

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

INTERIM EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING REPORT 2019

FOREWORD

I am delighted to present the University of Aberdeen's Interim Equality Mainstreaming Report 2019.

Since publishing our review of our Equality Outcomes and progress on mainstreaming equality in 2017 we have continued to strive to promote inclusiveness and tolerance throughout all our activities.

The report which follows provides details of the progress we have made since our report in 2017 and also showcases the new initiatives and projects which we believe will continue to support and enhance our strategic priorities in relation to diversity and inclusion.

Some of the key highlights include:

- proactive action in implementing new policies and practices but have also embedded existing work;
- We have been delighted to be working closely with the Aberdeen University Student Association to implement enhanced support for staff and students who experience gender-based violence;
- Our British Sign Language Action Plan presents an excellent opportunity to increase awareness and understanding of British Sign Language;
- Our achievements with the Athena SWAN Charter over the last two years demonstrate significant commitment to and progress on gender equality;
- The University's Inclusion Week in March 2019 provided a wonderful opportunity to encourage dialogue on inclusion and diversity and to celebrate the staff, students, local community and International Partners;
- Our commitment to improving mental health and wellbeing of our staff and students has continued with the implementation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. We have trained over 250 staff and students in Scottish Mental Health First Aid and have welcomed external organisations to participate, positioning the University as a hub of activity in this area.

We continue to be open to suggestions and ideas on this important area so if you have ideas about diversity and inclusion, please do get in touch and together we can continue to build a university which puts inclusion at the heart of all it does and continues to meet its founding promise to be "open to all".

Professor George Boyne
Principal and Vice Chancellor
University of Aberdeen

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Interim Report sets out the progress the University has made in mainstreaming equality in relation to the general duty of the Equality Act 2010:

- Eliminating Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation
- Fostering good relations between people from different groups
- Advancing Equality of Opportunity

1.2 A report is also provided detailing the progress made in relation to the University's Equality Outcomes which were developed through extensive consultation with staff, students, partners and stakeholders prior to the publication of the 2017 report. The University's Equality Outcomes are:

Outcome 1

The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University's activities, both strategically and operationally;

Outcome 2

Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality;

Outcome 3

The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies;

Outcome 4

The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students feel respected and valued;

1.3 A report on the diversity profile of the University Court is also provided, along with a summary of the actions taken to increase the diversity profile of the Court members where this is possible.

1.4 The report focuses on the progress made in the two years since the publication of the last report which can be found at this link, along with the previous reports:
<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/vision-2271.php>

2 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2.1 The principles of Equality and Diversity are embedded within the University's current Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020. The University's mission within the Strategic Plan includes the commitment to embed "*a culture of equality and diversity in which all staff and students thrive*". The values included in the Strategic Plan commit the University to:

- Sustainable partnerships with stakeholders - driving a culture of inclusion and accessibility
- Respect for all within and beyond the University
- An empowered and ambitious community in which all can thrive

2.2 It should be noted that the University welcomed a new Principal in August 2019 and his commitment to equality and diversity issues has been evidenced by his personal involvement in equality matters. Additionally, the profile of the University's 1495 foundational purpose to be 'open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others' has been raised and will steer the development of a new institutional strategy. The development process of the strategy will be fully participative, and a significant consultation exercise is planned. Inclusion will be one of the key planks of the strategy.

2.3 The University has also agreed a specific vision for Equality and Diversity:

To strive to create an *inclusive culture* which *celebrates* the *diversity* of the University's staff and students. In recognising that this diversity brings new and *engaging* perspectives

and *enriches* the experience of all who work, study and visit the University we will take a *proactive approach* to embedding and mainstreaming the principles of Equality and Diversity by:

- *Driving* the agenda at the highest strategic level and throughout the University;
- *Communicating* the Equality and Diversity Vision and the University's expectations widely to all staff and students;
- *Challenging* prejudice and discrimination;
- *Sharing* experiences and good practice;
- *Educating* staff and students on Equality and Diversity and their responsibilities;
- *Engaging* staff and students on Equality and Diversity matters.

2.4 Equality and Diversity matters remain part of the People Strategy for the University "to foster a positive culture wherein our people are engaged, committed to our future, and champions of equality and diversity". However, the portfolio will be championed directly by the incoming Senior Vice Principal, who will have a remit to chair the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity

3 STRUCTURE OF REPORT AND PUBLICATION

3.1 The structure of this report has been set out to show clearly how the University is meeting the general duty within the Equality Act 2010. This report focusses on the progress and impact since 2017 in relation to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advancing equality of opportunity, considering the need to: remove or minimise disadvantage, meet the needs of people with protected characteristics, and encourage participation where it is low and;
- fostering good relations between people from different groups;
- diversity within the composition of boards.

3.2 The report also outlines the progress that the University has made towards meeting our Equality Outcomes since our review in 2017. Information which was provided in our reports of 2013, 2015 and 2017 will not be repeated in this report unless required. The actions set out in the 2017 report will be addressed and new actions for the period 2017 – 2019 set as appropriate.

3.3 An action plan can be found at Appendix 2. The actions from the last report are listed in that action plan with a progress report. New actions identified in this report have been added to that action plan and are specifically linked to the items in this report. The action plan is ambitious, but achievable and continues our work to meet the Equality Outcomes. Where actions are embedded in other action plans e.g. Gender Action Plan or Athena SWAN, they will not be repeated in this report or in the action plan. The employee information/data can be found in Appendix 3. It should be noted that since 2017 the University has undertaken a review and re-organisation of its academic structures. Schools are not now organised into Colleges – Heads of School are directly accountable for equality matters. This more direct involvement has been reflected in our equality governance structures so that representative Heads of School are part of the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity.

3.4 This report is fully available to staff, students, visitors and other interested groups or individuals. It will be published on the University's Equality and Diversity webpage and will be publicised to staff and students through the University's communication channels e.g. Staff E-zine, Message of the Day, open sessions, newsletters.

4 ELIMINATING UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION

This section highlights how we have been working towards meeting the first of the four 'needs' of the general duty within the Equality Act 2010 and mainstreaming equality to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We have made progress in this regard through supporting staff and students to increase their knowledge of equality and diversity, enhancing our promotions process to mitigate against bias, implementing equality impact

assessments, reviewing and making clear strides towards eliminating our gender pay gap and enhancing support for staff and students.

4.1 Equality and Diversity module – *Diversity in the Workplace* Training

4.1.1 Progress

In 2017, we reported that 80% of staff had completed the mandatory on-line training module. This has now risen to 86.1% overall, but 92.3% in the academic areas as can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Uptake of on-line equality and diversity training February 2019

School	Total Nos	Completed/ Passed	%
Business	90	73	81.1%
DHP	74	69	93.2%
Geosciences	85	80	94.1%
LLMVC	93	86	92.5%
Law	54	48	88.9%
MMSN	771	715	92.7%
NCS	127	121	95.3%
Biological Sciences	129	112	86.8%
Education	66	62	93.9%
Engineering	111	109	98.2%
Psychology	48	45	93.8%
Social Science	53	50	94.3%
TOTAL	1720	1588	92.3%
Institution	2841	2447	86.1%

4.1.2 The Key Performance Indicator for the uptake of the training continues to provide a focus for ensuring that the training is completed. The target to reach 100% completion rate has also been embedded into our Athena SWAN action plans within Schools and institutionally. The training is flagged in our new induction system, Page Tiger, and is also signposted at induction fayres to ensure that all new staff complete the training within 3 months of commencing employment.

4.1.3 We are also in the process of automating our uptake monitoring system so that more detailed data can be obtained. This work has led us to commission an upgrade of the training material and we will shortly be launching a customised module to our colleagues based at the Qatar campus.

Action: Achieve 100% compliance with the training module (Action 2.1)

Launch updated module to Qatar campus by September 2019 (Action 2.5)

4.2 Unconscious Bias Training

4.2.1 Progress

Great progress has been made in engaging the academic areas with Unconscious Bias training. Each school has received or will receive a session on Unconscious Bias, with the feedback being positive and indicating that behavioural change would be implemented. A session for Professional Services staff was offered during Inclusion Week and 55 staff attended.

- 4.2.2 Since 2015, the University Unconscious Bias training has been delivered to a range of staff groups, using both internal and external trainers. Thus far, the Senior Management Team, members of the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity, School Diversity Leads, Human Resources staff and other senior colleagues have received training and/or briefing. Members of the University's Promotion Panels have also received training with a follow-up briefing paper prepared for discussion before each promotion panel meeting. This takes into account unconscious bias research which suggests that raising awareness of bias immediately before a decision-making situation mitigates against bias occurring.
- 4.2.3 The University has delivered Unconscious Bias training across the University since 2015 and plans to ensure that all staff have attended training by 2020. Staff who have attended a session receive a certificate. All staff participating in recruitment and selection and/or promotion panels must attend a session on unconscious bias. Table 2 shows the uptake of training in the Schools to date.

Table 2: Uptake of training in Schools since October 2018

School	Number of attendees	% of all staff in School
Engineering	24	20
Business	17	16
Institute of Education and Medical and Dental Science	23	17.6
Rowett Institute	87	75.6
Medicine, Medical sciences and Nutrition	65	23
School of Education	19	29

4.2.4 Impact

The impact of the unconscious bias training is evidenced by the feedback received. 95% of respondents to the feedback survey rated the training as Good or Excellent, with respondents commenting that the training had motivated them to make behavioural changes in decision-making situations. Feedback also suggested that all staff should receive the training and that follow-up sessions should be available. We have acted on this feedback by implementing a rolling programme of unconscious bias sessions.

Action: Review the mandatory on-line equality training for staff participating in recruitment by Dec 2019 with a view to including additional material related to unconscious bias (Action 2.5)

4.3 On-line Equality and Diversity Training for Students

4.3.1 Progress

First Year students have had the opportunity to undertake on-line equality training for two full academic years. In year one (2016-17) 87% completed (with a further 3% completing in the following year). In year two (2017-18) 86% completed (they have the rest of 2018/2019 to complete it before final figures can be reported). The equality training is embedded within other mandatory modules on Health and Safety and Employability. These courses will be reviewed in 2020 to ensure relevance and appropriateness.

Action: Review the on-line equality and diversity training for students in summer 2020 (Action 2.3)

4.4 Mitigating Bias in the Promotion Process

4.4.1 Progress

The University operates an annual transparent promotion exercise and is keen to take actions to ensure that the opportunity for bias within the process is removed. Promotion panel

members were trained in unconscious bias in 2017 and a guidance note was produced to be referred to at the beginning of each promotion panel meeting. Following consultation and anecdotal feedback, we have introduced a blind-review in the first stage of the process. We also piloted an unconscious bias observer system in 2018. The unconscious bias observer sat in on the promotion panels to review how decisions were taken in practice. Following review and amendments, this will be repeated in 2019. The figures for promotion application and success rate by gender since the 2017 report can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Promotion application and success rate by gender 2018

Year	Applied			Successful			Success rates (%)	
	Female	Male	% Female	Female	Male	% Female	female	male
2016-2017	91	80	53.21	46	39	54.11	50.55	48.75
2017-2018	60	78	43.48	30	45	40	50	57.69

4.4.2 Impact

Assessing the impact of the changes we have made within the promotion process will be a long-term project. Although feedback suggests that staff continue to raise queries about how the promotion process works and how it is objective the University ensures that all staff have access to clear information about promotions. We have also changed the processes for particular grades of staff and it is now possible to apply for a contribution award at any time during the year, it is not restricted to the promotion timetable. The Senior Women's Network have also hosted drop-in sessions for staff in the immediate period preceding the promotion application deadline so that staff can ask questions about the process in an informal setting. Human Resources also hold information sessions for staff, where questions are welcomed.

Action: Monitor the success rates in the promotion process to ascertain impact of 'blind review' and report back to Promotions Review Group (action 3.2)

4.5 **Gender Pay Gap**

4.5.1 Progress

Since the last report the University has continued to progress and re-enforce the achievements highlighted in that report. In addition to this, significant benchmarking has been undertaken to further identify and understand the options available to further reduce the Gender Pay Gap.

4.5.2 Significant work has been undertaken to review the gender pay gap at a grade level, and a range of options are currently being considered to address any gaps, where a pay gap has been identified.

4.5.3 Revised annual figures will be published on 4th April 2019 and will be baselined on all staff employed by the institution on 31st March 2018.

Table 4: Gender Pay Gap across the University 2017

Gender Pay Gap	
Mean	Median
22.4%	22.2%

4.6 Advance HE Programme – Equality Impact Assessment of Strategic Documents

4.6.1 Progress

Since 2017 the University has been engaged in a project with Advance HE to develop a toolkit on the equality impact assessment of strategic documents. In particular, the University's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council is required to be equality impact assessed and it is anticipated that the new toolkit would support that work.

4.6.2 The University will adopt the new toolkit (due to be completed May 2019) where appropriate and will use that opportunity to raise awareness of and provide training on equality impact assessment.

4.6.3 The University continues to require policy owners to undertake equality impact assessment at the initial stages of policy development. The assessments are then sent to the equality network groups for consultation and are then signed off by the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity.

Action: Review the University's equality impact assessment process in the light of the publication of the Advance HE toolkit, which the University will have contributed to in June 2019 (Action 1.2a)

4.7 Transgender Equality

4.7.1 Progress

The University has developed policies to support staff and students who are transgender and provide guidance to staff who will be required to support transgender staff and students. These policies will be implemented, along with information/training sessions by July 2019.

4.7.2 Additionally, our keynote speaker in Inclusion Week was Charlie Martin, a motor sport professional who took the brave step of coming out as transgender while striving for some of the toughest challenges in the motor sport industry. Her talk was extremely well-received by the 54 attendees and the feedback was extremely positive. The University will maintain links with Charlie to further enhance our support for transgender staff and students.

4.7.3 We have also developed materials, which were promoted/distributed during Fresher's Week 2018 and Inclusion Week and on an ongoing basis providing guidance on terminology, respect and tolerance. These will continue to be updated and communicated at events. An example of the leaflets can be seen at Diagram 1 below.

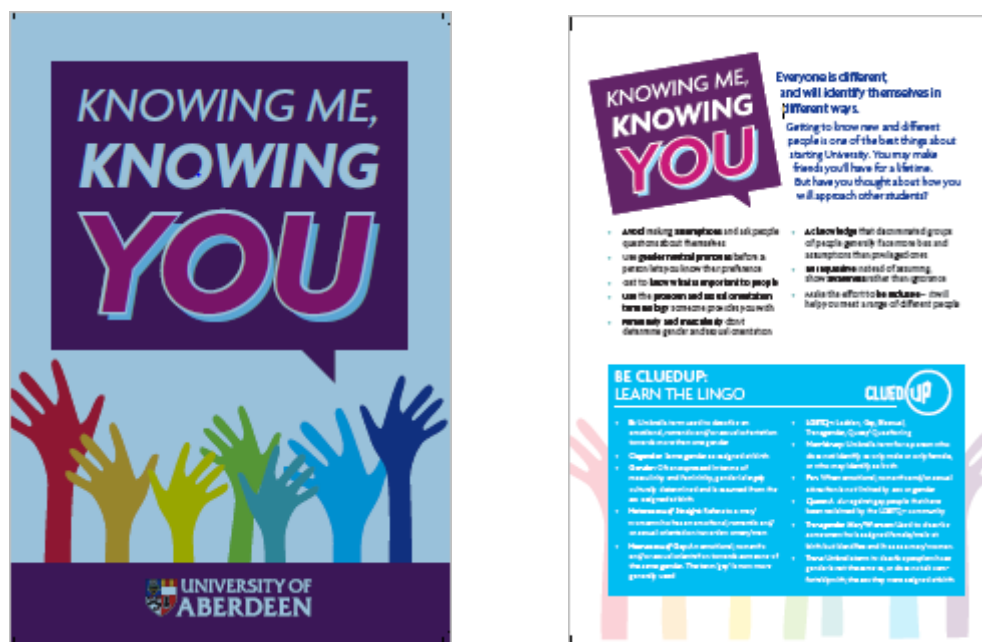


Diagram 1: Examples of leaflets used in Fresher's Week 2018 to promote the Gender Action Plan and gender terminology

Action: Implement staff and student policies on transgender by July 2019 (Action 1.8)

4.8 Widening Participation

The Widening Participation team continues to be represented on both the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity and the Gender Action Plan Working Group.

4.9 Gateway2Medicine

4.9.1 Progress

G2M is an initiative designed to widen access to the medical degree. It provides 20 places per year for students to do a one year Certificate in Pre-Medical Studies. The first half session is taken at NESCOL and comprises courses from the HNC/HND in Applied Sciences with the second half session at University of Aberdeen comprising level one courses from the medical sciences BSc programmes. Students have academic and pastoral support throughout from a dedicated G2M tutor and have specific training for the MMI and the UKCAT. NHS Grampian supports the programme by offering all students training and employment as bank health care support workers.

4.9.2 Impact

In the first run of the programme in the 2017-18 session, 21 students were recruited. Six of these qualified outright through an SIMD20 postcode and/or coming from a care background. Of the remaining 16, a further nine came from a remote a rural background. The programme has therefore resulted in recruitment of a cohort of students who would not have qualified under the conventional SIMD20 criteria. At the time of writing, all students are still in the programme and on track to comfortably pass all their courses.

4.9.3 A mixed methods evaluation of the programme including qualitative work with all G2M stakeholders is underway including dialogue with the cohort to explore their experience of medical school, influences on their career intentions and their ultimate careers destination.

Action: Evaluate the programme and use results to make appropriate changes by September 2020

4.10 Care-Experienced Pupils/ SFC REACH Project

4.10.1 Progress

We have a number of initiatives in place to support care-experienced pupils in primary and secondary education with the long-term aim of enhancing educational attainment and widen access and participation, including our Homework Club which offers local care-experienced secondary school pupils a supportive learning environment to complete their homework and revise for exams, and our pilot Volunteer Classroom Assistant scheme whereby trained students support pupils in local primary schools in literacy and numeracy skills the classroom under the supervision of the teacher.

4.10.2 The University continues to host a branch of the Scottish Funding Council funded REACH Project. In 2018 the scope of the REACH project was expanded beyond its original remit. The project now supports school pupils who are normally resident in SIMD 20 postcode areas and who have experience of being in care. The subject areas covered by the REACH project have expanded beyond Law and Medicine – they now include Business Management, Engineering, Computing Science and Psychology.

4.10.3 In 2017 we incorporated an action to implement monitoring of the impact of the REACH project in relation to protected characteristics. The University has encountered a challenge with this action in that the registration data it captures from the pupils who participate in this project is not related to the protected characteristics. Pupils can take part in this project if they meet one

of the following non-protected characteristics – attendance at target secondary school, resident in a SIMD 20 postcode area and / or have experience of being in care.

Impact

This project continues to meet its aims and targets. The number of pupils participating in the project has increased. It continues to raise aspirations and support pupils who wish to study one of the high demand / professional degree programmes.

Action: The University will continue to explore other ways of measuring the impact of the REACH in relation to the protected characteristics, especially in relation to gender (Action 3.4)

4.11 Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Attracting Diversity Project

4.11.1 Progress

The University was engaged with the Equality Challenge Unit's Attracting Diversity project and was a key partner in the development of outreach materials and evidence-gathering. The University's involvement in this project came to a natural conclusion (the national project came to an end) in June 2018.

4.11.2 Impact

The materials, information and knowledge generated by the University's involvement in this project have supported the University's practice and other initiatives. e.g. the development of the Gender Action Plan.

4.12 Equally Safe in HE Toolkit – Gender Based Violence (GBV)

4.12.1 Progress

In 2017, in advance of the publication of the Equally Safe in Higher Education (ESHE) Toolkit, the University commenced work on supporting staff and students who had experienced sexual harassment/gender-based violence.

4.12.2 In mid-2018 the University participated in a sector-wide steering group to implement the Equally Safe Toolkit for Higher Education. Since then we have:

- Established a Working Group including student representatives with a remit to implement the Toolkit;
- Distributed cards which provide information on how to handle a disclosure of GBV to all staff;
- Designed an online confidential reporting tool which is close to completion and launch;
- Disseminated the results of a survey undertaken of staff and student experiences of GBV;
- Received approval from Senior Management Team to participate in a wider data collection exercise led by the University of Strathclyde and which will provide national data to support/inform initiatives
- University Principal and President of Aberdeen University Students Association signed a Joint Statement Against Sexual Harassment in February 2019

4.12.3 The University will Launch a University-wide awareness/communication campaign by the end of February 2019. The tag line for this campaign is "Online Report, Real Support". As part of the campaign we will publish a joint statement of commitment by the University and AUSA endorsed by senior members of both organisations. The confidential reporting tool will also be launched as part of the campaign. The tool allows the option for individuals to remain anonymous when making a report whilst also providing clear links to sources for information through dedicated re-designed webpages (www.abdn.ac.uk/reportsupport).

4.12.4 Impact

This is a new piece of work and the impact of it will be monitored through the reporting tool data, feedback (qualitative and quantitative) from Student Support Service and Human Resources.

Action: Publish a new, comprehensive policy and accompanying procedures supporting the statement of commitment, enshrining its values into University policy by April 2019 (Action 2.6)

Develop training for staff and students to raise awareness of the issues and ways in which they can source support either for themselves or colleagues who turn to them for support by June 2019 (Action 2.7)

Launch an online awareness course on consent issues targeted at students by September 2019 (Action 2.8)

Roll out Bystander training to staff in planned and targeted programme by December 2019 (Action 2.9)

5 FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT GROUPS

This section showcases the work the University has undertaken to meet the second need of the general duty within the Equality Act 2010: to foster good relations between people from different groups and mainstream equality and diversity.

Our equality networks provide opportunities for fostering good relations and the review of our equality governance structures as reported in 2017 now underpins and facilitates those opportunities. In addition, the networks contribute their valuable insights and views into a range of University groups, including the Employee Engagement Working Group. We continue to enhance our packages to welcome international staff and students, which in the current political climate has become an increasing priority. We are proud of our work with Stonewall Scotland and our increasing ranking in their Workplace Equality Index.

5.1 International Women's Day Conference

5.2.2 Progress

5.2.3 The University has presented a highly successful International Women's Day Conference on an annual basis since 2015. Each year a theme is chosen, which either reflects that of the International Women's Day overall theme or one which is of particular relevance to the University at that time.

5.2.4 In 2017, our theme was 'Inspiring Journeys' as a driver for showcasing the achievements of women, particularly those who have overcome barriers to achieve outstanding success. Our international line-up of speakers included Olympic swimmer Hannah Miley and Timipre Wolo from the Petroleum Technology Development Fund. In 2018 the theme was #PressforProgress – a call to action to all within the University to continue to work towards gender equality. Our speakers included Her Excellency Sheikha Aisha Bint Faleh Al Thani, Qatar and journalist Eve Pollard. We also contributed to the Wellbeing of Women Charity through a small registration fee. The 2019 conference adopted the theme of #BalanceforBetter on 8 March. We were delighted to welcome Annie Wallace, a successful transgender actress; Aimee Work, Chairperson of the Active Girls Committee Aberdeen, Kate Bryan, art historian, curator and arts broadcaster; and Miranda Krestovnikof, biologist and resident wildlife expert on BBC One's The One Show. The inspiring talks were extremely well-received.

2.2.5 Impact

The Conference is very well received and attracts audiences of staff, students and external partners. In 2018 Her Excellency Sheikha Aisha Bint Faleh Al Thani was inspired by our conference to hold a similar event in Doha, Qatar in 2019. The Conference is also an opportunity for the University to showcase commitment to and progress on gender equality.

5.2 Equality Networks

5.2.1 Progress

The University's Equality Networks continue to thrive and grow. They are a valuable source of guidance for the University and support for the members. The Networks also have a presence at the Induction Fayres.

5.2.3 The University is delighted to have created new networks for colleagues to engage with since 2017. The Menopause Network has proved to be extremely popular. The Network meets to discuss how the University could better support women going through or approaching the menopause and to share coping strategies. The network has also organised talks and seminars. A nutritionist provided a session on the best nutrition options for women. The Network had one of their meetings at the Aberdeen Sports Village where they were provided with demonstrations and guidance on using weight-bearing exercise machines. The Network hosted a seminar led by Professor Margaret Rees, an internationally renowned expert on the menopause, in January 2019. The seminar attracted 83 delegates and the feedback was extremely positive, with 80% of those who provided feedback stating that the seminar was good/excellent.

5.2.4 The University aims to build on this and the knowledge and support gained by developing a policy for staff and line managers raising awareness of the many and varied symptoms of the menopause and the support available.

Action: Develop and implement a Menopause Policy to support women and all staff by December 2019 (Action 3.17)

A Parent's Network has also been established. Meetings are arranged on campus; however, a closed Facebook account has been created which provides an accessible forum for discussion and suggestions. The network has hosted sessions on Self-Care for Parents, Returning from Maternity Leave and HR Issues for Parents. The chair of the Network provided a talk within Inclusion Week at an EqualITEA session focussed on the power of internal equality networks and it was announced that the network would be encouraging carers to join and add their voice to the discussions.

Action: Expand the Parents Network to the Foresterhill campus by June 2019 (Action 3.18)

It has been challenging to develop a Race Network. Despite issuing four calls for expressions of interest in participation, this has failed to ignite interest. The University has also sought guidance from the campus trades unions, Scottish Race Equality Network and Advance HE. We are committed to continuing to aim to establish a Network. Further attempts are being made during the University's Inclusion Week.

Action: Establish a Race Equality Network Group by November 2019, potentially by inviting external input (Action 4.8)

5.3 Brexit - Supporting Staff and Students

5.3.1 Progress

Since the vote to the leave in the EU was announced in June 2016 as information has become available we have worked with our 670 EU national staff to advise and support them in respect of any impact leaving the EU might have on them professionally. This has included making provision for staff to speak directly to an Immigration Lawyer regarding their specific circumstances; 57 staff have made appointments to date. As yet we have not received any direct feedback which suggests that staff have left us due to Brexit.

5.3.2 The University recognises the uncertainty the external political environment has created for all staff and students, particularly those from countries within the European Union. The University has taken proactive action to provide guidance where available and appropriate and has provided staff with updated communications as developments have been reported. We will continue to do this as the impact of Brexit for the University is further understood.

5.3.3 In addition, the University has offered the following:

- Web chat with HR staff to discuss concerns and options after the referendum vote
- 1-2-1 sessions with an immigration lawyer in 2017 and 2019
- Facilitated the Settlement Scheme Pilot by purchasing an android device (which is the only way to access the Settled Status application form), also assisting individuals during the application on the device
- Reimbursed staff who applied for the Settlement Scheme (£65).
- Created and updated a dedicated Brexit website.

Action: Continue to monitor the impact of Brexit and provide ongoing support to staff and students (Action 3.11)

5.4 Unpaid Carers

5.4.1 Progress

In late 2017 the University published and implemented a Student Carers Policy which was written with input and guidance from Carers Trust Scotland. The information available for unpaid carers who are applicants and students was enhanced on the University's website.

5.4.2 In June 2018 the University was awarded the Carers Trust Scotland's Going Higher in Scotland Award Accreditation in recognition of its work to support the applicants and students who have a caring role.

Action: launch a Carers Network for staff and students by May 2019 (Action 4.6)

Explore gaining an accreditation regarding staff carers by September 2019 (Action 4.5)

5.5 Inclusion Week

5.5.1 The University's Inclusion Week 4-8 March 2019 provided an opportunity for staff, students, external partners and the local community to explore the concept of Inclusion and to provide suggestions for our future approach to inclusion and diversity.

5.5.2 In partnership with Unite, Unison, UCU and the Aberdeen University Students Association, the University organised a packed schedule of events to open discussions on inclusion and celebrate the diversity of the University and the local community.

5.5.3 Additionally, stalls were available across the campus on Dyslexia Support, Implicit Bias and Health Coaching.

5.5.4 Our key note speaker was Charlie Martin, a motorsport professional who champions transgender rights following her own transition experiences (54 attendees). Two colleagues provided a talk at our Foresterhill campus on how they have achieved career success and faced significant challenges related to disability (50 Attendees). Both of these sessions were live-streamed, attracting 40 colleagues. They were also interpreted into British Sign Language. The session on Supporting Staff and Students with a Hearing Impairment was very well received and was delivered by North East Sensory Services. One of the most popular events was Learn Basic BSL and the session on Be Conscious about Your Unconscious Bias for Professional Services staff was very well attended. The events on University Mental Health Day (7 March) included a talk from an internal academic who shared his experience of depression, supporting the University to create an open culture in relation to mental health. Overall, the feedback was extremely positive with 90% of all feedback forms received rating the events as 'excellent'.

5.5.5 Example of promotion material can be found in Appendix 1

5.5.6 Impact

The impact of Inclusion Week will potentially be focussed on increased awareness and the power of personal reflections. The comments in the feedback forms indicate that colleagues and students were inspired and took confidence from the personal journeys of the speakers. It is intended to develop a number of case studies to be published on the equality and diversity webpages and to present more regular equality events for the community to engage with.

6 ADVANCING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

This section details the examples of mainstreaming equality which contribute to advancing equality of opportunity, the third 'need' of the general duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. At the heart of understanding how to advance equality is gaining reliable qualitative and quantitative evidence. We are delighted to have established a University Equality and Diversity Research Group, whose work will provide robust data which can be used to inform policy and practice. Since 2017 the University has progressed the implementation of its Mental health and Wellbeing Strategy to further equality for staff and students with mental health and wellbeing concerns. Our continuing commitment to advancing equality for women has proved successful in relation to our Athena SWAN initiatives and we have, since 2017 developed a Gender Action Plan. We are proud to be advancing equality and raising awareness of learning disabilities through our prize-winning Project SEARCH initiative.

6.1 Aurora European Universities Network

6.1.1 Progress

The University was delighted to become a founding member of the Aurora Universities Network which was launched in October 2016 and has as one of its key aims to enhance opportunities for all. We are networked with the universities of Antwerp, Bergen, Duisburg-Essen, East Anglia, Gothenburg, Grenoble-Alpes, Iceland and Vrei University Amsterdam. The current President was appointed in November 2017, Professor David Richardson from UEA, and he visited the University in autumn 2018.

6.1.2 The Mission of the Aurora network is to:

- Share our collective best practice in being relevant, socially inclusive and diverse. Access to education is at the core of the member institutions' missions and we will demonstrate our commitment to inclusion and diversity.
- Ensure we learn from each other in how we respond to an increasingly digitised world. Through our research, education and engagement we will combine our expertise in how to remain relevant and resilient in the digital landscape.
- Commit to delivering research which provides solutions to societal issues – locally, nationally and internationally.
- Make our University experience a lasting and meaningful one for our students. While we provide an education which other universities aspire to, we will also encourage our alumni to make a real impact in the world as truly global citizens.

6.1.3 The network has identified key themes of Inclusion/Diversity, Sustainable Development, Digital, and Research. Biannual meetings of the network have been complemented by workshop activity across the partners and the University of Aberdeen has been represented at all meetings to date and will host the conference in November 2020.

6.1.4 The Aurora workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion aims to:

(1) Create equal opportunities for our staff and students; (2) Create a working and learning environment at our universities in which different perspectives are explicitly valued and (3) Capitalize on the ability to generate creativity from different perspectives both in teaching and in education. To date, the University has engaged with the diversity workgroup through working with the other network members by:

- Identifying and exchanging good practices in research, education and supporting systems (research, education, HR, communication, campus).

- Setting up a research agenda that focuses on opportunities of diversity in higher education and on the effectiveness of existing and new practices
- Stimulating joint activities aimed at developing diversity related competencies in our students (e.g., cultural events, competency training, diversity related courses, internships/summer school courses)
- Stimulating joint activities aimed at developing diversity related competencies in our students

6.1.5 The student population of European universities is increasingly diverse, both as a result of increasing numbers of students with a first- second or third generation migration background, and as result of internationalisation of higher education across Europe. Universities in the Aurora network actively strive to use the diversity amongst their student population as a tool for excellence in education. It is regarded as crucial to develop the intercultural competencies of students, because future academics in contemporary societies need to be able to function effectively both as citizen and as professional in a diversifying and globalizing context. The MPQ (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001) has been developed as an instrument to measure five intercultural competencies:

- *Cultural empathy* refers to empathizing with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of individuals from a different culture.
- *Open-mindedness* reflects an open and unprejudiced attitude toward cultural differences.
- *Social initiative* refers to a tendency to actively approach social situations.
- *Emotional stability* reflects an ability to stay calm under novel and stressful conditions
- *Flexibility* refers to interpreting novel situations as a positive challenge and adapting to these situations accordingly.

6.1.6 This AURORA-project aims to test and develop the MPQ for application in a University context among students and staff. The overall aim is to implement appropriate interventions to support the development of intercultural skills.

6.1.7 Impact

The impact of the University's involvement in the Aurora European Network in relation to diversity and inclusion has been in the opportunity it presents to showcase the work undertaken through participating in the annual Diversity Award and to gain ideas from partners about how their diversity work is structured and their focus. The University aims to engage with the MPQ questionnaire mentioned above, initially by piloting with the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity and the Equality Networks.

Action: Continue to engage with the Diversity Workgroup within the Aurora Universities Network and ensure that Diversity and Inclusion is a key element of the conference to be held in Aberdeen in November 2020 (Action 4.14)

6.2 Digital Capture of Lectures

6.2.1 Progress

The University has been committed to capturing lectures digitally to support international students and the broad range of learning approaches in our increasingly diverse student population, allowing students to take control of their own learning. Our Lecture Capture Policy directs staff to record all lectures subject to agreed caveats. As we believe it important students understand that recordings are a supplemental resource, not a replacement for lectures, guidance has been produced on the use of lecture recordings and how to maximise their educational value.

6.2.2 Impact

Analysis of 2016-17 and 2017-18 teaching events (including lectures) recorded using our digital capture software showed an increase of 56% and 20% of recordings and views respectively suggesting significant student demand for such resource. Given our very large

cohort of international students, it is important to note that a study in Psychology indicated that students for whom English was their second language particularly benefit from access to recordings and, in line with sector literature, there was no significant effect on attendance.

Action: Investigate why staff are unable to record events to ensure that technological or practical reasons are not barriers to recording by December 2019 (Action 3.18)

6.3 Student Learning Service

6.3.1 Progress

In response to changing student needs our Student Learning Service (SLS) has extended its discipline specific support (e.g. maths skills in Engineering, Business, Biomedical Sciences and Geosciences, and academic writing in Education, Social Sciences, History and Politics and International Relations), in addition to addressing increased demand for individual support sessions for students with specific learning differences and from students with mental health conditions. Increasingly the SLS works with PGR and PGT students and collaborates with colleagues elsewhere in orientation programmes and widening access initiatives. Our S4S student mentoring programme is now institution-wide, with identified School academic supporters (for mentees and mentors) and Registry Officers provide regulatory guidance and support for both UG and PG students.

6.4 Gender Equality

6.4.1 Gender Action Plan (GAP)

6.4.1.1 Progress

In July 2017 the University developed and implemented a Gender Action Plan (GAP). Within that Plan we have committed to improving the gender balance in all subjects where there is an imbalance of 75%/25% or more, by a minimum 1% year-on-year. Strategically we are prioritising Physics, Computing Science, Psychology and Education as (i) internal data indicates they have the most consistent gender imbalances across the Scottish-domiciled population, (ii) STEM based subjects and Education are each SFC priorities and (iii) all were subject to focus under the ECU Attracting Diversity project. Key activities to date have included involving students on Athena SWAN self-assessment teams, ensuring gender balance in role models in open days, websites and prospectuses and establishing breast feeding rooms in the Students' Union building and across the campus: we have publicised this facility with posters and information on our Equality and Diversity webpage. Gender-related targets are monitored via institutional KPIs and we are participating in the joint NUS-SPARQS project on engaging students with gender action plans; we hope this will be significant in ensuring effective student engagement in the ongoing development not only of our GAP but other strategy development.

6.4.1.2 With activities centred on influencing the influencers (parents, teachers, careers advisers), and raising awareness and aspirations, we have placed particular focus on outreach work at primary and secondary school level and so monitor more closely the gender profile of staff attending these activities. We were central to establishing a Regional Gender Group, GENES, to develop a series of events to promote gender equality to engage prospective students, their parents/carers.

Girls in Engineering Conference in 2016

The School of Engineering partnered with the local School for girls (St Margaret School) to host the inaugural Girls in Engineering conference in 2016 for girls aged 16-17. The event was designed to increase the awareness of the engineering discipline and readdress the gender imbalance in engineering industries, as well as encouraging young girls, to make positive and informed choices about their post-school career. This event was the largest conference of its type to take place in Scotland and was attended by 90 female pupils from across Scotland. The event was covered by BBC and ITV, featuring our colleague Professor Ana Ivanovic.

Women in Engineering Conference 2018/2019

This partnership between St Margaret School for Girls further developed, which resulted in a joint organisation of a 3-day residential Women in Engineering Conference in 2018, which was sponsored by Chevron. The conference was held in July 2018 for 43 girls aged 15-17 from schools across the UK. The conference provided an opportunity for the delegates to explore engineering both in a University setting and in the workplace.

Feedback from delegates of Women in Engineering Conference 2018:

“I have gained confidence in pursuing engineering in higher education and as a career choice and learnt more about different routes and opportunities studying engineering at University.”

“I have realised just how integrated all fields of engineering are with each other and with the wider working community. I’ve realised that this is absolutely a career which I want to pursue in the future.”

Video from 2018 event; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV6lhwA3kPE>

Pictures from the 2018 Conference can be seen in Diagram 2 below.



Diagram 2: Pictures from Women In Engineering Conference 2018

Women in Engineering Conference 2019

The School of Engineering aims to deliver the same conference in July 2019 for 45 girls aged 15-17 from schools across the UK. We will work in partnership with St Margaret's School for Girls and sponsored by BP and supported by Skills Development Scotland. The conference will focus on readdressing the gender imbalance in engineering industries, as well as encouraging females, to make positive and informed choices about their post-school careers. This year, particular emphasis will be placed on supporting the University strategic priority of widening participation and therefore we have involved Skills Development Scotland and are keen to encourage more students from all backgrounds to apply for the event. The conference is currently being promoted on <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/engineering/events/14407/>.

6.4.1.3 Impact

There has been recognition that the changes we aspire to see in relation to the statistics i.e. addressing gender imbalances will be a long-term endeavour. We have not seen significant changes; however, the GAP was developed only 18 months ago. Gender inequality is not a topic just affecting Aberdeen, and the University is of the view that the issues stemming from gender biases and inequalities require the input, knowledge and collaboration from as wide a pool of key stakeholders as possible. Utilising regional collaborations will be key to the ongoing success of effecting a wider societal step change in tackling gender stereotyping and bias.

Action: Establish collaborations with colleges and other local HE providers, such as local secondary and primary schools in order to broaden the understanding of the impact of gender bias on educational choices that children go on to make, therefore potentially impacting their future life choices

Continue to work in collaboration with the School of Education and the University's Widening Access team to explore appropriate channels of disseminating information to teachers, parents and pupils

Over the next 12-months, in collaboration with local schools from the Aberdeen City and Shire council areas, the University will be holding focus groups with pupils, parents and teachers to examine perceptions and stereotypes around gender and to explore ways in which the University might help to tackle these, alongside the impact of cognitive bias.

6.4.2 **Athena SWAN**

6.4.2.1 Progress

There has been significant progress since 2017 in relation to our commitment to the Athena SWAN principles. There has been a focus on ensuring that all Schools and Institutes apply for a Bronze Athena SWAN award. All the 16 academic Schools/ Institutes have now submitted an application for the Bronze award. Of these, 14 have been successful to date. The School of Psychology is currently preparing an application at Silver level, which will be submitted in April 2019.

Table 5: A summary of the status of Athena SWAN awards

	Level of award	Round of submission	Year for renewal or Silver
Institution	Bronze	Nov-16	Apr-20
Institute of Applied Health Sciences	Bronze	Nov-16	Nov-20
Institute of Education in Medical and Dental Sciences	Bronze	Apr-17	Apr-21
Rowett Institute	Bronze	Nov-16	Nov-20
Institute of Medical Sciences	Bronze	Apr-18	Apr-22
Institute of Dentistry	Bronze	Nov-18	
School of Psychology	Bronze	Nov-15	Apr-19
School of Biological Sciences	Bronze	Apr-17	Apr-21
School of Natural and Computing Sciences	Bronze	Apr-16	Apr-20
School of Engineering	Bronze	Apr-18	Apr-22
School of Geosciences	Bronze	Apr-18	Apr-22
School of Education	Bronze	Apr-17	Apr-21
School of Divinity, History and Philosophy	Bronze	Nov-16	Nov-20
School of Language, Literature, Music, Visual Culture	Bronze	Nov-18	
School of Law	Bronze	Nov-16	Nov-20
School of Social Sciences	Bronze	Apr-17	Apr-21
The Business School	Bronze	Nov-16	Nov-20

*The Institute of Dentistry was formed in Nov 2017 from the splitting of the Institute of Education in Medical and Dental Sciences (IEMDS), which was awarded an Athena SWAN award in April 2017. To retain the Athena SWAN Bronze award, the Institute of Dentistry has the opportunity to apply for the Athena SWAN interim award. The interim award recognises the department's efforts to ensure that gender equality is embedded in the new structure, and the continuation and appropriate modification of its actions to address the key issues identified by the self-assessment and restructuring processes.

- 6.4.2.2 Athena SWAN co-leads meet twice/year with the Principal to discuss initiatives and/or issues in the completion of the action plans. The first meeting with Professor George Boyne was held on 31st October 2018 and at that meeting the Principal stated his commitment to supporting the work associated with Athena SWAN.
- 6.4.2.3 The University's KPI monitoring process was implemented at the start of the Strategic Planning period from 2015-2020 to monitor progress towards achieving aspects of the Strategic Plan. Currently, quarterly updates are provided to the University Management Group and to Court.
- 6.4.2.4 The University's Institutional and School Athena SWAN progress is one of the metrics that is reported to both committees. Every quarter, performance is given a green (over 80% of actions being completed), amber (over 60% of actions) or red (under 60%) colour based on the % of completion of actions, within the action plan, with deadline falling within the quarter timeframe. Any areas of weaker performance are discussed by the committees to identify further action that can be taken forward to keep Schools and the University on track towards achieving 2020 targets.
- 6.4.2.5 Focus groups have been held with Professional and Support Staff and with Teaching Track staff to gain views on Induction, Promotion, Training and Mentoring. The results of the focus groups will be used to inform actions to support Schools in moving towards Silver award submissions.
- 6.4.2.6 Impact

The impact of Athena SWAN action plans is not only the actions which are completed but the awareness they raise of equality across the University. All of the School Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Teams have now widened their remit to cover diversity and inclusion. Examples of actions which have been implemented are:

- Advertised vacancies display clear links to diversity and inclusion web page, Athena SWAN logo, University's Athena SWAN website and Stonewall Diversity information

- Interview coaching available for internal candidates (selection committees members report lack of confidence in female candidates at interviews for posts at grade 8 or 9)
- Internal leadership roles are not open for nomination; expressions of interest must be invites offering the opportunity to highlight to underrepresented groups;
- Monitoring of gender balance on selection committees (system has been set up to monitor the gender composition of all selection panels – flag is raised not at least 60/40 gender split)
- Gender balance on promotions committees is monitored.
- We support flexible working (this should help to retain women and should encourage applications by women for senior posts)
- Schools are monitoring gender balance on seminar speakers (to ensure we have both male and female role models)

Action: The Schools and the institutional Athena SWAN team have action plans which they are working towards and which are monitored through an institutional KPI.

6.5 British Sign Language Action Plan

6.5.1 Progress

The British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2017-23 was published by the Scottish Government in October 2017. The rationale for the development of the Plan was to ensure that BSL becomes a nationally recognised language in line with the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. Universities were required under the legislation to produce and publish (including in BSL) their own Plans by October 2018. The University already provided BSL interpretation at graduation ceremonies and would provide support to individual staff and students who were BSL users.

6.5.2 The University engaged with Deaf Action, the organisation appointed by the Scottish Government to support the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. A University Working Group was established comprising key areas of the University, AUSA representatives and members of staff who had experience of BSL.

6.5.3 Human Resources and Student Support Services led on regional partnership meetings with Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College. The purpose of engaging with local partners stemmed from the common difficulties faced by the education institutions in relation to the lack of BSL interpreters in the North of Scotland.

6.5.6 The University's BSL Plan is ambitious given the challenges faced by the lack of interpreters and the current lack of government funding to address that situation. However, the Plan is the result of extensive consultation undertaken to date. The BSL Plan is a 'live' document which will continue to be amended where appropriate and as progress is made.

6.5.7 Initial actions taken to implement the Plan have included currently working on a virtual campus tour in BSL to be promoted on the website and social media; ensuring BSL interpreters are available at Open Days, promoting the BSL online interpreting video relay service 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL'.

6.5.7 Within the University's Inclusion Week staff and students were offered the opportunity to participate in a session led by North East Sensory Services on supporting staff and students with hearing impairments. Additionally, the services of a registered interpreter were engaged to deliver a Learn Basic BSL session, which . Feedback TO BE ADDED

6.5.8 Impact

The BSL Action Plan is very recent, however the impact of the Plan will be measured by: monitoring the numbers of staff and students who use BSL, feedback from them about the support offered/received and changes in relation to the availability of interpreters in the north east of Scotland.

Action: Regular updates on the progress of the BSL Action Plan will be presented to Senior Management Team (Action 3.10a)

6.6 Equality and Diversity Research Group

6.6.1 Progress

In 2017 we reported the establishment of an Equality and Diversity Research Group within the University and led by the School of Psychology.

The current ongoing research projects are:

- A systematic review of existing research examining how bias might impact all aspects of higher education
- An investigation into stereotypes of academic disciplines and how these might influence degree subject choice

6.6.2 The University is collaborating with the Aberdeenshire Philosophy Café to run café-style discussion sessions in secondary schools across Aberdeenshire. It is intended that we provide a variety of café topics from academic staff from across the four named Gender Action Plan discipline, which includes psychology. While the topics do not have to address gender in their topic, it is hoped that the talks from each discipline will in some way help to challenge gender stereotypes of that subject.

6.6.3 These sessions take place within schools during school hours and typically involve an invited speaker, around thirty children, with the café organisers acting as discussion facilitators. The speaker gives a talk of around 20-minutes, the children then spend 10-minutes discussing some related questions in their groups (facilitated by the café organising team); this is followed by another brief presentation and some more group discussion. The café organisers are happy to consider any topics that might be of interest to the children (i.e., not restricted to topics that are philosophical in nature).

6.7 Mental Health and Wellbeing

6.7.1 Progress

In 2017 we reported that the University had launched a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Since then, significant progress has been made in implementing the strategy:

- 15 Staff Wellbeing Coordinators have been appointed to support colleagues with workplace concerns
- Mental Health Champions have been identified in all areas to support communication of initiatives across the University
- Mental Health Advisor appointed in Student Support Service to support students in crises and to provide guidance to staff who are supporting students
- Support for Study Policy implemented to enhance the support available for students requiring to take time away from their studies due to a mental health condition
- Two -day Scottish Mental Health First Aid training has been rolled out to over 250 staff and students including a recent training event at our Qatar campus
- Launched a half-day workshop
- Employee Assistance Programme launched offering 24 hour/7 days a week counselling and advice to staff
- Each School and Professional Services area has been offered a session on Mental Health and Wellbeing
- On-campus Counselling Service now focussed solely on students
- Wellbeing Days for staff and students have been held
- Health Coaching offered to staff and students
- The University is now a Disability Committed Employer
- An app is being developed to provide all support contact details for mental health and wellbeing for students. The app is being piloted currently and also contains strategies for coping with pressure and stress.

6.7.2 Impact

The most significant impact will be in relation to awareness of the support available. The support mechanisms have been promoted through Mental Health Champions, School Forum meetings, staff e-zine and during training sessions. 250 staff, students and external partners have attended Mental Health First Aid training. Although we are delighted that there has been such a significant interest in the training, we are conscious of the need to assess the impact the training has had. We have engaged with the mental health charity See Me to assess toolkits which could be used to assist us in measuring the impact of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy overall.

6.7.3 The Mental Health Advisor role has been crucial given that student numbers requesting in-person appointments with our Student Support advisers increased by 73% between 2015-16 and 2016-17, particularly amongst those seeking support for stress, anxiety and mental ill-health; in 2017-18 there had already been 152 referrals to the Mental Health Adviser. The number of clients accessing the Student Counselling Service has increased by 17% over the same time period. Some of this increase may be the result of increased promotion of our support services generally via our improved website and promotional material, our CLUEDUP campaign, Personal Tutors, and our Mental Health training for staff and students.

6.7.4 Our new Student Experience Team (SET) comprises the Infohub, the International Centre and Student Engagement Manager and supports all aspects of the student experience from the point that a student accepts their offer to study until they become Alumni. The Infohub is our in-person and online information and advice service for all students, for all student facing services; it also co-ordinates our Personal Tutoring and Students 4 Students (S4S) Schemes. The SET teams work closely with Aberdeen University Student Association on a variety of initiatives to further improve the student experience.

6.7.5 SET coordinates our award winning **CluedUp** campaign for student health and wellbeing which includes our CluedUp website, a student facing portal which signposts and directs students to up-to-date and relevant services, information, and resources (internal and external) which will support students in maintaining good health and wellbeing. Key features include student blogs and testimonials linked to key pressure points for students throughout the year, general tips on health and wellbeing, key contacts and interactive content. CluedUp is actively marketed via social media posts on topical issues, student blogs, and an awareness campaign including promotional material such as key fobs on all halls of residence keys. It articulates our commitment to Health and Wellbeing and enables us to monitor and track engagement. In the first two months of campaign re-launch, the website received over 4682 unique user page views compared with 451 for the same timeframe the previous year. Additionally social media blogs achieved a reach ranging from 2.8K on top tips for exam revision, to over 3K for a post sharing wellbeing tips, reaching and engaging more students than before.

6.7.6 Complimentary to our own provision, the Aberdeen University Student Association Student Advice Centre offers free and impartial advice and support to all students. AUSA staff and volunteers help students with issues such as private accommodation, academic appeals and complaints, part-time employment, employability advice, money and health.

Action: Monitor uptake of use of Wellbeing Coordinators and trends in issues to ascertain where further support may be required (Action 4.10)

Monitor the use of the Employee Assistance Programme and analyse trends where they occur in relation to equality issues/bullying/harassment (Action 4.9)

6.8 **Project Search**

6.8.1 Progress

We have been supporting young people with learning difficulties to gain work experience and jobs through Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH is a collaboration between the University of Aberdeen, Inspire, North East Scotland College and Skills Development Scotland, operated under a license from Project SEARCH DFN and funded by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire

Councils. The project is based on an international model which originated in the USA and is a one year Internship programme supporting 12 young people per year with additional needs to gain skills and experience to go on to employment.

- 6.8.2 The Interns are supported to undertake three internships/work placements over a one year period of study. The on-site team (which comprises the University Employer Partner Co-ordinator, the Senior Job Coach and Job Coach from Inspire and the Tutor from North East Scotland College), work together to identify work placement opportunities based on the student's experience, interests and skills assessment. The project has achieved the following local and national recognitions:

Foremost 'up and coming' site – Project SEARCH 2014 European Conference, Glasgow
'Raising Achievement' Award 2014 – Aberdeen Children's and Young People's Services
Green Gown Awards 2014 Finalist
Highest Employment Rate in Europe – Project SEARCH 2015 International Conference, Arizona

USA

First provider in the North East of Scotland to be accredited by Developing Young Workforce (North East) at Gold Level in November 2016

Further information can be found here: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/projectsearch-2431.php>

- 6.8.3 Impact

To date, the University has supported 57 interns. 34 interns have found and sustained jobs in the North East of Scotland. This is a tremendous achievement, particularly in view of the national employment rate of young people with a learning disability in Scotland which in 2018 was 7%. 2018 was Scotland's National Year of Young People and the programme celebrated this in an event which raised its profile with senior Council officials and education, health and business leaders across the North East. Due to the success of this event and the interest it generated in Project SEARCH, the governance structure of the programme was re-structured, with many of those who attended now actively engaged in the programme's Strategic Steering Group. In November 2015, the 'Interns Into Employment' toolkit was launched to support local businesses in employing Project SEARCH graduates. 'Meet the Intern' events encourage members of the local business community to engage with the project by becoming a Mentor to one of the interns or by delivering a workshop/seminar/talk to the interns on their area of expertise as part of the curriculum.

Action: Measure the impact of the Project SEARCH initiative on the interns and the staff supporting them across the University (Action 3.13)

7 COURT DIVERSITY

This section details the examples of mainstreaming equality which contribute to advancing equality through improving the diversity within the composition of Court and governing bodies. This is the fourth and newly published amendment to the 'needs' of the general duty contained in the Equality Act 2010.

- 7.1 Progress

The University has been actively seeking to increase the diversity profile of Court, its governing body, since 2015. In support of this, the Court has adopted a Statement of Intent on Diversity which sets out its commitment to its own membership reflecting the diverse nature of the University community insofar as is possible and practicable. The Statement was reviewed and updated in 2018 to include an enhanced commitment towards improving diversity and, in particular, achieving gender balance across all categories of membership on Court rather than just those members appointed by Court itself.

- 7.1.1 The Court has in 2018 achieved gender balance in its appointed independent membership and is, therefore, consistent with the objectives of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act. The Court is also part of the Committee of Scottish Chairs' '40:40:20' policy commitment.

- 7.1.2 In July 2017 a new composition of the Court was formally approved by the Privy Council. In addition to compliance with the requirements of the Higher Education (Governance) Scotland Act 2016, the need to achieve gender balance and greater diversity in the overall membership of Court was a key principle underpinning the proposals. The new composition increases the proportion of the membership appointed by Court to 48% and will better enable the Court to address gender balance and diversity.
- 7.1.3 In implementing the proposals and the transition to the new composition, the achievement of improved gender balance and greater diversity was a key consideration. As just under 50% of the Court's members are elected or appointed by bodies other than the Court, it, therefore, routinely brings the Statement of Intent on Diversity to the attention of those bodies or individuals who either elect or appoint members. Overall, the Court's gender balance has improved from 29% female 71% male in 2016, to 44% female 56% male in 2018.
- 7.1.4 The collation of equality monitoring data on Court members is undertaken to allow baseline reporting against all protected characteristics. In 2017 three vacancies for independent members of Court arose, with two women and one man being appointed, thus providing for gender balance across the 12 independent appointed members. In support of recruitment processes the University undertakes a number of measures to seek to increase awareness of the positions among under-represented groups, but with a particular focus on women. Those measures included:
- Equality Impact Assessments of the role description, person specification and advertisement were undertaken. Text was included in the advertisement of the roles to emphasise the diversity of the University community and the Court's wish to encourage applications from women and other under-represented groups
 - Increasing the range of advertising networks used beyond mainstream print media to professional networks for women and other under-represented groups. These have included:
 - Public Appointments Scotland;
 - Women on Boards;
 - Non-Executive Directors;
 - Diversity Network Sites (Ethnic Jobsite, Asian Jobsite, Diversity Jobsite, LGBT Jobsite, Disability Network and Disability Jobsite); and
 - Communications to staff, students and alumni and inviting nominations for consideration;
 - The proactive identification of potential female candidates from the University's own network of contacts.

- 7.1.5 The University Court has a composition of 25. The following figures are based on the membership in office as at the following dates since 2017:

Table 6: Gender profile of Court 2017 and 2018

	July 2017* Composition of 28	July 2018 Composition of 25
Men	18	14
Women	10	11
% of membership	64% Male 36% Female	56% Male 44% Female

*Note: On 19 July 2017 the Court's composition changed and reduced from 28 to 25 members. The data given for 2017 is as at 18 July, this being the last day during which the composition of Court in operation across 2016/17 was in force.

The table demonstrates that 44% of Court's membership is female. This has increased from 29% in 2016, the date of the last PSED report.

Action: Continue to carry out equality monitoring of Court Membership, reporting to University Management Group (UMG) and Court on progress towards targets (Action 4.4)

8 EQUALITY OUTCOMES

- 8.1 The University's first set of Equality Outcomes were developed in 2013. Since then, the Outcomes have evolved through consultation and evidence-gathering. The Outcomes were fully reviewed in 2017 and are currently:

Outcome 1

The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University's activities, both strategically and operationally;

Outcome 2

Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality;

Outcome 3

The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies;

Outcome 4

The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students feel respected and valued;

Our Equality Outcomes cover all of the equality protected characteristics and we have developed a detailed action plan for continuing to meet the Equality Outcomes.

- 8.2 The progress made, in the last two years, in relation to furthering the Equality Outcomes can be found below.

Outcome 1

The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University's activities, both strategically and operationally;

Activity	Date
A participative exercise for developing the University's next Strategic Plan has commenced with Inclusion as one of the main pillars of the consultation	Feb 2019 – Feb 2020
Involvement of the University in the Advance HE project to develop a toolkit for equality impact assessing strategic documents has led to a review of the University's equality and diversity toolkit	Commenced 2018 and ongoing

All Schools have received Unconscious Bias training and Professional services staff have had opportunities to attend Unconscious Bias training, particularly within Inclusion Week – Maria to provide numbers	ongoing
---	---------

Outcome 2

Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality;

Progress	Date
Staff are required to complete mandatory Equality and Diversity training – uptake has increased by 20% since 2017	ongoing
Staff involved in recruitment and selection are required to complete specific equality training	ongoing
Staff survey indicates an increased level of awareness in relation to equality matters	November 2018
250 staff and students have attended Mental Health First Aid training - 151 have been trained since 2017	As at February 2019
Equality and diversity training has been rolled out to our campus in Doha, Qatar	December 2018
Mental Health First Aid training has been delivered to colleagues based in our campus in Qatar	February 2019
The Diversity section of the 2-Day New Lecturers Programme has been revised to include case studies and practical guidance for new members of staff	September 2018

Outcome 3

The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies;

Progress	Date
Employee Assistance Programme has been introduced to support staff on a 24 hour/7 days a week basis with telephone counselling	Implemented 2017
Mental Health Adviser appointed in Student Support – impact has been significant	Implemented 2017
Diversity Calendar developed and launched to raise awareness of equality dates and events so that we can aim to be as inclusive as possible when organising University events/communications https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/2019%20Diversity%20Calendar.pdf	Launched January 2019
Senior Women’s Network held two sessions in 2018 and 2019 aimed at supporting staff who wish to apply for promotion. 15 colleagues attended, and feedback was positive.	Feb 2018 and Feb 2019
British Sign language Action Plan developed and implemented following extensive consultation both within and external to the University	October 2018
Staff Wellbeing Coordinator role was created. 17 members of staff were selected and trained to fulfil the role.	Implemented 2017
International Women’s Day conferences continue to be successful	Annually in March
Significant work has been undertaken to improve the support available to staff and students who have experienced gender-based violence and to implement the Equally Safe In HE Toolkit	Commenced work in Jan 2018
The University is now part of a European Universities Network which was generated through a desire to put tolerance and inclusiveness at the heart of all of the 9 institutions in the network. This has resulted in positive connections and a sharing of ideas.	Joined 2016 with biannual meetings
Induction Fayre introduced which incorporates information about the equality networks	2017
The University became an Accredited Living Wage Employer in August 2015 and as part of this commitment it continues to pay all staff (including contractors) the Living Wage rates. The Living Wage is calculated based on	2015 to date

the cost of living and the 2018/19 rate is £9 per hour. The LW hourly rates apply to the lower graded posts, majority of which are occupied by females. Application of the LW rates is positive for staff as we offer a higher rate of pay than the government's 'National Living Wage' of £7.83 per hour	
---	--

Outcome 4

The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students feel respected and valued;

Progress	Date
The University held an Inclusion Week in March 2019 offering a variety of opportunities for staff, students and the public to engage with equality and to express their views.	4-8 March 2019
The University's equality networks have become integral to decision-making.	ongoing
New equality network groups have been created – Parents Network and Menopause Network	2016
University is now a Disability Confident Committed Employer highlighting the University's commitment to disability equality	Awarded 2017
University values were developed through the Employee Engagement Working Group, with input from the University's equality networks. The values are Integrity, Communication, Respect, Inclusion. These have been promoted through posters/staff e-zine/plasma screens. The next step is to provide communication around the practical application of the values e.g. within the context of meetings	2017

9 STAFF AND STUDENT INFORMATION

- 9.1 Data for 2017 and 2018 are available in Appendix 3.
- 9.2 We reported in 2017 that a second data cleansing exercise would be undertaken in 2017, following a similar exercise in 2015. This was undertaken to ensure that the data presented is as accurate as possible.
- 9.3 Since the report in 2017, our reporting of data has been modified to take account of the re-structure which means that data is now reported by School rather than College.
- 9.4 There are relatively few significant changes in the data since 2017.
- 9.5 As reported in 2017, the proportion of staff under the age of 25 is increasing year-on-year.
- 9.6 The gender figures remain relatively stable, demonstrating that in some schools we are required to research more in relation to the barriers/societal stereotyping for women or men and the factors affecting the progression of the under-represented gender.
- 9.7 The data indicates that the proportion of staff with a disability has been steadily increasing over the previous 4 years and the proportion refusing to provide the information has been decreasing.
- 9.8 In relation to ethnicity since 2015 the proportion of staff identifying as Asian has increased by 2%.
- 9.9 The proportion of Black staff has increased by 1% overall since 2015, however, the specific school data indicates that the Business School has seen an increase of 6% and between 2017 and 2018 the Law School has seen an increase of 2%.
- 9.10 In relation to sexual orientation, we have been able to more accurately present the data as the proportion of staff for whom no information is held has reduced by 10 % since 2015.

- 9.11 The proportion of part-time staff has increased from 28.7% in 2015 to 46.3% in 2018. This may be due to the more flexible approach the University takes to support parents/cares and work/life balance. The introduction of the 9-day fortnight in 2017 has supported full-time colleagues to rearrange their working hours to achieve a working pattern which supports other commitments.
- 9.12 In relation to religious beliefs, the University continues to welcome staff with a wide range of beliefs. We now have information on the religious beliefs of 85% of staff, compared to 75% of staff in 2015.
- 9.13 The University's first Staff Survey for four years was undertaken in late 2018. There was a response rate of 39%. The key areas surveyed were Your Job, Workload, Pressure and Stress, Treatment of Employees, Management of People, Communication, Leadership and Direction, Training and Career Development, Pay, Benefits and Working Conditions. The results of the survey have recently been released to all staff to ensure transparency and to open conversations regarding how the University can tackle some of the challenges raised in the survey.
- 9.14 The survey covered some new areas and it was a revised format, so for some questions there is no direct comparator. Equality and mental health were part of the survey and the results have been analysed by gender (we may be able to analyse them by other protected characteristics in due course).
- 72.9% (an increase of 25%) stated that they have the opportunity to work flexible in their job
 - 69.4% stated they had good mental wellbeing (12.8% disagreed)
 - 73.9% felt that if they were unfairly treated they could talk to someone about it in the University
 - 79.1% indicated that they are not subject to discrimination at work (15.7% were neutral and 5.2% disagreed)
 - 94.3% indicated they were not subject to bullying at work, or were neutral about the question
- 9.15 The full results are currently being presented to groups of staff across the University and will include the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity. Actions to address some of the points are being developed and we will be able to report on the progress in our 2021 report.
- 9.16 The University has also been analysing the data contained in Appendix xx to ascertain whether there are any cultural barriers to progression in the University as part of a wider exercise looking at the development of staff. The analysis has so far shown that there is no conclusive evidence that cultural barriers to progression exist. However, the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity has requested to review the data on an annual basis to ensure that all progression opportunities in the University are accessible to all.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The University is pleased to have the opportunity to showcase the work undertaken and planned on diversity and inclusion. This area of work continues to be a strategic priority and links directly to the University's overall founding mission to be "open to all".
- 10.2 There has been a real focus on tackling issues evidenced by the data such as implementing the Gender Action Plan and Athena SWAN activity. We have also strengthened our equality networks to provide as many options as possible for staff to become involved in shaping and directing policy development. We have implemented feedback processes so that we can learn what is most effective and engaging for staff.
- 10.3 Our Inclusion Week aimed to bring staff, students and the local community together to celebrate, discuss and improve diversity on campus. We aimed to include all three of our campuses (Old Aberdeen, Foresterhill and Qatar) to engage our whole community. Following extremely positive feedback we will continue to offer events and workshops for the community to engage with.

- 10.4 We have continues to implement our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and this will be an ongoing focus to ensure as far as possible that staff and students:
- Know where to get support
 - Receive the support required in a timely and effective manner
 - Are able to maintain a work/life balance so that the University is an effective environment for work and study
- 10.5 The implementation of the Equally Safe in HE Toolkit is central to our commitment to working in partnership with the Aberdeen University Student Association to support staff or students who experience gender-based violence and to action initiatives which aim to prevent such incidents occurring on campus.
- 10.6 The legal imperatives and requirements drive diversity and inclusion work, however, there is a strong commitment at the University of Aberdeen to strive to move beyond legal compliance and to progress equality and inclusiveness across all of the protected characteristics through constructive dialogue and understanding intersectional barriers.

Appendix 1: Inclusion Week promotional material

Appendix 2: Equality Outcomes Action Plan 2017 – 2021

Appendix3: Staff and Student Profile Data 2017 - 2018

Appendix 1: Example of Promotional Material for Inclusion Week 4-8 March 2019

INCLUSION WEEK

4-8 March

1495 UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

A week-long programme of events

Celebrating diversity

www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/equality-and-diversity-277.php

✉ janine.chalmers@abdn.ac.uk
☎ 01224 273883

In partnership with

UNISON the public service union
unite the UNION
UCU Universities and Colleges Union
ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Booking required

University of Aberdeen Inclusion Week: Programme

<p>Mon 4 Mar 10.45am-12pm</p> <p>Principals Welcome and introduction of keynote speaker - Charlie Martin Linklater Rooms University of Aberdeen Booking required</p>	<p>Wed 6 Mar 1-2.30pm</p> <p>Being Conscious about Your Unconscious Bias Room 224 Sir Duncan Rice Library University of Aberdeen Booking required</p>
<p>Mon 4 Mar 12-2pm</p> <p>Around the World in Many Faiths Linklater Rooms University of Aberdeen Drop-in anytime</p>	<p>Wed 6 Mar 1-3pm</p> <p>Open to All - Accessible Sports Day King's Pavilion/Pitch University of Aberdeen No booking required</p>
<p>Mon 4 Mar 12-2pm</p> <p>Meeting the needs of students and staff with hearing impairments Court Room University Office Booking required</p>	<p>Wed 6 Mar 6-7pm</p> <p>Beyond Buzz: Words and Action Plans: Fighting for a liberated world New King's 14 University of Aberdeen Booking required</p>
<p>Tues 5 Mar 10-11am</p> <p>Mindfulness Session IMS Level 7, Foresterhill Campus Booking required</p>	<p>Thur 7 Mar 9-4pm</p> <p>Postgraduate Research School Wellbeing Day Old Aberdeen and Aberdeen Sports Village Booking required</p>
<p>Tues 5 Mar 11.30am-12.45pm</p> <p>When life throws you a Curveball...Success and Moving On IMS Level 7, Foresterhill Campus Booking required</p>	<p>Thur 7 Mar 9.30-10.15am</p> <p>Mental health in academia: a personal reflection by Dr Malcolm Harvey Bishop's Table, Crombie Hall of Residence Booking required</p>
<p>Tues 5 Mar 3-4pm</p> <p>Learn the Basics - British Sign Language Workshop Court Room University Office Booking required</p>	<p>Thur 7 Mar 12-1pm</p> <p>Workout for your mind with ASV staff NK10, New King's Old Aberdeen Booking required</p>
<p>Wed 6 Mar 10.30-11.30am</p> <p>Friendship House Coffee Break Linklater Rooms University of Aberdeen Booking required</p>	<p>Thur 7 Mar 12.30-1.30pm</p> <p>Mindfulness Session Room 224 Sir Duncan Rice Library University of Aberdeen Booking required</p>
<p>Wed 6 Mar 11.30am-12.30pm</p> <p>World Café Networking - hints /tips for achieving goals Linklater Rooms University of Aberdeen Booking required</p>	<p>Thur 7 Mar 12.30-1.30pm</p> <p>EqualTEA - "Use Your Voice" Court Room University Office University of Aberdeen Booking required</p>