This document is available on-line at:  https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/equality-and-diversity/strategic-equality-plan/annual-monitoring-report

It is also available in alternative formats, e.g. hard copy, Braille, large print, audio on request. Should you or someone you know require this in an alternative format, please contact the Compliance and Risk on 02920 870230, email ComplianceandRisk@cardiff.ac.uk.

If you have any questions or feedback relating to the information contained in this report, please contact Andrew Lane, Senior Compliance and Risk Adviser: 02920 874164, email lanea5@cardiff.ac.uk.

A Welsh version of this document is also available.
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Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction and background

Under the Specific Duties for Wales of the Equality Act 2010 the University (as a public body) is legally required to develop a Strategic Equality Plan and produce an annual monitoring report by 31st March each year for the previous year.

The annual monitoring report must contain progress statements including:

- the steps taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- how the institution has used the information;
- the reasons for not collecting any relevant information;
- a statement about the effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information and the steps taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives;
- the progress that the institution has made to fulfil each of its equality objectives;
- a statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the authority has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives;
- specified employment information, including information on training and pay (unless it has already published this information elsewhere).

This report contains a progress report against our current action plan which covers the period April 2020 – March 2021. This action plan is reviewed annually and is informed by this report. This report also contains a student data report that covers the academic year 2019/20 and a staff data report that is a snapshot taken on 31st March 2020.

The University’s Strategic Equality Plan outlines its Objectives and Action Plan for achieving the equality objectives for the period of 2020-24.
Section 2 - Identifying, collecting and using relevant information

2.1 The steps taken to identify and collect relevant information

Monitoring data for the diversity profile of both staff and students are collated on an annual basis and form part of the University’s Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report.

Following a data gap analysis during the previous Strategic Equality Plan (2012-16) the University developed data reports for the protected characteristics of religion or belief and sexual orientation in addition to existing reports on age, sex, ethnicity and disability. Top level data are also included for gender identity. This does not however provide the same level of data as the other protected characteristics due to lower numbers and the need to ensure that individuals are not identified.

The University’s Business Intelligence Team currently supports production of the Student Data for the Annual Monitoring Report as well as providing reporting for Advance HE applications.

Questions on the protected characteristics of staff are incorporated within the e-recruitment system and CORE HR, the University’s Management Information System. Staff/employment data reports are produced on an annual basis. The University had identified an issue in previous years with the transfer of equality monitoring data from the e-recruitment system to the CORE HR. As this report relies upon CORE HR data, in previous years’ reports data held in the e-recruitment system that had not been transferred to CORE HR has been reported as unknown data. Work has commenced to manually transfer this missing data to CORE HR and therefore the amount of ‘unknown’ equality data has been expected to drop in this year’s report.

The University acknowledges the importance of collecting staff and student equality monitoring data and has taken a number of steps throughout the monitoring period to encourage disclosure, in particular amongst staff through focused communication with line managers and revision of local induction practices to encourage staff to make declarations.

In order to complement student and staff data reports, the University also reviews disaggregated feedback from staff and student surveys e.g. the National Student Survey (NSS) and the ‘Staff Survey’.
2.2 **How the institution has used the information:**

Staff and student monitoring data are used in a variety of ways to inform progress in line with the equality action plan and to shape additional or new actions as required. Monitoring data reports are also used to inform equality impact assessments and College/School level action plans where appropriate.

Monitoring data reports are reviewed by the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee on an annual basis, alongside additional updates throughout the academic year.

Monitoring data reports are also used for the University’s Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter Mark and the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index applications as a required part of the application process and in order to identify relevant issues of underrepresentation and potential for positive action.

Examples of how the University has used monitoring data to develop relevant actions are set out below:

The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee commissioned the Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD) to develop a more detailed report on progression and attainment of different protected characteristic student groups to better understand some of the relevant factors that influenced progression and attainment. This analysis considers the progress and attainment of undergraduate students with a variety of protected characteristics. In particular, it examines the relationship between outcomes and the characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity and disability.

Data on ethnicity was used extensively by two working groups set up to look at staff and student race equality issues. This work contributed to the University’s application for a Race Equality Charter Mark Award, overseen by the Equality Challenge Unit - now Advance HE.

2.3 **How we are developing our monitoring and access to our EDI data**

The Business Intelligence team have been given an opportunity to work with colleagues experienced in the societal and legal context to EDI data to deliver relevant information and insight to institutional decision makers. The Annual Student Data report provides a high-level annual overview of the institutional and sector landscapes. However, we recognize it is not suitable as a tool for regular progress review or ‘deep dives’ into the reasons behind institution level trends. Reporting for Advance HE applications provides some ‘deep dive’ capability but is
limited in scope. To address this gap, a suite of new reporting has been specified in agreement with the Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, EDI Committee and colleagues in the University Secretary’s Office. This new reporting suite, or EDI Dashboard, aims to provide accurate, relevant, timely information to inform decision making and monitor strategy implementation. It will ensure we meet the baseline information required for our Statutory reporting duties but it will also allow our Cardiff Data Professionals to access granular data, specific to their needs. Cardiff Data Professionals is a group with members across the University who are in roles or have a professional interest related to data collection or analysis and are all required to undergo specific data protection training before they can access data.

The first phase of this reporting suite will be available in March 2021 accompanied by training, videos and support, ensuring staff are able to access and interpret the information they need. The reporting suite will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains aligned to the needs of key stakeholders. This project has already resulted in the following reports:

- Bespoke statistical analysis on correlation between specific disabilities and the likelihood for students to progress and graduate with a ‘good degree’ for Student Support and Wellbeing;

- As agreed with Widening Participation Strategy Group we have integrated data on veterans, carers, care leavers, receipt of DSA, estranged students, first-in-family to support those analysing data into the warehouse, making them available for analysis;

- As agreed with REF Committee we have delivered information and analysis to support ongoing REF and mock REF EIA monitoring;

- For this year’s Strategic Equality Plan we have expanded the Annual Monitoring Report for student data to include Russell Group and comparable Cardiff HESA data allowing for appropriate benchmarking;

- Reviewed the institution’s legal obligations and the requirements of external audiences for institutional EDI information. These formed the basis of a specification subsequently agreed with the Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and EDI Committee for delivery in early 2021.
2.4 Data Analysis - Full statistical reports for staff and student data are included in Appendices 2 and 3.

Summary – Cardiff University Student Numbers

NB. Due to work that has been carried out on the quality of our data, there have been small variations to 2016-19 data reported in previous years.

Sex:
- 59% of all enrolled students were female in 2019/20 – including 59% of undergraduates; 59% of taught postgraduates; and 51% of research postgraduates. These percentages have remained broadly the same over the last few years.
- When compared to the sector Cardiff University has a higher proportion of female students and a higher proportion of female first degree and PGR students than the Welsh sector, the Russell Group and the UK sector.

Ethnicity:
- Over the past five years, the proportion of most ethnicities have remained stable. Our data for 2019/20 shows that 16.66% of UK domiciled enrolled students at Cardiff University described themselves as BAME. However, it’s noticeable that the proportion of Arab students has increased year upon year from <0.5% in 2015/16 to 2.8% in 2019/20.
- Cardiff University has an attainment gap (10.9%) similar to the UK average between BME & white students. Black International students are most likely to achieve lower than the average.
- The number of Third-Class Honours awarded at Cardiff has decreased over time for all BAME groups, while the number of First-Class Honours awarded has increased across the majority. The number of Distinctions awarded for PGT students has increased over time across most BAME groups, with the number of Passes correspondingly decreasing.

Disability:
- There has been an increase in the proportion of students declaring a disability at Cardiff University from 8.5% in 2015/16 to 10.4% in 2019/20.
- Our data shows an increasing proportion of students declaring a disability over time at Cardiff, in the Welsh sector, the Russell group and the UK sector. This potentially indicates a greater willingness of students to share this information with their institution, or an increase in the inclusivity of the UK HE sector.
- Over time there is an increase in the number of students declaring more than one disability, from 28% in 2016/17 to 35% in 2019/20.

Age:
- Our data indicates consistently a much higher proportion of students on UG degrees are Young (>80% every year). Whereas postgraduate degrees are consistently dominated by Mature students (~89% for PGT and >96% for PGR).
- For the last 2 academic years there has been a greater proportion of Mature students applying to the University than Young students. However, more young students have enrolled at the University than mature students.
**Sexual Orientation:**
- In 2019/20, 4.73% of all students identified as bisexual, 1.47% as gay men and 0.85% as gay women/lesbian. 82.7% identified as heterosexual while 9.53% preferred not to disclose. A further 0.71% identified as ‘other’
- In 2019/20 14% of PGR students preferred not to say when asked to declare their sexual orientation, compared to 10% of PGT students and only 8% of UG students (6.2)..

**Religion and Belief:**
- The proportion of students with declaring ‘No religion’ has increased year on year over the last 5 years, comprising 57% of the cohort by 2019/20.
- While ‘No religion’ has increased, those who identify as Christian has decreased, from 24% in 2015/16 to 19% in 2019/20. The proportion of Muslim students has also decreased from 8% in 2015/16 to 7% in 2019/20.

**Overall Student data snapshot for 4 years (all students including PG):**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disabled Students</strong></td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black and Minority Ethnic Students (UK domiciled only)</strong></td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
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Staff Data

Summary – Cardiff University Staff Numbers

Sex:
- Of the 7,153 members of staff in post as of 31st March 2020, 56% of all staff were female and 44% male. The proportion of female staff has increased by 1% when previously it had remained at 55% between 2014-2019.

Ethnicity:
- 9% of all staff identified themselves as being BAME, 81% as White, 2% preferred not to say and 8% had not made a disclosure.
- When nationality is taken into consideration, our international workforce continues to show an increase each year.
- When considering job role 5.0% of those with a Professional and Support Services role are from a BAME background compared to 12% of those on an Academic contract.

Disability:
- 5.5% of all staff recorded themselves as being disabled. 12.5% selected ‘prefer not to say’ and 11% were unknown.
- Declaration of disability is lower amongst Academic staff (4%) compared to P&S staff (7%).

Age:
- 33% of all staff fall within the 35-44 age group;
- There is a larger percentage of females to males at the younger age ranges, and a slightly larger percentage of males to females at the older age ranges.

Sexual orientation:
- 58% of staff have recorded their sexual orientation as heterosexual, 2% as Bisexual, 2% as a Gay Man, 1% as a Gay woman/ Lesbian and 0% as Other. A further 23% preferred not to say.

Religion and Belief:
- Of those who did declare a religion, 24% stated that they were Christian, 1.7% stated they were Muslim, 4% followed a religion or belief not listed and 23% stated that they had no religion. 22% of staff had not yet declared religious beliefs, and 24% of all staff preferred not to give this information.
2.5 Reasons for not collecting any relevant information identified but not held

A review of data was carried out in 2013 (this is now reviewed every reporting year) and the following reasons identified for non-collection:

Gender Reassignment
Advice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission indicated that particular care needs to be taken when monitoring for gender identity and that there are particular problems in relation to the use and publication of this data due to low numbers. Therefore it has been agreed that statistical data for students will not be collected for this protected characteristic at this time and other sources of information are sought to inform relevant activities.

Staff data relating to Gender Reassignment has been collected from 2014, however only very limited data has been included in the annual report due to the very low numbers involved.

Pregnancy and Maternity
Statistical data in relation to pregnancy and maternity for students is not currently collected. It is recommended that other ways of measuring impact of pregnancy and maternity are sought e.g. via qualitative information.

Marriage and Civil Partnership
It is not recommended that data in relation to marriage and civil partnership are collected for students as this is not a protected characteristic for the further and higher education provisions and therefore does not extend to cover students.

2.6 The effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information and the steps taken to fulfil each equality objective;

Over the implementation period of the previous Strategic Equality Plan (2012-16), significant
efforts were made to collect the relevant equality information following guidance from HEFCW and the Equality Challenge Unit (Advance HE). This resulted in a large amount of data being made available and work is ongoing to ensure that data sets are available to all who need them throughout the University in a format which is meaningful in order to inform a variety of activities. Discussions are also taking place to refine the information which we collect and analyse. For this reporting period, student data sources have been aligned with those used to gather Athena SWAN management information, which will help to improve consistency going forward.

Information on the steps taken to fulfill each of the equality objectives are contained within the action plan updates and annual monitoring reports and are summarised in Section 3.
3.1 A summary of initiatives and activities undertaken to progress the overall objectives of the Strategic Equality Plan is given below. A full progress report is included in Appendix 1.

This update provides an overview of progress on meeting actions and Objectives during the first year (April 2020 - March 2021) of the 2020-2024 Strategic Equality Plan. A full report of progress with the Action Plan and Objectives is included in the Annual Monitoring Report 2020 that is published on the University’s website: \[\text{http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/equality-and-diversity/strategic-equality-plan}\].

3.2 Summary of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion activity in response to the COVID pandemic

At the outset of the pandemic, the Vice-Chancellor established a task force to oversee all aspects of re-opening the University and its day-to-day business during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

At an early stage, the taskforce acknowledged that the pandemic would have a disproportionate impact upon groups who share protected characteristics. The taskforce supported an institutional approach to the completion of Equality (and Welsh Language) Impact Assessments (EIA) with regard to the policy and process decisions being made in response to the pandemic. This has not only ensured that assessments have been carried out but that they have conducted by senior officers directly involved in the decision making groups put together in response to the pandemic. This has enabled the groups to establish common issues across the different areas of the University. An EIA database was been set up to ensure officers can access existing assessments to ensure that issues and mitigating action that were established and resolved in some of the earliest assessments, have been quickly picked up in meetings or in later/ongoing assessments.

The University has started a project, ‘Our Stories, a Listening Project: equalities impacts of COVID-19’, to explore the impact of the pandemic on staff, taking account of intersectionality and looking at how they could be supported. The project has initially called for staff to share their stories, to listen and analyse their experiences to help develop outcomes and ways in...
which staff can be supported. The information will be used to develop toolkits and enhance processes and procedures although it is acknowledged that other activities may be introduced as analysis is undertaken.

The pandemic has had a significant impact upon the University’s ability to deliver our Action Plan 2019-20. However, the Equality Impact Assessments captured how much work the University has put into ensuring the safety and well-being of all students and staff, and to ensure that students have not been disadvantaged by COVID-19, and able to carry on or complete their studies. This has resulted in work that has improved Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University but that would not have been foreseen when our Action Plan was published.

There has been certain unforeseen benefits from the enforced move to working in a virtual environment. In particular every one of our equality staff networks have reported that attendance has significantly increased which has resulted in increased participation in wider equality related matters. The ability for staff working on re-opening our buildings to consult with our Disability Staff Network was a particularly good example of this. Another example of a benefit is the normalisation of a gender-neutral toilet, which are now seen as both an inclusive and a safe option considering the current pandemic.

The following summary provides information about progress against each Objective but it also includes relevant work that has been carried out in response to the pandemic.

3.3 Objective 1:
A University that supports an inclusive student journey through recruitment, admissions, wellbeing and learning environment.

For the majority of the actions set, progress has been made with achieving the outcomes despite the significant impact of work arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following work has been carried out in 2020/21:

Widening participation – Community Outreach and Community Learning activities have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic however the possibilities of delivering remotely / digitally are under review. We have linked up with a Grangetown revision project where current University students are delivering revision sessions and homework support for children from the Somali and other BAME communities in the local area.
Other projects have moved online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to achieve planned outcomes including the Discovery project, which aims to support students who have autism spectrum conditions to progress to university and succeed thereafter. We have also delivered a summer programme through Minecraft.

The new WP Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021) will determine how best to address gender imbalances and to support Mature students. Some progress has been made to improve gender imbalance for identified degree programmes. The WP team will be working with Admissions and Marketing teams to develop a WP data dashboard, which will include gender, to improve data gathering. The WP team has also created a mini team to focus specifically on Transition for vulnerable groups, including Mature Students into Higher Education with a Mature Students welcome event being delivered virtually in September 2020.

**Recruitment and Admissions** – Since the implementation of the new Contextual Admissions Policy in October 2019, early analysis of its effectiveness has shown that new entrant numbers have increased in a number of WP categories including in Care (increased by 90%) and those from a disadvantaged socio-economic background.

Due to COVID-19 there has been a need for the University to be flexible on entry requirements due to actions taken by the UK Governments and Awarding Organisations in relation to final grade awards. The full effectiveness of the policy cannot currently be measured, as steps taken to prevent COVID disadvantage in relation to entering HE will have impacted the data.

A considerable amount of work has gone into reviewing admissions policies during the pandemic which will continue. Examples include:

- an increased recognition of qualifications such as BTECs in recognition of data which has shown a trend for certain ethnicities to be more likely to take these courses than A-Levels. We have made it clearer in our communications to ensure prospective students are aware of this. We will continue to review qualifications (such as T-levels) from this perspective.
- All admissions policies have been reviewed to ensure gender neutral pronouns are used. We have improved our interview policy to be more inclusive for applicants who require reasonable adjustments. The policy reviews have benefitted from the increased
discourse around Race Equality as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Over the next year the analysis of admissions data will be developed to identify how underrepresented groups that share protected characteristics are impacted with the aim of using the data to understand student needs within the student support environment.

**Inclusive Curriculum** – Significant work has been carried out to recognise and respond to specific requirements, particularly in complying with social distancing.

In relation to the action originally included in the action plan for 2020/21 work has now begun to develop a clear definition of ‘inclusive curriculum’. This will include:

- Researching sector wide activity to ascertain best practice examples.
- Obtaining feedback from Student ‘Champions’ on their view of inclusivity and what that practically means in CU.
- Using Student Champions’ feedback to establish common themes and terminology associated with IC for word search of qualitative data sets.
- Identifying EDI contacts in all academic schools.
- Consolidating findings and produce draft definition for IC, with report outlining key findings and proposal for next.
- Consulting with Schools and students on the draft definition and ongoing approach to the support and enhancement of this area.

Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out on arrangements put in place to deliver learning activities in line with COVID-19 restrictions. This includes an EIA on arrangements that support the delivery of the curriculum including the Digital Education Strategy.

The following actions have been put in place to address the issues identified as a result of the EIA on the Digital Education Strategy:

- The digital learning framework encourages staff not to apply stereotypes to determining digital fluency of different groups. The framework has developed an induction session for all students who need guidance on using digital learning resources.
- The needs of staff delivering the digital framework have also been taken into account and the package developed is aimed at supporting staff to deliver training in this way.
- The University’s reasonable adjustments policy will provide a procedure for identifying
and meeting specific needs of disabled students. The Disability and Dyslexia service continues to support disabled students in the context of COVID-19 and assessment and support is continuing.

- An accessibility guidance document has been developed that provides a toolkit for Schools to make any activities that take place on campus available as an online equivalent. This will provide students who are more at risk and/or shielding and students with caring responsibilities with access to the learning activity.
- Guidance advocates use of sound pedagogical practice when developing digital learning opportunities, for example shorter sessions (reducing screen fatigue). A guidance statement is being prepared around accessibility elements of online teaching.
- The Head of Disability and Access Support has provided specialist input into the digital education framework. The Disability and Dyslexia service provide advice and support to access specific reasonable adjustments to meet specific needs.
- Activities delivered online and remotely are likely to be available at times of the student’s choosing and this will assist students who may be constrained in their ability to take part in scheduled learning activities.
- The digital education framework has taken into account requirements relating to inclusive curriculum, including consideration of digital accessibility tools.
- Online invigilation (proctoring) has been taken into account and only allowed in very limited circumstances to ensure that students are not disadvantaged. There is some evidence to suggest that BAME students feel disproportionately intervened as a result of proctoring.
- Consideration has been given to the needs of international students who may be located outside the UK and in countries where there a specific firewall considerations.
- Links have been made to staff and student behaviour policies within the Digital Learning Strategy.
- Development of Welsh Language guidance and digital learning opportunities have been considered as part of the strategy with early input from the Dean for Welsh Language and ongoing consultation with the School of Welsh. Correspondence, guidance and training have been provided through the medium of Welsh and English. Digital Learning opportunities can be provided in Welsh/English in line with the original teaching language for the module.

**Addressing differential student attainment and retention** – Good progress has been made with the University’s actions relating to attainment and retention. The BAME Awarding Gap
Group combined evidence from the #closingthegap report with qualitative University data from student surveys and outputs from the senior staff conference to develop an action plan. Actions have been themed to consider the University culture, admissions, curriculum content and learning environment, student support and wellbeing.

The action plan will feed into the University’s Race Equality Steering Group, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Academic Standards and Quality Committee. The measurable outcome will be a reduction in the BAME awarding gap long-term with an aim to reach a zero gap and a <5% gap across all University programmes by 2025.

The Senior Staff Engagement: An Active Approach to Race Equality has been running virtually since November 2020. Meetings have been held with each Head of School to: 1. reflect on Race Equality practice in the School and signpost to ‘Strengthening Race Equality: A Resource Guide’; 2. review the BAME awarding gap School data signposting to recommendations for local actions; and 3. consider the University’s approach to Race Equality and the next steps for the School.

The BAME awarding gap group in consultation with the Students’ Union delivered a plenary session providing potential participants with background knowledge on the attainment gap project.

Phase 2 of this objective, the instigation of focus groups, was impacted by COVID-19. The objective has therefore been amended and Schools will now be asked to conduct qualitative work as part of their three-year action plan, based on a model of student focus groups, with the recorded plenary, facilitator training, question set, or student survey.

In 2020 the University established its Race Equality Steering Group which has become firmly embedded in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee’s governance structure. The long term goal of the group will be to build towards an application for the Race Equality Charter Mark. At this present stage the group is focused on supporting groups that are putting the necessary building blocks in place to improve Race Equality at Cardiff University. An example of this is the BAME Awarding Gap group which has been strongly supported by the steering group. The chair of the steering group has been heavily involved in bringing the findings and recommendations of the group to the Heads of Schools and Departments who are now tasked
with forming the aforementioned 3 year action plans.

**Supporting the wellbeing of students with protected characteristics** – Providing support to students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant changes in priorities for Student Support and Wellbeing Services. The planned work identifying existing equality data collected and evaluated and developing an action plan that supports students with specific protected characteristics has been delayed and will be reviewed in January 2021. Some progress has been made implementing a new enquiry and case management system will go live in early 2021. Data on student’s protected characteristics will be reviewed to enhance understanding of student engagement across the services.

As a result of the pandemic in-person, student facing services moved to remote provision to ensure the continued support of students' wellbeing. This involved:

- The adoption and procurement of new platforms to support student facing work;
- Development of online support provision e.g. Academic Skills Classes, Wellbeing workshops;
- The implementation of GECKO: an enquiry and communications tool. The benefits were 24/7 information and support to students via the ChatBot and an accessible and improved system to manage enquiries;
- The enhancement of out of hours support, especially during University closures, providing access to BACP registered counsellors and practical advice;
- Introduction of a new Online Orientation which is accessible to any new student anywhere via the web. The new platform had over 8500 users during the Autumn Semester 2020-21 and was widely praised for its content and accessibility).

A number of support initiatives were enhanced or developed to support student's wellbeing specifically in response to the pandemic. These include:

- Talk Campus;
- Click & Connect: Informal, supported group. Offered twice a week by the Students’ Union with support from the Student Connect Team;
- Weekend Student Connect: telephone service 10.00-16.00 Saturday and Sunday for 6 weeks during October and November 2020;
- Guidance on disabled students and accessibility of online learning platforms was developed to support academic staff.
3.4 Objective 2:
Creating a staff environment where we improve the diversity of our recruitment and enable our staff to progress and develop in a supportive environment.

Significant progress has been made with Objective 2, with two-thirds of the actions complete and the remaining two actions having made good progress despite being impacted by COVID-19 disruptions.

Staff Recruitment - Due to COVID-19, staff recruitment has been frozen for all but essential roles, therefore work on this objective has changed focus to improve other elements of the recruitment process.

Data on recruitment was presented to the Race Equality Steering Group which has informed progression around recruitment panels, interview questions, training for panel chairs and the way that we recruit. Suggestions on more diverse routes for advertising roles have been proposed. Work has been undertaken with our recruitment system supplier on anonymising content in applications. The ability to anonymise applications will be a mandatory requirement in procuring our next recruitment system. In Spring 2021 we will hold discussions internally and externally to evaluate recruitment to grade 1-4 roles and how we adapt our approach to make these roles more accessible to our local communities.

Understanding Unconscious Bias is now mandatory for all staff to complete and at 1/12/2020 completion rate was 60%. A bank of standard interview questions has been created to explore applicants’ understanding of diversity and inclusion.

Equal Pay and Pay Gap – A 2020 Equal Pay Audit has been completed and shared with Equality in Reward and Trade Unions. The Audit will be published following approval at University Executive Board.

Staff Progression and Development - In partnership with Bath, Bristol and Exeter Universities in January 2021 we launched a new programme for BAME females called Elevate. This is externally facilitated and aimed at professional services staff from grades 3-7 and academic staff from grades 5-8. From February 2021 we plan to run Career Development for Female Academics and, following feedback from the Race Equality Staff Working Group,
Career Development for BAME staff at all grades following a similar format to the Career Development for Female Academics. Following a successful first cohort where six colleagues were promoted from reader to Professor, the second cohort of the Academic Promotions Development Programme ran virtually from April 2020.

A revised Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was published in 2019 to promote further sector-wide changes in three main areas: (i) research environment and culture, (ii) the employment of researchers, and (iii) their professional and career development. The University signed up to the revised Concordat in November 2020 and will conduct a gap analysis during the 2020/21 academic year to identify priority areas for improvement.

The Diversity in Leadership Task and Finish Group is looking at a range of activity from development programmes, recruitment processes and mentoring that will inform our future activity in this area. The action plan for this work is being reviewed and evaluated by an external organisation.

**Staff Wellbeing** - We launched our Wellbeing Strategy in September 2020. One of the strands of this strategy is Leadership. We have included examples of wellbeing in our leadership and management programmes to facilitate supporting wellbeing and mental health and need to evaluate the effectiveness of this and continue to ensure content is up to date with relevant changes in mental health and wellbeing legislation. Our Wellbeing Strategy states that we will support individuals by rolling out an enhanced mental health and wellbeing programme of training and awareness workshops to promote self-care, mental health awareness and wellbeing support. This delivery has continued during the 2019/20 academic year to include i-Act training on Mental Health and Wellbeing for our Dignity and Wellbeing Contacts, line managers and human resources professionals, Managing Stress and Building Resilience, Managing Stress in others and Mental Health First Aid. Alongside these staff development programmes are the delivery of workshops and specific campaigns around mental health and wellbeing delivered by the Staff Wellbeing team.
3.5 Objective 3:
Creating an inclusive University culture based on building and maintaining relationships.

Progress against this objective has been severely impacted by the COVID pandemic. Most of the actions were entirely dependent on the assumed successful procurement of an external provider to support the action for an Inclusive Culture with experience in the delivery of Relationship Approaches. Due to the financial implications caused by the pandemic. In August 2020, our Diversity in Leadership Task & Finish Group enabled funding to be prioritised in support of this objective. A full round of procurement was undertaken in late 2020 with 3 external providers going through two phases of review - after consultation with panel members none of the providers were felt to meet the diverse needs of the University to meet the objective. The extended timeline has enabled wider consultation with stakeholders and the Action Plan for 21/22 will be reviewed & revised to reflect this.

While procurement has been delayed, it has been possible to carry out background work on how relationship approaches can be implemented in harmony with existing case management processes.

Good progress has been made on our Equality Impact Assessment data analyses for outputs relating to Rolling REF and Mock REF. Key findings have been made in particular around the disadvantages staff with a disability face in the research environment as well as clear differences in eligible female researchers, aged 25-34 and working part-time achieving high-quality outputs compared to males of the same age and work pattern. An action plan will be created by REF EDI working group to attempt to resolve these and any other equality issues discovered.
3.6 Objective 4:
To improve accessibility and inclusivity of University estates and facilities

Physical Environment - As with preceding actions progress against actions designed to meet our objective, have been significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic. However, as our COVID Equality Impact Assessments have discovered, progress has still been made to meet this objective through actions that we have taken to respond to the pandemic that was not part of our original action plan.

Consultation and engagement events that were planned throughout the year have been more or less impossible to run during the pandemic and many of our actions were reliant on feedback from these events. Our planned accessibility audit that was being carried out by an independent third party, was postponed throughout lockdown and has only been possible to recommence in January 2021. However the audit of the main building has been completed and a programme of works has been proposed for funding. All effort will be made to ensure the remainder of the audit is completed during the reporting period.

Relevant work carried out in response to COVID
In response to the pandemic, all University buildings and routings around buildings have been adapted to meet COVID social distancing requirements. Risk Assessments have been prepared for every building and activities being undertaken and as part of this process accessibility has been a key consideration. All risk assessments and building plans with routing are openly available on the University web pages.

Accessibility issues have been raised in profile following Equality Impact Assessments that have been carried out on matters such as re-opening and use of buildings, car parking arrangements and use of face coverings on campus. The consultation stage of the EIA has enabled senior officers to discuss matters with groups such as the Disability Staff Network as well as officers wanting to raise concerns regarding the buildings within which they work. The Equality Impact Assessments captured or resulted in the following improvements:

- University has adopted the [Welsh Government advice](#) on vulnerable and extremely vulnerable people as well as all Wales [COVID-19 workforce risk assessment tool](#) to enable individuals to understand their risk.
- Where a disability meant that a member of staff requires a lift, the Buildings User group ensured this could continue in line with the COVID-19 controls. Consideration was also
been given to supporting those with visual impairments who may have difficulty reading signage and would benefit from an orientation introduction to their building.

- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans were to be reviewed with the Line Manager prior to the staff member returning to campus.
- All toilet facilities to be gender neutral.
- Provision for hand sanitizers at different heights and non-alcoholic hand sanitizers was ensured.
- Specific consideration has been given to quiet room and breast feeding facilities and Welsh Language requirements regarding relevant signage.

**Digital Accessibility** – The main focus of this year’s actions for improvement to accessibility of our digital environment were similarly to the physical, heavily reliant on consultation events. These have been unable to go ahead therefore these actions have been significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic.

However, some good progress was made with respect to testing the University website’s accessibility with current students, in collaboration with the Disability and Dyslexia team. This prompted additional recommendations which have been incorporated into the development backlog for the Digital Communications team. In addition, a new mobile optimized design went live as planned which has significantly improved the usability and speed of the website for users on a range of devices. A new mechanism for publishing documents in an accessible format (in line with new website accessibility legislation) has also been released with guidance available for staff on how to take advantage of it.

**Relevant work carried out in response to COVID**

As detailed within the summary of progress within Objective 1 above, our Digital Learning Strategy/Framework perhaps demonstrates as well as any of the University’s efforts how we have tried to reduce adverse Equality impact due to the COVID pandemic. This work has been summarised in full within the update in Objective 1 above.
3.7 Objective 5:
To promote and develop an inclusive (internal) culture and governance by addressing diversity of decision-making committees

There has been significant upheaval both in terms of staff turnover and changes to the size and shape of the team over the last few years, with the Head of Governance post being recruited to multiple times and the role remaining vacant in some interim periods. This has resulted in a lack of progress in actions overseen by the Head of Governance, not only during this reporting period but during previous Strategic Equality Plan reporting periods. On a very positive note, the University has successfully recruited to all positions in addition to being headed up by a newly appointed role of University Secretary and General Council within the University Secretary’s office. These appointments give the University confidence that progress will be made against this objective in the coming years.

In addition the COVID pandemic has had an inevitable impact on the ability for a new group of staff to focus on actions that pre-date their appointment. However, during the lockdown period actions were taken to encourage a diverse range of applications which has had an immediate and successful impact on the diversity of applicants for Committee membership.

We have made good progress with respect to actions designed to improve staff disclosure of protected characteristics. This is a matter Human Resources has been making a substantial effort on for a number of years and there a clear improvement can be seen within our staff data report which is likely to be directly related to this department’s efforts.

**Relevant work carried out in response to COVID**
Our planned actions to improve our processes around carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and raising awareness of the importance and legal duty to do so have been very successful. A new template and guidance is due to go live on our Staff Intranet within the reporting period. As already reported above, the COVID pandemic has actually created a situation where Equality Impact Assessments were essential to ensure our staff and students were kept safe and suffered as little detriment as possible due to the changes in work and study environment. This along with a necessary review of the Strategic Equality Plan in the summer, inadvertently has allowed us to make progress against these actions.

**A full progress report on actions which support each of the Objectives is contained in Appendix 1**