ACTIVATE LEARNING

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT
2022/23

Group members
Colleges
- Banbury and Bicester College
- Bracknell and Wokingham College
- City of Oxford College
- Farnham Sixth Form College
- Guildford College
- Merrist Wood College
- Reading College
- The Oxford Partnership colleges (Saudi Arabia)

Schools
- The Bicester School
- Bicester Technology Studio
- Theale Green School
- UTC Heathrow
- UTC Oxfordshire
- UTC Reading
- UTC Swindon

Training
- Activate Apprenticeships
- Activate Business School

OUR COMMITMENT AND INTENT

Activate Learning is on an ambitious mission to transform lives through learning, by enabling opportunities, creating life chances, and generating prosperity for individuals and communities. In achieving this mission, Activate Learning is committed to advancing equality of opportunity, respecting and celebrating difference, eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and fostering good relations.

The Learning Philosophy and our Values underpin equality, diversity, and inclusion. We believe that everyone has the capacity and ability to learn and develop and do so best when they feel emotionally secure and when they work in a safe environment. We acknowledge this for all our students and staff and pay particular attention to those groups who may be marginalised due to protected characteristics.

We aim to promote a culture of equitable opportunity for staff and students across Faculties, Services, Teams and Departments and strive to provide a safe, professional, accessible environment; delivering services, education and progression opportunities that are inclusive and allow individuals from all walks of life to access free from prejudice and/or discrimination.

Overview of Equality Legislation

The general equality duty as detailed in the Equality Act 2010 requires us to give due regard 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;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

VISION AND MISSION

- **Consistency** means that we deliver consistently high 'quality' and 'relevant' education provision wherever we serve.

- **Community** means that we are a complex community of communities (both internal and external) and that we strive to deliver as much social and economic value as possible to our communities.

- **Collaboration** means that we work well with civic, education and community partners and employers to achieve our vision and mission.

Our Learning Philosophy

The Activate Learning philosophy provides a common set of values and language for learning across our colleges and workplaces. It helps us collaborate and achieve success for our learners, our people and the employers and communities we serve. We believe anyone is capable of great things if they can learn to believe in themselves. Our learning philosophy shows how hard work, persistence, the right incentives and a supportive and safe environment, can change the way we learn and develop highly employable talent for our own organisation, our local communities and the employer partners we work with.

Our values

Our aspiration is for everyone to be the best they can be.

We fuel confidence and drive ambition in both our students and our employees alike and develop the strength, confidence and agility to meet the demands of tomorrow, to make the most of their future, and to succeed.

- We help people to embrace a positive mindset and to grow more confident through learning.
- We inspire people to take charge and actively shape their lives and futures.
- We encourage people to believe in themselves and to believe in others.
- We ignite positive energy in people, enabling them to switch-on, to be present, engaged and active in all their dealings.
- We value energised people who will stand-up, speak-up, participate and contribute, people who will make a positive and significant impact through their actions.
- We encourage and empower people to take responsibility. Responsibility prompts engagement, engagement drives progress.
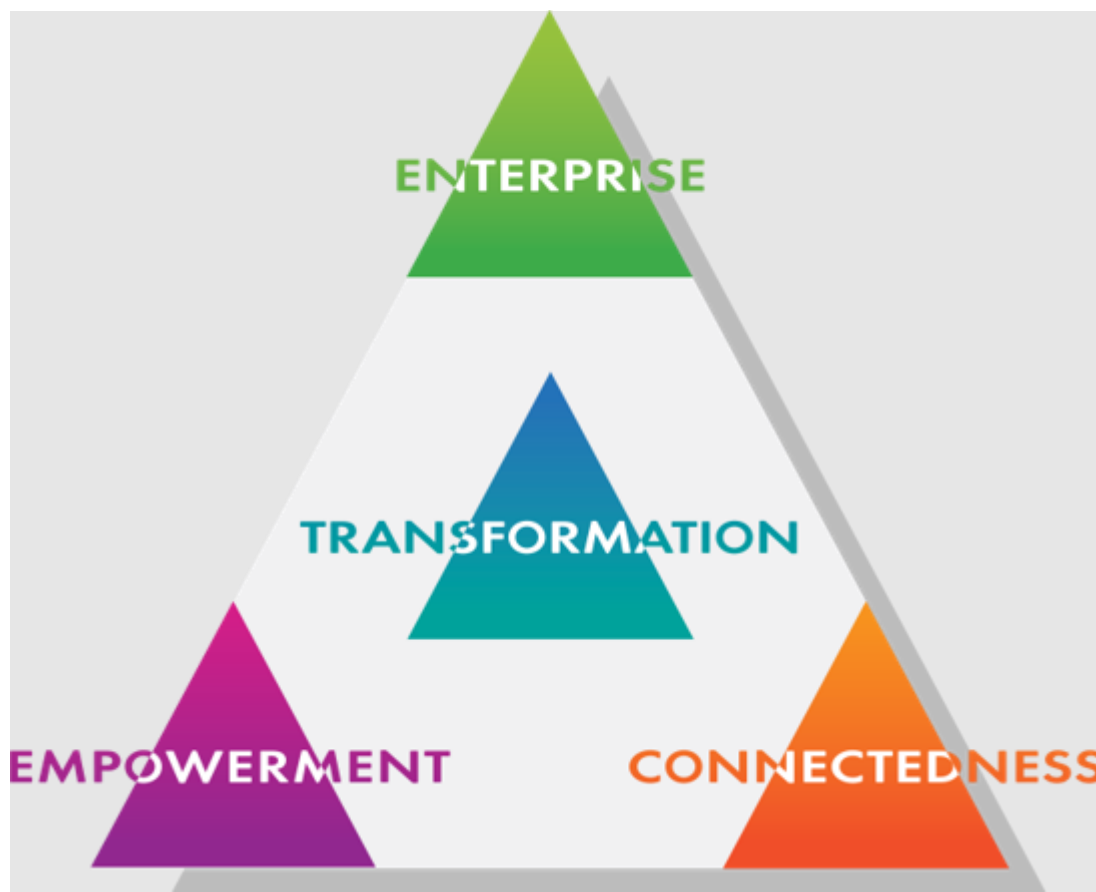
OUR ATTRIBUTES

Our employer co-created attributes serve as the underpinning framework for our Learning Philosophy led culture and articulates the behaviours that we aspire to demonstrate and aim to develop.

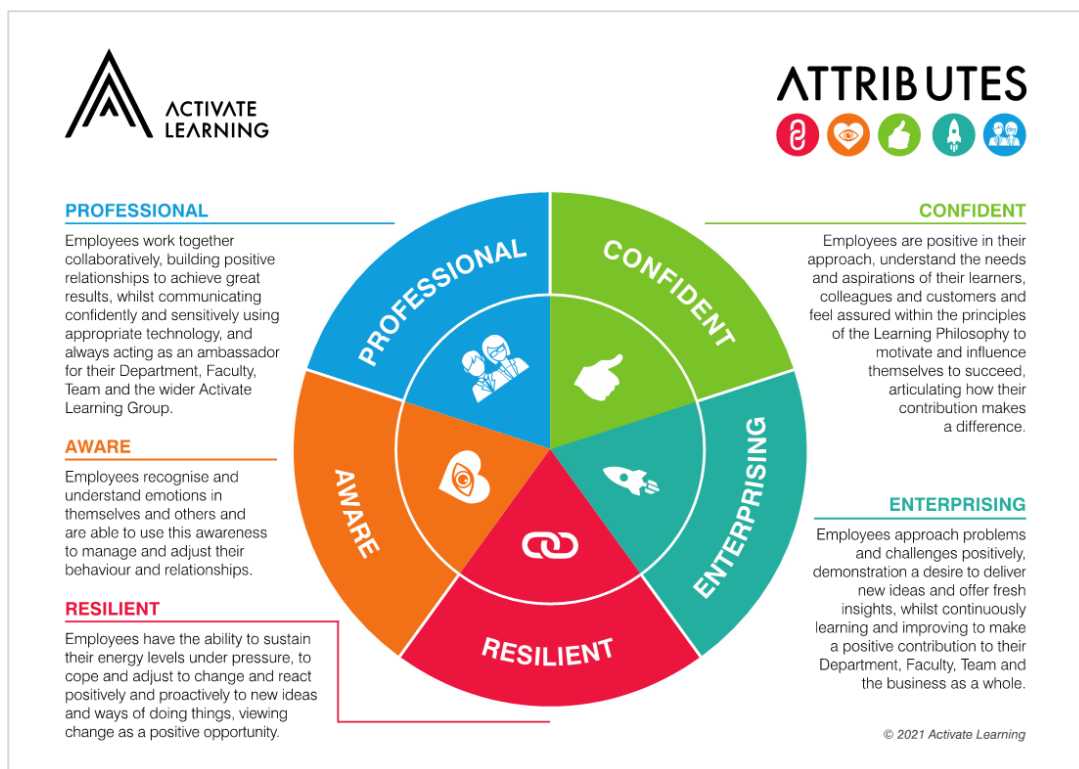## Our Leadership attributes and behaviours

ΛCTIVATE LEARNING

OUR LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES AND BEHAVIOURS
provide purpose and direction

Managers and leaders understand and support Activate Learning's long-term mission, vision and goals and communicate this enthusiastically in a clear and compelling way, always putting students and their learning at the heart of everything we do.

Managers and leaders work collaboratively both internally and externally and act as an ambassador for the Department, Faculty, Team and the Activate Learning Group.

Managers and leaders understand the needs and aspirations of their staff and feel assured to use this knowledge within the principles of the Learning Philosophy to motivate and influence them to succeed, articulating how their contribution makes a difference.

Managers and leaders recognise and understand emotions in themselves and others and are able to use this awareness to manage and adjust their behaviour and relationships.

Managers and leaders focus on Activate Learning Group outcomes and work on behalf of the whole Group, understanding the business and commercial environment of the organisation in which the department, Faculty and team operates.

Managers and leaders have the ability to sustain their energy levels under pressure, to cope and adapt to change and react positively and proactively to new ideas and ways of doing things, viewing change as a positive opportunity.

Our Staff attributes and behaviours

Our Learner Attributes

Our aim is to prepare our students for both the present and a vastly different future than what exists today. For many years employers have been stating that qualifications alone do not make someone employable, and they continuously urge education establishments to give equal focus to the development of attributes critical for sustained success in employment.

Through wide ranging consultation with stakeholders and several iterations we have agreed on five core attributes to develop and celebrate. The attributes are Resilient, Aware, Confident, Enterprising, and Professional.

Naming the attributes is one thing but through our approach to teaching and learning, we give them meaning and build learners understanding about their importance and relevance. Attributes are brought to a learners' conscious level through defining the features and behaviours associated with them so that they can identify what the attribute looks like, sounds like and feels like. Learners develop their understanding over time through the consistent use of this common language and understanding starting from day one of their learning journey with us.

OUR EDI AMBITION AND DRIVERS

We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity, respecting and celebrating difference, eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and fostering good relations between all who work or learn at, or use the services of Activate Learning. We aim to create and maintain a working and learning environment in which everyone can participate fully, give of their best and achieve their full potential in a climate free from discrimination or harassment. We recognise that everyone has a right to equality of opportunity irrespective of race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, nationality, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, or socio-economic status, background, or class. Equality and diversity is central to all that we do, and fundamental to our mission and values.

EDI Committee

To ensure full compliance with the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee has oversight of organisational performance. The committee is chaired by the DCEO and is made up of representatives from the key areas across the organisation and ensures that a rigorous approach is taken to assess organisational performance, identify EDI objectives, implement improvements and report on the progress against objectives. A link Governor attends the committee and provides governance oversight of the work and progress of the committee. Group members annually set EDI objectives that are approved, implemented and reported on.

EDI Objectives 2022/23

- Effectively build on the work achieved through our commitment to the national mental health charter and deliver a 'whole organisation approach' to Mental Health through the implementation and monitoring of the Activate Learning Mental Health Strategy and action plan.

- Build on phase 1 of trauma informed practice (trauma awareness) and introduce phase 2 (trauma skilled) through a whole organisation focus, training and support to impact staff and student wellbeing and success.

- Continue to raise awareness of sexual harassment, abuse and violence for all stakeholders by extending networks, external partnerships and providing regular updates and training.

- Draw from sector expertise, innovate and co-create with our colleagues' new ways to enhance the physical, mental, and financial wellbeing of our workforce and measure the impact through employee feedback.

- Identify key priorities/activities to embed a culture of inclusion and implement through a rolling programme of training across faculty and group services. Our progress will be measured through the staff survey.

- Increase the diversity profile of our senior leadership groups to show an improving trend against the current profile.

OUR PROGRESS AGAINST OUR EDI OBJECTIVES

Effectively build on the work achieved through our commitment to the national mental health charter and deliver a 'whole organisation approach' to Mental Health through the implementation and monitoring of the Activate Learning Mental Health Strategy and action plan.

The Mental Health Strategy was launched in May 2022. Activate Learning is committed to building capability and capacity in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all employees, learners, and stakeholders by creating a 'whole organisation approach' applied consistently and comprehensively. Mental health support is part of our strategic approach to ensuring a consistently high quality of education across our organisation and assuring economic sustainability. We believe mental health and wellbeing plays an important part in contributing to success and sustainability in meeting our institutional goals and objectives as well as improved attainment, attendance, reductions in behavioural challenges and happier, more confident, and resilient students and staff.

The whole organisation approach is monitored by the leadership team and to date we have delivered on running workshops, activities and events centred around mental health for staff, students and other stakeholders.

Our current areas of success are:

- Support Available for All – students and staff at Activate Learning have access to mental health support when required. For students this is the Counselling service, the Safeguarding team and access to the FIKA App, as well as trained staff within Faculty. For employees this is through; the Employee Assistance Program, FIKA App, Everymind App, internal coaches, counsellors, safeguarding leads and mental health first aiders, of whom we have 60 across the Group.

- Culture of Wellbeing and Mental Health – The organisation value wellbeing immensely and this is evident in the way in which wellbeing is discussed so regularly and openly. World Mental Health Day and Mental Health Awareness Week are celebrated across the organisation.

- The organisation has built links with mental health organisations such as CAHMS, Samaritans and Mind, to provide support in more specialist areas of mental wellbeing for staff and students. There is the additional offer of mental health resources on the Wellbeing SharePoint Page, access to Employee Counselling and use of the FIKA app.

- The Group introduced the 'Mental Health Matters here' essential training for staff as part of the CPD Day in January 2023. This module now forms part of our essential training for all staff.

The Mental Health Strategy is monitored through the organisation's Leadership team.

Build on phase 1 of trauma informed practice (trauma awareness) and introduce phase 2 (trauma skilled) through a whole organisation focus, training and support to impact staff and student wellbeing and success.

Activate Learning is committed to supporting students who suffer with trauma or mental health problems which may become a barrier to learning. Our aim is to develop relationships which heal minds, brains and bodies.

Following the introduction of 'Becoming Trauma Informed' training, phase 2 of this training, Becoming Trauma Skilled' was introduced as part of the staff CPD Day in January 2023. Becoming Trauma Informed is mandatory training for all new members of staff.

Continue to raise awareness of sexual harassment, abuse and violence for all stakeholders by extending networks, external partnerships and providing regular updates and training.

Our aim is to create a culture where sexual harassment and sexual abuse, off and online are not tolerated, and where we are able to identify issues and intervene early to better protect our learners. Over the past year, we:

- Launched the 'Stand up, speak out campaign' to encourage staff and students to take action against bullying, harassment, and other forms of unacceptable behaviour that they may experience or witness
- Developed an Active Bystander workshop to support staff in the intervention and de-escalation of negative behaviour on campus
- Delivered CPD training sessions, facilitated by the designated safeguarding leads, focussed on how to identify and report instances of suspected child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Delivered multiple trauma-informed training sessions for staff as part of the organisation's CPD day
- Developed our dedicated SharePoint resources with information and guidance for students about sex and consent, in addition to PSHE resources for teachers about sex and consent.

Draw from sector expertise, innovate and co-create with our colleagues' new ways to enhance the physical, mental, and financial wellbeing of our workforce and measure the impact through employee feedback.

We refreshed our wellbeing Strategy to gain clarity on our strategic intent and focuss our activity and initiatives on our wellbeing pillars.

During 2022/23 we made the following progress:
- Significant cost-of-living Award
- Increase mileage allowance for all to 45p per mile
- Strong focus on internal communications
- Enhanced physical fitness facilities, with free access to Gyms at City of Oxford College and Reading College
- New monthly reward and recognition – Learning Philosophy Champions Award.
- New agile working spaces in Bracknell & Wokingham College, Guildford College and Banbury College.
- We kept our wellbeing sharepoint reviewed and updated with relevant resources for staff in response to specific themes and priorities.
  - Trained additional Mental Health First Aiders to bring our complement up to 60 across the group.
  - Delivered 33 wellbeing themed sessions attended by 337 employees.
  - 30+ of our male members of staff took part in our Movember, growing moustaches and joining weekly mo-ment men's health calls. The team raised over £2300 for the Movember charity.
  - We signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge and committed to:
    - Recognising that the menopause can be an issue in the workplace and women need support.
    - Talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause.
    - Actively supporting and informing employees affected by the menopause.

Identify key priorities/activities to embed a culture of inclusion and implement through a rolling programme of training across faculty and group services. Our progress will be measured through the staff survey.

Over the past year we have made the following progress:
- Annual diversity and inclusion calendar was launched to celebrate, promote and raise awareness of the religious festivals, cultural events, and cultural awareness campaigns relevant to our staff and students.
- Providing informative diversity and inclusion training for all staff to improve cultural sensitivity and awareness within the organisation. This included training around the following topics:
  - Micro-Aggressions
  - Exploring our Unconscious Biases
  - LGBTQ+Allyship
  - Understanding Racism
  - Understanding Neurodiversity and Neurodiversity in the Workplace
  - Understanding Ramadan
  - Inclusive Language
  - International Womens' Day
  - Pride Month
  - Black History Month
- Kept our EDI SharePoint under review, adding relevant information, guides, and resources to support staff on their personal inclusion journey.
- We signed the Armed Forces Covenant to pledge our commitment to the families of our military personnel and achieved our Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award.

Increase the diversity profile of our senior leadership groups to show an improving trend against the current profile.

Whilst the aspiration has been to increase the diversity profile of our senior leadership groups, the profile of diversity has remained unchanged from the previous year.

Management by Gender

	Male	Female
2021/22	45%	55%
2022/23	47%	53%

Management by age

	16-21	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65	66+
2021/22	-	3%	21%	34%	37%	5%	-
2022/23	-	3%	23%	31%	31%	12.4%	-

Management by Ethnic origin

Ethnic origin	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other Ethnic Group	Not known
2021/22	3%	2%	1%	59%	2%	33%
2022/23	2%	2%	1%	55%	2%	38%

We recognise that we have more to do in achieving this objective if we are to increase the diversity profile.

STAFFING PROFILE 2022/23

Staff by gender

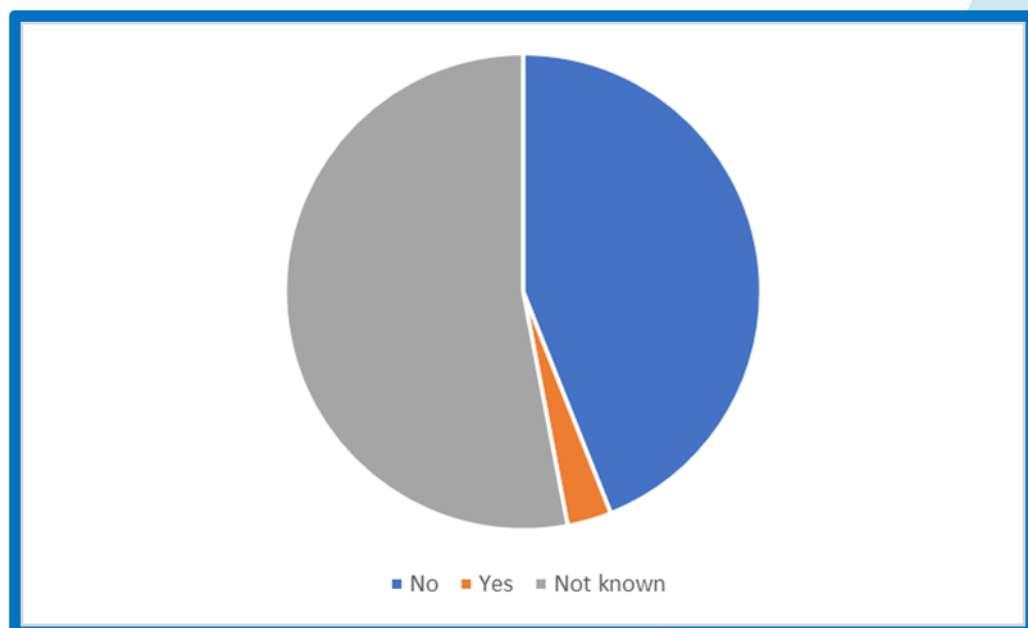| Year	Governors	Management	Business Support	Teachers	Total
2021/22	Female 50% Male 50%	Female 55% Male 45%	Female 73% Male 27%	Female 69% Male 31%	Female 70% Male 30%
2022/23	Female 50% Male 50%	Female 53% Male 47%	Female 70% Male 30%	Female 70% Male 30%	Female 70% Male 30%

Staff by age

Year	Staff Group	16-21	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65	66+
2021/22	Governors	0%	0%	20%	13%	13%	27%	27%
2022/23	Governors	0%	0%	17%	8%	8%	26%	41%
2021/22	Management	0%	3%	21%	34%	37%	5%	0%
2022/23	Management	0	3%	23%	31%	31%	12%	0%
2021/22	Business Support	6%	19%	19%	18%	22%	10%	6%
2022/23	Business Support	0	20%	22%	23%	22%	11%	2%
2021/23	Teachers	1%	7%	21%	25%	31%	13%	3%
2022/23	Teachers	1%	9%	26%	24%	27%	12%	1%

Staff by ethnicity

Year	Ethnic origin	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other Ethnic Group	Not known
2021/22	Governors	0%	7%	0%	93%	0%	0%
2022/23	Governors	5.5%	5.5%	0%	89%	0%	-
2021/22	Management	3%	2%	1%	59%	2%	47%
2022/23	Management	2%	2%	1%	55%	2%	38%
2021/22	Business Support	2%	2%	2%	45%	2%	47%
2022/23	Business Support	2%	2%	2%	42%	2%	50%
2021/22	Teachers	3%	2%	1%	44%	2%	48%
2022/23	Teachers	3%	2%	1%	40%	1%	53%

Staff by Disability

Staff by sexual orientation

Pie chart showing: Bisexual 2%, Gay 1%, Heterosexual 41%, Lesbian 1%, Prefer not to say 3%, Not known 52%

Legend: Bisexual, Gay, Heterosexual, Lesbian, Prefer not to say, Not known
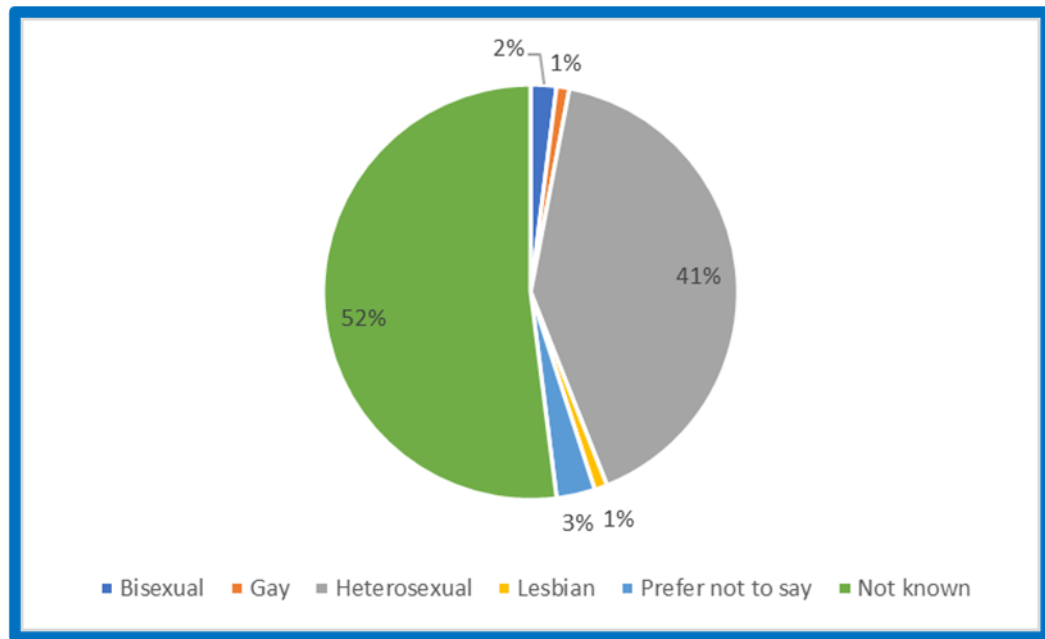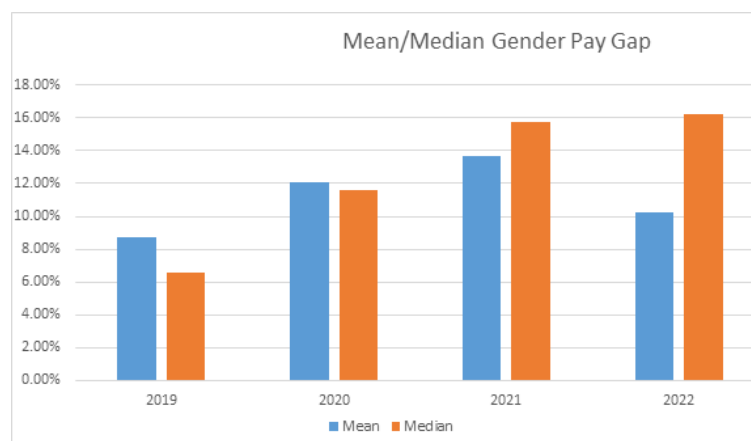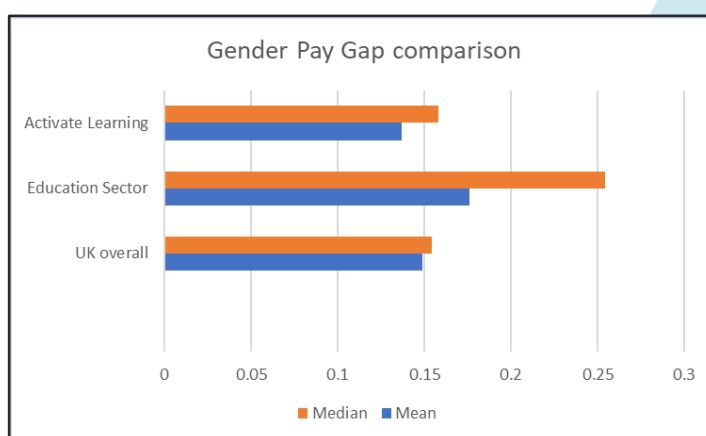
GENDER PAY GAP

Activate Learning, in line with many FE providers, has more female employees. Whilst we have seen a reduction in our mean gender pay gap of 3.4% compared to last year, the median gender pay gap has shown an increase year on year over the past 3 years, which is linked to the balance of female staff compared to male staff across the four pay bands. Whilst we have a greater proportion of female staff in the whole organisation, 79.78% of our workforce in the lower quartiles are female. This has increased since 2020.

This does not mean that the Group underpays its female staff. Activate Learning supports fair reward and recognition of all staff irrespective of gender. In line with the Education sector, we provide a range of flexible working patterns to suit the work/life balance of employees. At Activate Learning, a greater number of female staff have taken advantage of this flexibility, choosing to work less hours or taking on term time only contracts which has an impact on Gender Pay reporting calculations.

The education sector is cited as having the largest gender pay gap of any sector with 25.4% median and 17.6% mean for all employees in favour of males. The comparison shows that the Activate Learning median is close to the national median gender pay gap and well below that of the education sector with the mean gender pay gap tracking below both the national and education sector averages.

The Group is committed to closing the gender pay gap. The following are some of the actions we will pursue to do this.

Recruitment Practices

- Role specifications are reviewed to ensure that there is no unintended gender bias and wherever possible consider flexible working arrangements.
- Through our Applicant Tracking System, Vacancy Filler, the Talent Team are able to routinely monitor the shortlisting and hiring data to ensure that people are interviewed on the basis of their skills and ability to deliver in their role and not on the basis of any unconscious bias
- We promote the flexible and family friendly benefits on offer to candidates.
- We have implemented a program of training for managers on recruiting and selecting diverse talent and exploring unconscious bias to ensure that gender bias is removed from our talent acquisition processes.
- We provide access to internal coaches and mentors so that we can allocate tailored and flexible support to employees to develop their careers and progress within Activate Learning.
- We are ensuring all senior leadership roles have gender-balanced interview panels.
- Through our 'Work with Us' page we use our own employees as role models to promote our inclusive culture and the employment opportunities at Activate Learning.

Employee Progression and Development

- We advertise all vacant roles across our internal network, enhancing visibility of career progression opportunities and promoting our 'Transform your Career' value proposition.
- We offer funding to staff to support their professional development, enabling them to build their skills, knowledge and confidence to progress.
- We have implemented Leadership and Management development pathways, including an Aspiring Managers Programme, with increased access for women to develop leadership and management capability for internal progression opportunities.
- We have a comprehensive Learning and Development programme on offer, including access to on-line personal development opportunities to enable employees to enhance their skills and confidence.
- We offer internal coaching and mentoring for employees to develop their own resourcefulness in a range of work-related situations.

Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing

- We have a programme of diversity and inclusion themed development sessions available to raise awareness, remove bias and promote equality of opportunity, available for all levels of employee.
- Through our wellbeing initiative, employees are encouraged to focus on their work life balance and wellbeing at work with access to a variety of resources and workshops to support them.
- We have established an employee resource group to support employees through maternity and paternity, including a return-to-work buddy scheme

Working practices

- We offer enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption schemes and will continue to promote these along with other flexible and family friendly benefits that are on offer.
- We offer a generous annual leave entitlement.
- We consider flexible ways of working, including part-time and casual hours, and hybrid working for all roles across the organisation.

LEARNER PROFILE 2022/23

Students by gender

Under 16	16-18
F M X	F M X

19+	All learners
F M X	F M X
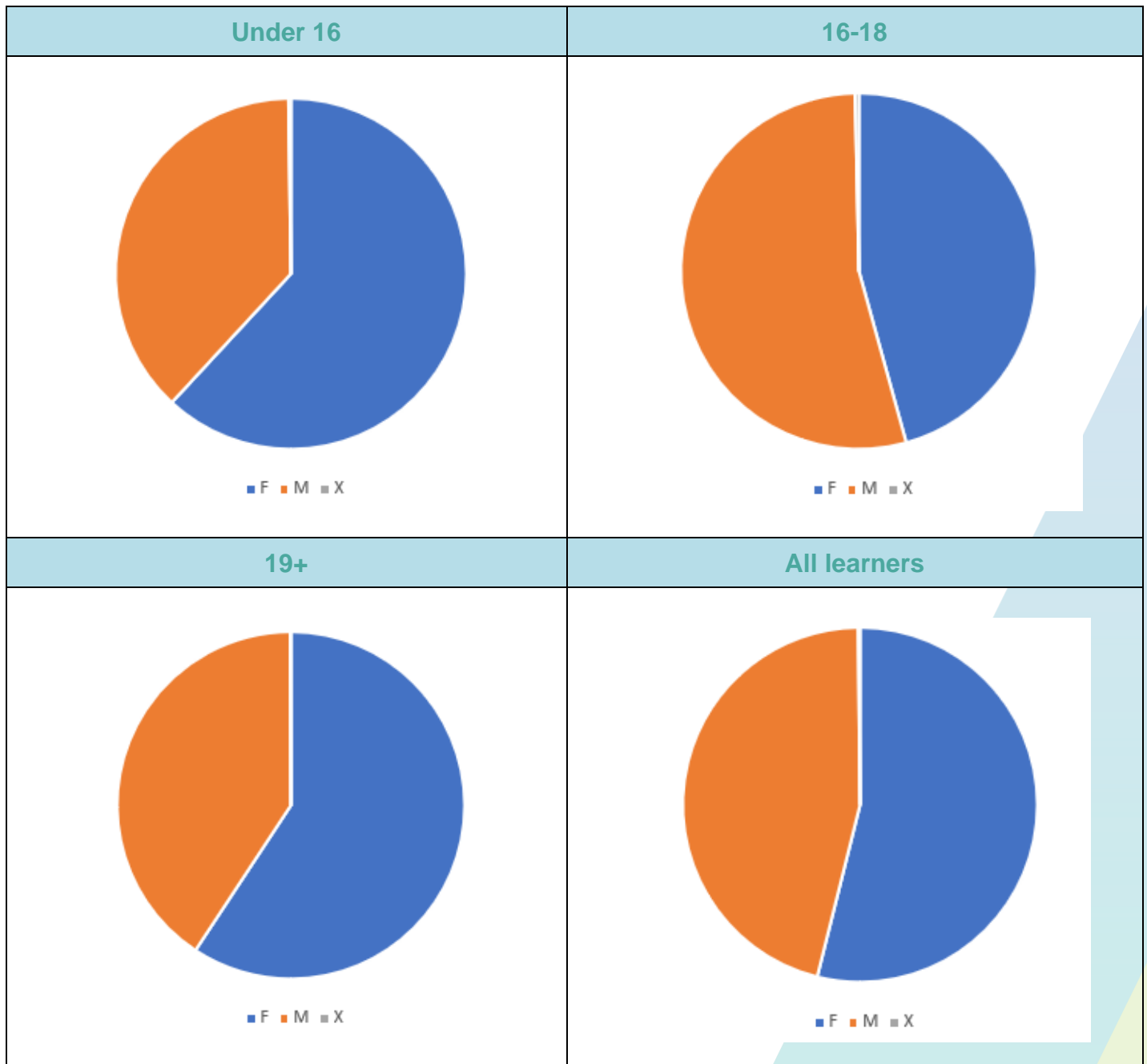
Students by ethnicity

	16-18	19+	U16	Total
Any Other	2.9%	3.9%	2.5%	3.5%
Asian / Asian British - Any other Asian background	2.6%	3.6%	2.5%	3.2%
Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.6%	0.5%	0.2%	0.5%
Asian / Asian British - Chinese	0.4%	0.9%	2.7%	0.8%
Asian / Asian British - Indian	1.5%	1.6%	0.7%	1.6%
Asian/ Asian British - Pakistani	3.1%	2.3%	0.2%	2.6%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African	4.0%	4.0%	0.2%	3.9%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	0.9%	1.2%	0.0%	1.0%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean	1.3%	1.2%	0.2%	1.2%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic group - Any Other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	1.6%	1.2%	1.1%	1.4%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic group - White and Black African	1.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.7%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic group - White and Black Caribbean	2.5%	1.2%	2.9%	1.7%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic group - White and Asian	1.4%	0.8%	1.6%	1.1%
Not provided	0.8%	2.4%	4.9%	1.8%
Other ethnic group - Arab	0.8%	1.4%	0.0%	1.1%
White - Any Other White background	8.5%	15.1%	6.5%	12.3%
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	65.1%	57.7%	72.0%	61.0%
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.4%	0.0%	1.1%	0.2%
White - Irish	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%
All learners	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Students by disability

DISABILITY

No   Yes

- 19+: No 79%, Yes 21%
- 16-18: No 67%, Yes 33%
- u16: No 69%, Yes 31%
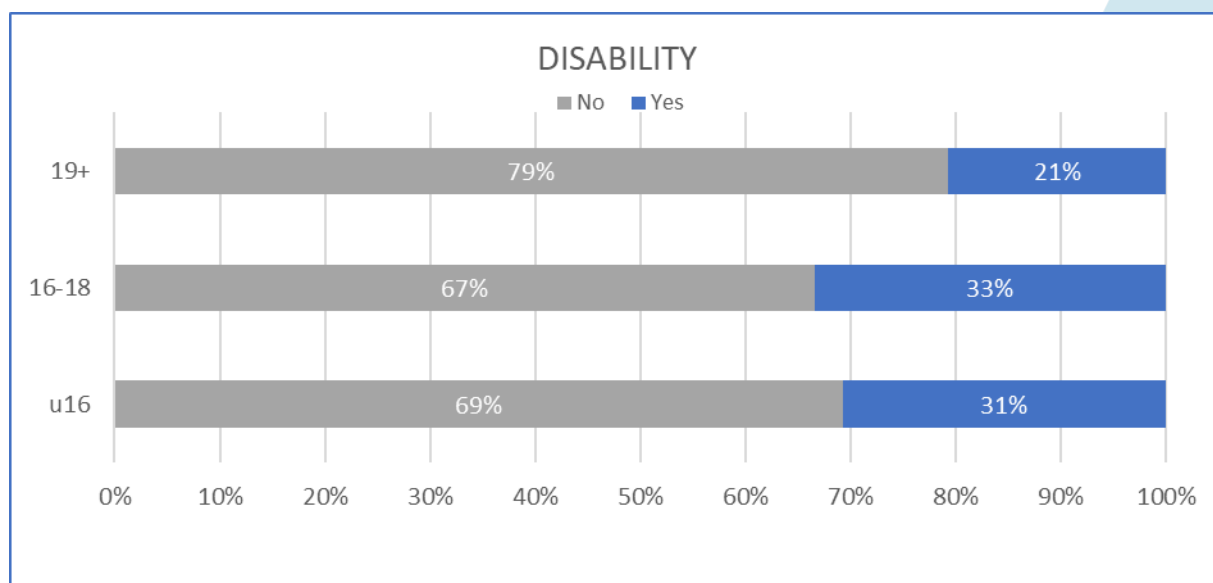
OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS FOR 2023/24

Monitoring of high needs
- Review and track numbers, growth patterns, training needs to better understand the overall landscape of our high needs learners.
- Review and track numbers of our vulnerable groups.
- Review and track learners with EHCPs, impact on teaching staff, impact on resources.
- Track how information in EDI is shared with faculty colleagues, with clear actions and accountability.
-

Monitoring of looked after children
- Review and track attendance and retention
- Stablish clear progress review points.
- Implement step by step interventions.

Staff development
- Responsive & relevant development programmes to support our staff to give learners the best possible experience.
- Include elements of our support programmes in as many of our staff development opportunities as possible, including but not limited to Induction, L&D Programmes for Group Services & Faculty staff and online modules.

Mental Health Strategy
- Monitor the progress of our mental health strategy, providing an update report for the EDI committee in February 2024 and again in June 2024.
-

Diversity profile

- Create a safe space to increase the EDI disclosure of our workforce to 65%.