5
Islam	63.4	24.4
Sikhism	80.0	25
Other	58.8	50
Unknown	73.7	30.9

Conclusion

The College’s recruitment and selection processes, and documented policy, fundamentally incorporate the principles for Inclusive Recruitment; the majority of which are aligned with research conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development². In considering this, and the relative few disparities from the application to shortlisting stage, it is reasonable to conclude that anonymising data in application forms, including diversity data, prior to the shortlisting stage, promotes an inclusive approach.

However, the data does lead to a conclusion that further development of the understanding of unconscious bias and how this can affect decision-making at the selection process stage (particularly in relation to gender, ethnicity and religion), is required and should be a College action, including Continuing Professional Development for recruiting managers. A deeper analysis of conversion rates will also identify any specific areas for development.

Gender Pay

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations required Northampton College, as a relevant public authority with 250 or more employees as of 31 March 2024, to publish details of its gender pay gap by 30 March 2025.

The snapshot date for the Gender Pay data/reporting denoted below is therefore 31 March 2024. The College’s next submission will be March 2026 for the snapshot date of 31 March 2025. As such, the data reported here does not reflect the implementation of the College’s Pay Framework and associated Policy, which was implemented with effect from 1 January 2025.

Mean (average) gender pay gap

Female Hourly Rate of Pay	Male Hourly Rate of Pay	Difference (%)
15.74	18.20	13.52

Median (mid-point) gender pay gap

Female Hourly Rate of Pay	Male Hourly Rate of Pay	Difference (%)
14.27	17.39	17.94

² [Inclusive recruitment: Guide for employers | CIPD](#)

Quartile pay bands

Top quartile		Upper Middle Quartile		Lower middle quartile		Lower quartile	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
47.44%	52.56%	58.97%	41.03%	75%	25%	78.21%	21.79%

Mean (average) bonus gap

Female mean bonus payment	Male mean bonus payment	Difference (%)
701.39	1016.67	31.01%

Median (mid-point) bonus gap

Female median bonus payment	Male median bonus payment	Difference (%)
500	1050	52.38%

NB A positive figure denotes that women earn on average less than men and, conversely, a negative figure denotes that women earn on average more than men.

Bonus proportions

Percentage of females who received bonus pay	Percentage of males who received bonus pay
1.48	3.65

The difference between Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap

Fundamentally, the principles of both gender pay gap reporting and equal pay are enshrined in reducing/removing pay differentials between male and female employees. However, it is important to note that they are distinct in nature. Specifically, equal pay deals with the pay differentials between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. The gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between men and women's average earnings across an organisation, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS)³, the median gender pay gap in the United Kingdom, for all employees (part-time and full-time), as of April 2024, was 13.1%, down from 14.2% in April 2023. The ONS commentary notes that the gender pay gap is higher for all employees than it is for full-time employees or part-time employees. This is because women fill more part-time jobs, which, in comparison, with full-time jobs have lower hourly median pay.

The principal reasons for the mean and median gender pay gaps, when considering the hourly rate of pay were:

- Females continuing to be over-represented in occupations such as catering and pastoral care, which is reflected in the high proportions of females in the lower quartile of pay. These roles have traditionally, and continue to, provide the greatest flexibility for people balancing caring and work responsibilities; females still being the main providers of care in the home environment.
- The 'traditional' occupational sectors that females and males have chosen/occupy. Specifically, as is commonplace in the sector, it is difficult for colleges to attract teachers in such areas as Construction, Engineering, Electrical and Vehicle Maintenance, which are roles

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2024#the-gender-pay-gap>

traditionally occupied by men. As such, the College, where essential, has had to apply market forces payments in these areas, which means the percentage of men receiving market forces was significantly higher than that of females; 21% of males as a percentage of their own population, as against 3.7% of females as a percentage of their own population. It should also be noted that, at the time of the snapshot data, 64.9% of the College's employees were female, which, in effect, exacerbates the percentage of males receiving market forces payments.

Notwithstanding this, whilst it is legitimate for organisations to utilise market forces payments, the College, as an education provider, continues to focus on addressing these societal 'occupational traditions' through a range of initiatives which promote engagement by female students in areas of study traditionally associated with males.

College policies, in relation to such as childcare, provide males and females with enhanced payments above and beyond the statutory requirements; for example, the College's Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave Policy provides enhanced payments for the first 26 weeks after the birth/adoption of a child. Paternity and Dependents Leave are also remunerated above the statutory levels.

In considering the data in relation to bonus payments, it is important to note that only one area within the College operates a bonus scheme and, as such, only 12 employees were eligible for payment. The data pertaining to the percentage of males and females who received a bonus payment is therefore somewhat misleading, as the calculation requires the measurement of the percentage to be a proportion of all employees in the organisation, as opposed to those within the area.

In formulating and implementing a new Pay Framework, and associated Policy, the College conducted a diversity assessment, including an assessment of pay gaps by grade and gender. As a result of this, adaptations were made to transition arrangements for Grade 10 roles occupied principally by females to reduce the gender pay gap. The Pay Framework will not mitigate all gender pay gaps because of the predominance of females in the pastoral care and catering roles. However, the removal of the vast majority of market forces payments, the transition arrangements to the new Pay Framework, and adherence to the pay policy for recruiting new staff are expected to result in a future reduction in the College's gender pay gap.