Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23

1.   Introduction

The University of Worcester is committed to creating an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of our community are treated with respect and dignity. We aim to create a culture of dignity and inclusivity within our community, providing a working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality.

We recognise that discrimination and bias have existed and continue to exist in society including in higher education and we acknowledge our own responsibilities in this regard. We seek to address these issues both within our community, and further afield, through our actions and inclusive approach which we hope will inspire others. We acknowledge that this work will never be completed, there will always be challenges for members of our community to overcome both as part of our community and within their wider lived experience, and we will endeavour to reduce, and ultimately remove, these challenges. We believe that all members of our community have a responsibility towards creating a genuinely inclusive environment for others to flourish and thrive in.

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has flowed through successive Strategic Plans. It is reiterated in the most recent plan which states "our approach…is built on the principle of inclusion". Our EDI Framework 2022 - 2027 restates and extends our commitment to EDI.

2.   Legislative Context

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to strengthen and advance equality, diversity and inclusion. The Act protects all individuals from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of nine protected characteristics:

Public Sector Equality Duty

The University has additional duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality. The general equality duty requires the University, in the exercise of any of its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3.   EDI Governance

The University's Board of Governors has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the University complies with the above legal duties.

In 2022/23 the EDI Committee was stood down and replaced with an EDI Oversight Group (EDIOG) and an EDI Forum. The overarching governance of EDI falls to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Group (EDIOG) and its membership is made up of members of the University's senior management team (UEB). This approach ensures EDI matters have a high profile at the University and EDI is embedded into University wide projects from the outset. EDIOG's relationship with other committees and the wider University is set out in Table 1 below. EDIOG reports directly to the University Executive Board and has a reporting line to the Board of Governors, via its People and Culture Committee.
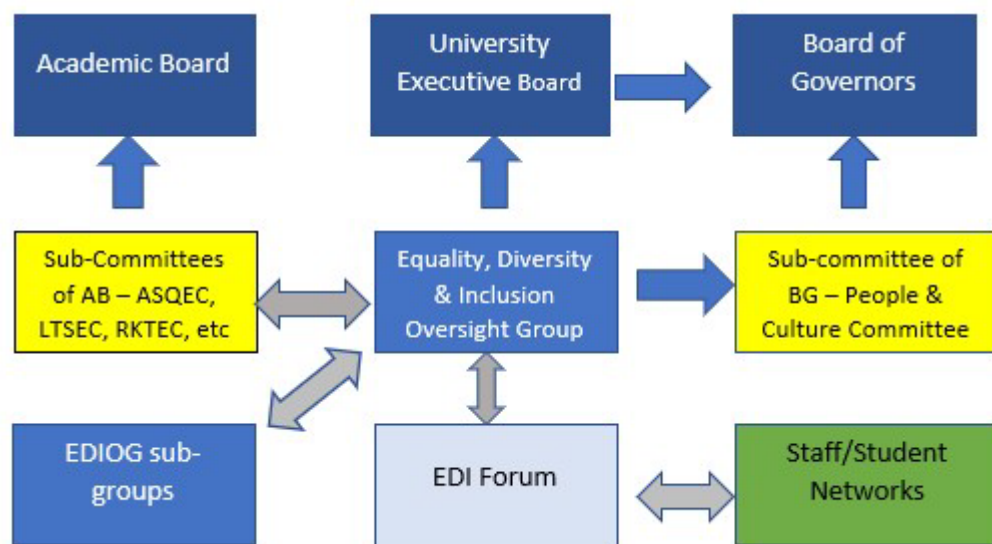
The EDIOG oversees the EDI Delivery Plan and works closely with the sub-Committees of Academic Board and other University Working Groups, whose area of focus closely aligns with one or more EDI themes.

The EDI Forum has student and staff membership from across the University including from various student and staff networks. The EDI Forum provides a sounding board for EDIOG as well as providing a mechanism for both staff and students to raise relevant EDI matters.

4.   EDI Framework

The University's Board of Governors approved a new EDI Policy Statement and EDI Framework 2022-2027 in November 2022. In these documents the University identifies six high level commitments which will enable us to achieve our vision:

1. We commit to embedding EDI in the design and delivery of all our core activities: in our educational offer, both in terms of our learning and teaching practice and our curriculum; in our research, both in how we support research but also in carrying out our research; in our public and community engagement and our wider Knowledge Exchange.

2. We commit to assuring that our strategies, policies and practices are inclusive to students and staff from all backgrounds.

3. We commit to ensuring that all members of our community and visitors to the University are treated with respect and dignity and receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of their engagement with the University.

4. We commit to ensuring that all members of our community are aware of their individual and collective responsibilities and legal duties in relation to equality and diversity through providing up-to-date training, development and guidance.

5. We commit to providing a clear framework which enables any unwanted conduct, behaviour or practice to be reported and which assures our students and staff of a robust process of investigation and appropriate action.

6. We commit to demonstrating visibility and accountability for EDI among our senior leadership.

The framework further identified six themes around which we will focus our work:

1. **Shaping the culture**: promoting an inclusive University-wide culture in which students, staff and other members of the University from all backgrounds have a strong sense of belonging and can work creatively and innovatively to achieve their own and the organisation's ambitions.

2. **Student success**: attracting, supporting, developing and retaining students from across all communities, providing an inclusive curriculum and enabling all our students to achieve their future study and career aspirations.

3. **Supporting our staff**: attracting, developing and retaining a talented workforce with increased diversity at all levels of the organisation.

4. **Influencing the wider community**: recognising the University is an integral part of the City of Worcester and the region and seeking to influence policy, practice and behaviours across this wider area.

5. **Developing an inclusive approach to Research and Knowledge Exchange**: ensuring EDI is embedded in the design and delivery of our Research and Knowledge Exchange and in the systems we develop to support our researchers.

6. **Enhancing our infrastructure**: developing further the physical and digital accessibility of our campus to increase opportunities and improve experiences for all.

And four main areas of focus which we wish to particularly focus on during the lifetime of the Framework

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- LGBTQ+

The EDIOG is currently developing a Delivery Plan to take this work forward and future Annual Reports will record progress against each of the six main themes.

5.   Student EDI Profile

5.1   The latest trends in the total student population relating to gender, age, disability, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation and religion/belief are shown below. The data in this report is from the HESA Core File as at year end for each academic year.

National comparator data throughout this section is taken from Advance HE Equality in Higher Education: Students Statistical Report 2023 (which provides further analysis and commentary on 2021/22 student data).

The first table shows the University of Worcester's total student population, including postgraduate, over the last five years.

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Total student number	10076	9801	10110	9901	9733

5.2   Gender

The student gender profile has remained fairly constant over recent years with a split 70-75% female and 25-30% male, with a small percentage identifying as 'Other'.

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Female	69.75%	71.02%	72.24%	73.16%	72.38%
Male	30.25%	28.98%	27.75%	26.79%	27.16%

|					
Other	0%	0%	0.01%	0.05%	0.14%
Refused	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.32%

The University's gender split, with a significantly higher percentage of female students, is reflective of the University's academic portfolio with a highest percentage of female students studying in the Schools of Nursing & Midwifery, Allied Health & Community, and Education all of which tend to lead to jobs which are more attractive to females. The greatest percentage of females v male students in 2022/23 was in the Three Counties School of Nursing & Midwifery where 91.35% of the students were female; this has barely changed for four years. Equally, the percentage of females studying in the Institute of Education has stood at around 84-85% since 2018/19. The highest percentage of males v female students was in the School of Sport & Exercise Science where 66.7% of the students were male, again there has been little movement on this figure for the last four years.

Nationally, 57% of all HE students in 2021/22 were female, this has been the case since 2016/17.

5.3   Disability

The number of students declaring a disability at the University during the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 has increased year on year from 17.38% in 2018/19 to 21.46% in 2022/23.
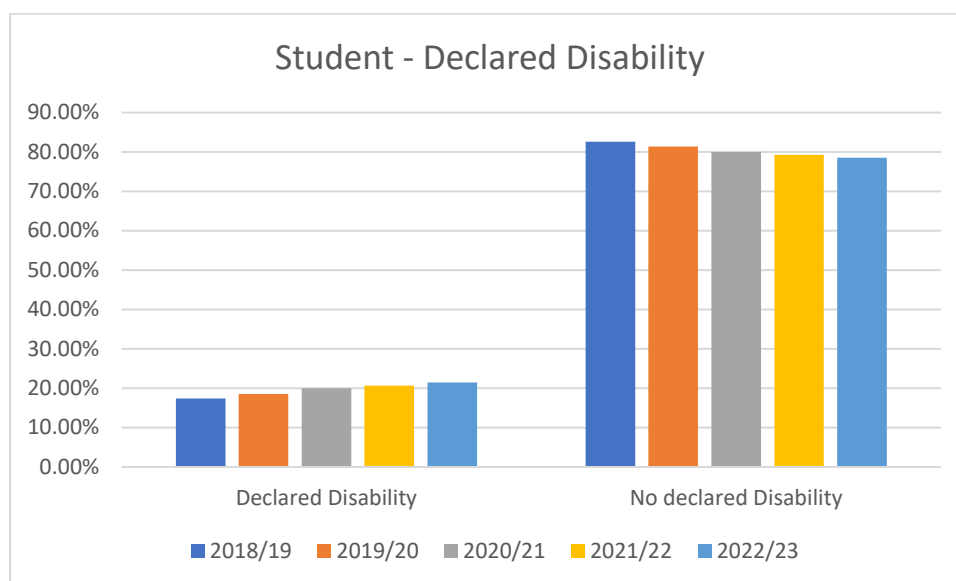
Across the UK HE Sector disability disclosure rates since 2003/04 have nearly tripled rising from 5.4% to 16% in 2021/22 (20.6% at the University of Worcester). The AdvanceHE report identifies that there has been a rise in students disclosing a mental health condition since 2016/17 and this is reflective in the University's own data which shows an increase from 3.66% (369 students) in 2018/19 to 6.20% (603) in 2022/23 declaring a mental health condition.

Students - % Breakdown of declared disability

Legend: 2022/23, 2021/22, 2020/21, 2019/20, 2018/19
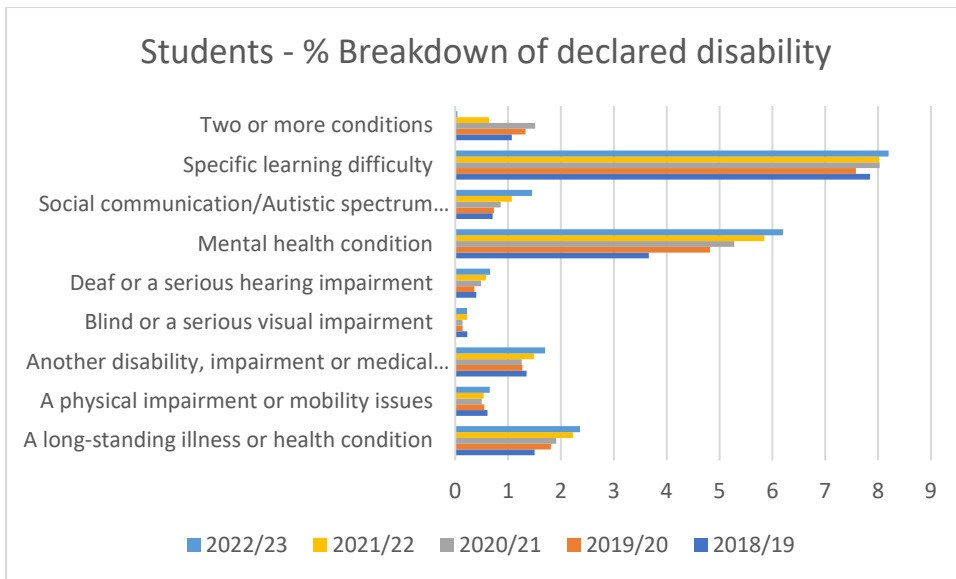
5.4 Ethnicity

The University's student population has slowly become more diverse with the percentage of White students decreasing from 85.25% in 2018/19 to 74.65 % in 2022/23. AdvanceHE reports on UK domiciled enrolments, where the student normally lived for non-educational purposes before starting their course. Whilst not 100% comparable to the University's data which includes all students, White UK domiciled students have for the past 4 years made up c 70% of the national student population: 76% in 2017/18 reducing slightly to 73% in 2021/22; meaning that in 2022/23 the University's percentage of White students was closely aligned with the national percentage average.

The percentage of the University's students not disclosing their ethnicity was relatively low from 2018/19 (2.24%) to 2020/21 (4.46%). There was a spike in 2021/22 of 10.41% of University students not declaring their ethnicity but this has fallen back down to 3.12% in 2022/23

Student Ethnicity - excluding White & Not Given

Legend: 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23

Categories: Arab, Asian-Bangladeshi, Asian - Chinese, Asian - Indian, Asian - Other, Asian - Pakistani, Black - African, Black - Caribbean, Black - Other, Gypsy/Traveller, Other, Other Mixed, White & Asian, White & Black African, White & Black Caribbean
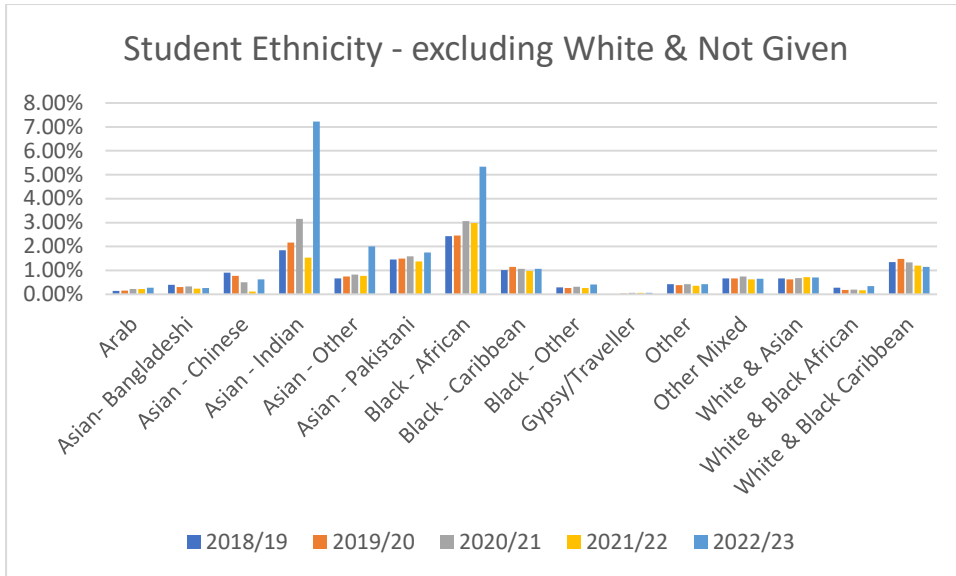
The ethnic split of the University's student population in 2022/23 shows an increase in the number of students of Asian-Indian ethnicity from 1.84% (185) in 2018/19 to 7.22% (703) in 2022/23; Asian – Other ethnicity from 0.66% (67) in 2018/19 to 2.01% (196) in 2022/23; and Black-African ethnicity from 2.43% (245) in 2018/19 to 5.34% (520) in 2018/19. These increases are mostly in the Worcester Business School and are reflective of the growth in international students in 2022/23 in that area of provision.

5.5   Sexual Orientation

Since 2019/20 it has been compulsory for universities, in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, to return sexual orientation data as part of the HESA return. This change was reflected, at the University, in a decrease of 'unknown' returns in 2018/19 from 10.25% (1033 students) to 5.68% (557) in 2019/20 but rising again to 8.67% in 2022/23. The University's data tracks the national picture although at the time of writing the national 2022/23 data is not available.

Student - Sexual Orientation
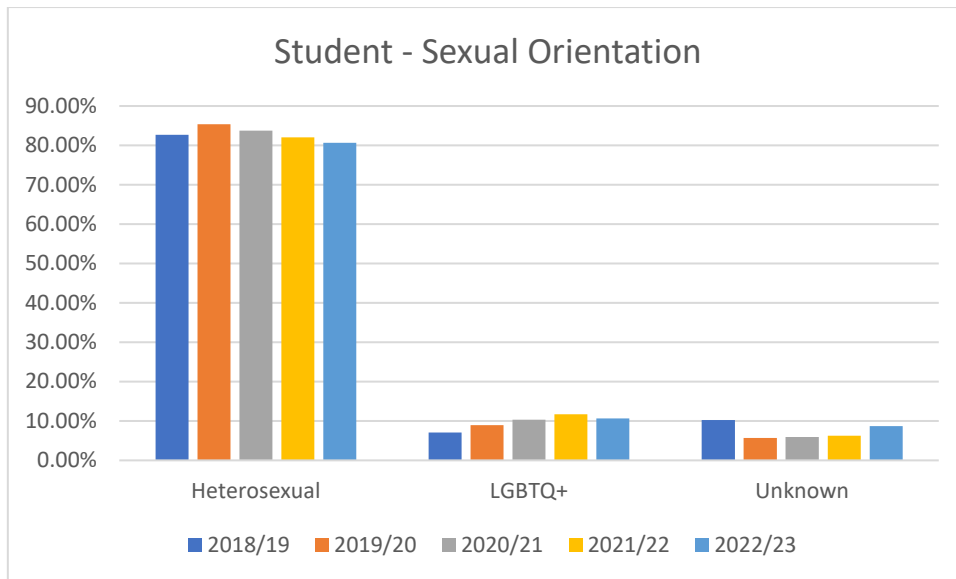
In 2021/22 11.71% of students at the University identified as LGBTQ+ compared to a national figure of 3.2% returned in the 2021 census[1], with 7.5% not responding to the question. In 2022/23 the percentage of the University's students identifying as LGBTQ+ reduced to 10.66% (1159 students in 2021/22 to 1038 students in 2022/23)

5.6   Student Religion/Belief

Religion/belief has been a mandatory HESA field since 2017/18. The University's data for 2018/19 to 2022/23 shows a generally consistent picture with between 34%-31% identifying as Christian and 51% -56% identifying as having 'no religion' and 8% - 4% 'preferring not to say'. Nationally in 2021/22 47% of students reported as having 'no religion' with 31% identifying as Christian.

---

[1] National census 2021 data – sexual orientation
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualorientatio
nenglandandwales/census2021

Students - Religion excluding Christian, No Religion and Prefer not to say
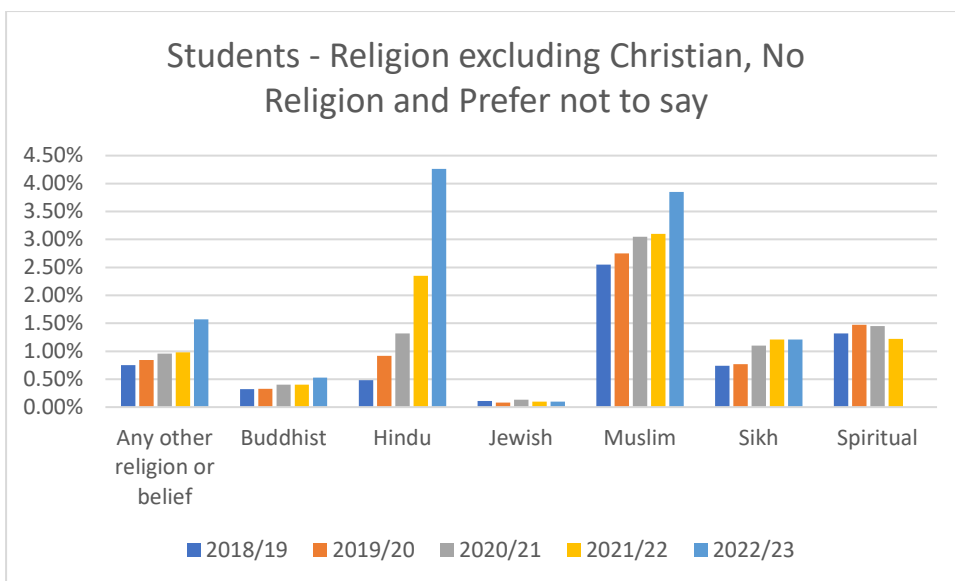
The next largest groups represented at the University of Worcester in 2022/23 are Hindu (4.25%, 415 students) and Muslim (3.85%, 375 students). The former has increased over the past five years from 0.48% and is likely to reflect the growth in international students at the University from Asia during this period. Nationally in 2021/22 the percentage of Muslim students has increased to 12% (3.10% at the University of Worcester) as did the percentage of Hindu students to 5% (2.35% at the University of Worcester).

6.   Access and Participation Plan (APP)

6.1   In 2022-23 the University was one of the first to have the new style Access & Participation Plan for 2024-25 – 2027-28 approved by the Office for Students (OfS).

6.2   The new plan, building on the University's success in previous APPs, will focus on improving outcomes for specific groups of students across the various stages of their university journey. The key aims of the plan are as follows:

We will improve access for:

- Students that are from a neighbourhood where not many people participate in higher education
- Students from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic community
- Students that have been in receipt of free school meals.

We will improve continuation for:

- Mature students (students over the age of 21 on entry to the University)
- Students with entry qualifications other than A levels
- Students from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds

We will improve degree completion and degree award levels for:

- Students with entry qualifications other than A levels
- Students from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds.

Approved by the Board of Governors, 29th February 2024
Author: University Secretary

6.3   Prior to the pandemic we were making good progress in improving continuation (students continuing with their studies), and degree award levels (students achieving a degree award of 2:1 or above). Our plan is focussed on regaining the positive impacts that we were achieving.

6.4   The University's reporting on its progress against its APP goals can be accessed via this webpage.

7.   Staff EDI

7.1   The data on which the report is based is taken from the HR system records for October 2023. It includes the core* staff of the University, total headcount 1,183. This is a slight increase from the total in 2022 of 1,171.

All staff are prompted to update their personal details and protected characteristic profile at various times during the year and especially when the Staff HESA census date of 31 July is approaching.

Until August 2019 it was possible to compare the data for the University with the data for the higher education sector as a whole collected through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). As from 1 August 2019 it was not mandatory to report data to HESA relating to 'non-academic' staff. At this university we continued to report 'non-academic'/professional services staff, however some HEIs have not reported, and this makes comparison with the national situation less robust. The higher education sector employs circa 425,000 people in total.

*Associate Lecturers and Students working part time within the University while they study are not included. The contractual situation for these two groups fluctuates during the year. Some who currently appear in the HR record might not undertake any work in the current year for a variety of reasons. Some Associate Lecturers might not be offered a contract and/or may decide to decline a contract for a period and return the following semester or year. Similarly, students may well work in their first and third years and decline a contract in their second year. When offered contracts, these colleagues receive written terms and conditions with hours specified, they are not given 'zero hours' contracts.

7.2   Age

The age profile for the University is shown below as % in each age group, it is unchanged from the previous years. The age profile in this university is older when compared with data from UK HE. This is because many of the academic staff who join the University of Worcester have already had a career within the sector in which they teach i.e health and education. The intersectionality of age with gender is considered below and the implications of this for policy and practice.

Age profile by %
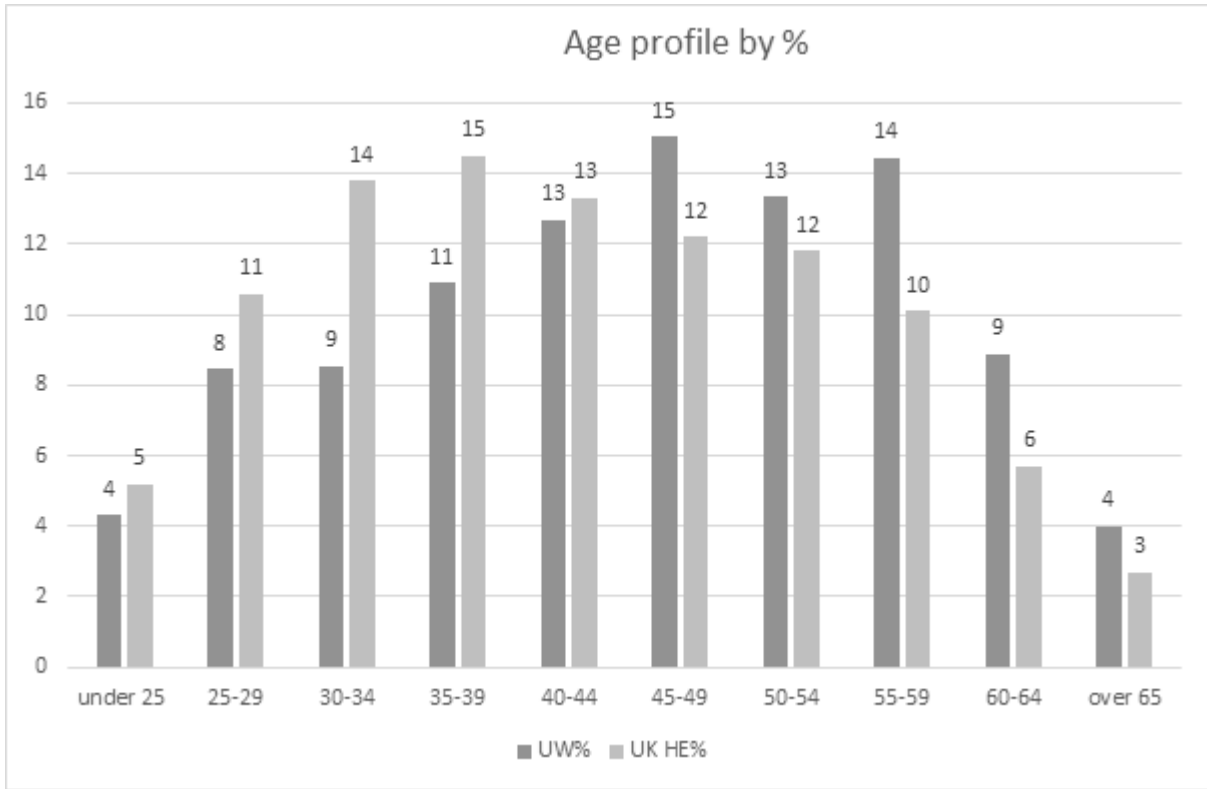
7.3 Disability

In the University of Worcester 12.6% of staff disclose a disability, this is a slight increase from 2022. In UK HE the current disclosure rate is 6.8%. This higher % of disability disclosure at the University of Worcester may well be due to the reputation for supporting students who are disabled.

The % across each category of disability is similar for University of Worcester and UK HE. The types of disability for staff are similar to those disclosed by students.

The types of disability disclosed during the last 12 months at the University of Worcester is similar to those of 2022. There has been a slight increase in the % of disclosures relating to mental health conditions.

There are various activities already underway that aim to provide advice and support for staff with disabilities and these are identified in the later sections of this report.

Categories of Disability disclosed %

Chart showing categories of disability disclosed for UW and UK HE:

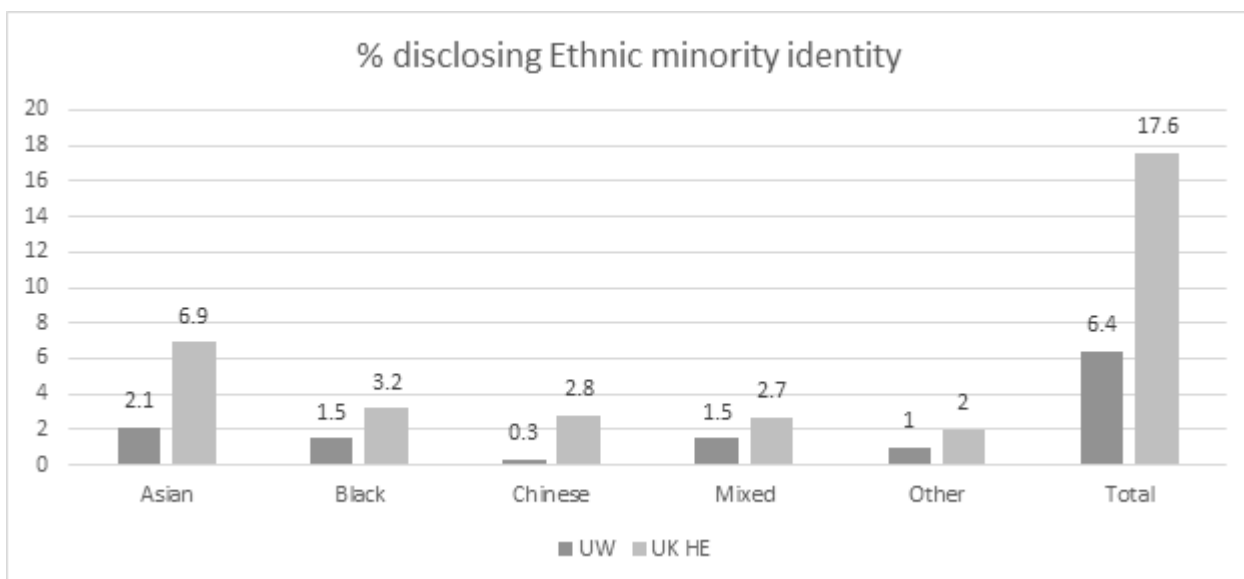| Category	UW	UK HE
Blind or a serious visual impairment...	0.1	0.1
Deaf or serious hearing impairment	0.3	0.3
General learning disability such as...	0	0.1
A long standing illness or health...	2.8	1.5
A mental health condition, such as...	1.9	1.1
A physical impairment or mobility...	0.5	0.5
A social/communication impairment...	0.3	0.1
A specific learning difficulty such as...	3.9	1.4
Two or more impairments and/or ...	0	1.1
A disability, impairment or medical...	2.7	0.7

■ UW ■ UK HE

7.4 Ethnic origin

At the University of Worcester, the data set relating to ethnic background is relatively robust with only 1% of colleagues who 'refuse to disclose' or 'not known'.

The % of colleagues who identify as being from a Minority Ethnic background in the University of Worcester has increased slightly to 6.4% from 6% in 2022. The national data for UK HE shows that 17.6% of individuals disclose their ethnic origin as being from a minority group.

The impact of regional demographic factors may well be significant in this data set. The counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire have low % of minority ethnic minority groups in the population; however, these have increased according to the 2021 Census data showing Herefordshire at 2% and Worcester at 7%.

The staff and the students in the University tend to be recruited from within the region. Attracting a more diverse applicant pool is a priority for the HR strategy, ensuring that work experience placements and staff volunteering opportunities include reaching out into the communities where the population is more diverse and raising awareness of the employment and career opportunities within the HE Sector, and at this University. Communities in areas such as Redditch are more diverse, however the regional transport links are poor, affecting the travel to work radius.

The chart below shows the % of staff from different ethnic groups in the University of Worcester and UK HE.

% disclosing Ethnic minority identity

|	Asian	Black	Chinese	Mixed	Other	Total
UW	2.1	1.5	0.3	1.5	1	6.4
UK HE	6.9	3.2	2.8	2.7	2	17.6

7.5   Gender

Over 65% of the University core staff are women and this has not changed over recent years. In UK HE the gender balance is 55% women and 45% men.

The high % of women in academic areas at the University of Worcester reflects the curriculum strengths in subjects allied to health and education, with these occupations historically attracting a higher % of women, despite many efforts to increase the % of men. This is 'horizonal' occupational segregation where gender still appears to be a factor in career choice.

As demonstrated in our Gender Pay Gap reporting, the vertical occupational segregation in the University's workforce is less pronounced than in many other organisations. The data shows that the representation of women is high in all the salary quartiles including at the most senior levels.

The intersectionality of age with gender is considered below and the implications of this for policy and practice is described in later sections.

University of Worcester; Age and Gender % (N=1183)
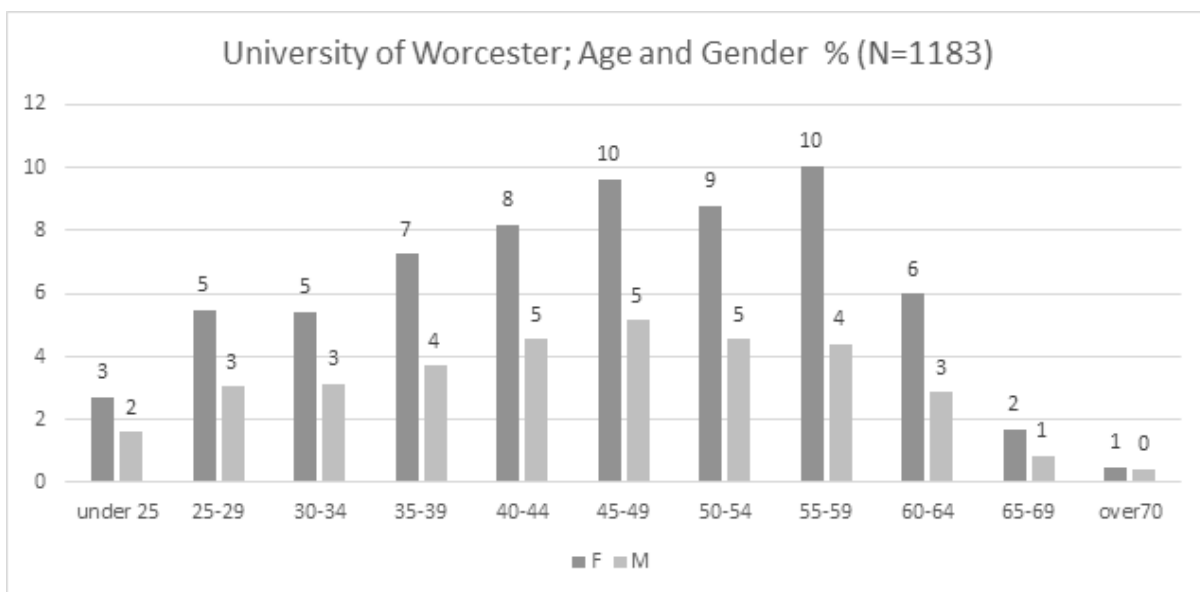
7.6 Gender identity, reassignment, or Transgender status

Completion of this field is voluntary as part of the HESA return.

It is encouraging to see from the table below that colleagues at Worcester are comfortable to answer the question.

Transgender status	2022		2023	
	% Worcester	% UK HE	% Worcester	% UK HE
Refused to say	2.6	2.1	1.94	2.11
Blank field	5.1	63.5	6.16	62.28
Gender changed since birth	0.2	0.4	0.25	0.49
Gender same as birth gender	92.2	34.0	91.65	35.11

7.7 Religion and belief, including no belief.

The chart below shows data for this University and UK HE.

	UW%	UK HE%
No religion	44.8	26.5
Buddhist	0.9	0.5
Christian	37.1	18.1
Hindu	0.3	1.2
Jewish	0.2	0.4
Muslim	1.4	2.2
Sikh	0.5	0.3

Approved by the Board of Governors, 29th February 2024
Author: University Secretary

Spiritual	0	0.7
Any other religion or belief	2.5	1.7
Information refused	10.2	7.4
Blank	2.1	41

This is not a required field for the HESA staff return therefore benchmark data for the HE Sector is limited. The UK HE HESA data shows that 41% of responses were 'blank' indicating that no data was collected.

7.8   Sexual orientation

	2022		2023	
	% UW	% UK HE	% UW	% UK HE
Bisexual person	1.8	1.3	2.4	1.6
Blank field	0	43.0	2.2	40.9
Gay man	2.0	1.3	1.7	1.4
Gay woman	1.6	0.7	1.5	0.7
Heterosexual	83.8	45.7	78.0	47.0
Other	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5
Refuse to say	10.4	7.5	13.8	7.8

The table above provides data for the University and from HE (from the HESA return). Again, the ability to benchmark the University's data to a HE benchmark is limited. This question is currently voluntary and over 40% of the UK HE respondents did not complete this field.
At Worcester, all staff completed the field, and the % of those choosing the option to 'refuse to say' has increased slightly since 2022.

8.   EDI activities in 2022-23 by EDI Framework theme

8.1   Shaping the culture

- In November 2023 the University held a World Café event for the newly formed EDI Forum. Attendees from across the University were asked to consider more than one protected characteristic from Race, Gender, Disability and LGBTQ+ and feedback on the University's strengths, priorities and areas of development and what good would look like for each of the six themes in the University's EDI framework. The outcomes of this event will inform the development of the University's EDI work going forward.
- During 2022/23 the University marked and celebrated Eid, Diwali and Ramadan through a range of student focussed events.
- A long-standing tradition has been established where colleagues, students and friends of the University gather at its flagpole to remember, pay respect, and stand in solidarity with victims of all forms of hatred. We have gathered following the 'Charlie Hebdo' murders in 2015, the Bataclan terror attacks in the same year, the 2016 mass

shooting at a gay nightclub in Florida and, subsequently, following many other tragic events. There has been active support from the University community for the people of Ukraine in response to the Russian invasion. Responding to the crisis in Gaza and Israel, the University community once again stood up to condemn all forms of hatred, holding a minute's silence on October 16, expressing their sympathy with all the victims of the Hamas terrorist massacre and all the innocent civilian victims of the subsequent bombing of Gaza.

- The University has recently developed a new decolonisation steering group, formed by a group of staff who nominated themselves through an expressions of interest process, to come together and drive this important agenda forwards. This includes the development of a University-wide community of practice to share good practice, help inform the direction of travel and to co-create the mission and values of decolonising the curricula at the University. The group has met twice so far and is currently developing its 12-month plan, which will focus on leading and developing safe, horizontal thinking and discussion spaces to foster progressive and positive change in the contexts of decoloniality throughout the University of Worcester.

- In September 2023, the University's new Three Counties Medical School welcomed its first cohort of students. The University received support from the Kildare Trust and local NHS trusts to fund 20 UK students through their four years of study. They are joined by 24 self-funded international students. The Medical School has directed recruitment primarily at those groups that are under-represented in medical courses and in the profession. This includes, in particular, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who still account for only around 10 per cent of all admissions nationally.

8.2 Student Success

- Just over 20% of Worcester's students have a declared disability and the University has largely eliminated disability continuation and achievement gaps in the student lifecycle. We have invested heavily in facilities and support for students with a disability. For example, our Disability and Dyslexia Service have introduced several new initiatives aimed at ensuring every disabled student joining the University has the maximum opportunity to get the information, advice and support they need to ensure a smooth and successful transition into university life. Online programmes, more face-to-face appointments, and specific summer schools for those with additional needs help to prepare students for life at university.

- The University has long had real expertise in teaching mature students; over half the University's undergraduate students are mature on entry particularly in such courses as Primary Initial Teacher Education, Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy and its training of Further Education teachers and its apprenticeship programmes were highly praised by Ofsted, who rated each as 'Good'.

- During 2022/23 the University had its new Access & Participation Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28 approved by the Office for Students (see Section 6). The plan sets out the University's aims for improving access, continuation, degree completion and degree

award levels for specific groups of students across the various stages of their university journey.

8.3   Supporting our staff

The staff profile helps to provide an evidence base for identifying areas of priority and a summary of our activities is provided below.

We continue to embed EDI matters into the staff employee journey at every stage, beginning with the recruitment and selection of staff.

- The job evaluation scheme that underpins the job analysis and grading system has been designed with EDI at its core; the factors and their weightings that are included in the scheme have been checked for gender bias, helping to ensure that equal pay is awarded for work of equal value.
- All those involved in staff recruitment and selection are required to attend in -person training where topics such as unconscious bias, discrimination and the current legal framework are included. These sessions also explore how the staff profile can change over time if we attract a more diverse applicant pool and how we can encourage this.
- Our work experience opportunities are now advertised widely, and we are attracting a more diverse profile of applicants; we have provided bespoke work experience to students from different cultural backgrounds studying HR in the UK.
- All new staff are made aware of the processes in place for supporting EDI through in-person induction and access to on-line training and information in our learning management system. All staff are required to complete foundation training in EDI every 2 years.
- An action for 2023/24 is to improve data completion and reduce the number of blank fields for gender identity, religion and belief and sexual orientation.
- Training for new staff and their managers in navigating induction, probation, mentoring and appraisal schemes addresses EDI issues. The topic of 'neurodiversity' and different learning styles has been considered by several groups.
- Other 'disability-related' topics have been considered within the approaches taken to enhance wellbeing. The topic of mental health has been addressed in the provision of mental health first aid programmes and suicide prevention and awareness. We have strong partnerships with expert external advisers to deliver these programmes. These programmes identify the increased risks of poor mental wellbeing that some members of minority groups might well experience.
- Our staff network groups continue to develop and flourish, these are promoted to all new staff during induction. The LGBTQ+ Network now has over 300 allies, and the network leads are supported to design and deliver awareness raising sessions for staff on the 'lived experience' of being LGBTQ+. The Disability Matters Network is taking a similar approach and the leads have delivered workshops to staff about their experiences. We have started to form a Cultural Diversity Group (working title) with advice from another university where there has been an active network for some years.

- Our network groups are invited to attend the Integrated Care System meetings for network leads. This provides an opportunity for regional collaboration. We are also encouraging staff and student network leads to explore joint working.
- Providing a vehicle for voices of minority groups to be expressed and heard is a priority. We are in the planning stage of a staff survey for 2024 where EDI topics will be explored. The EDI Forum met in 2023 to consider priorities and the feedback from this session is being collated to inform the next iteration of the EDI plan.
- The age and gender balance of the staff has indicated that menopause will be experienced by a significant proportion, and we have continued to offer support and guidance in the form of workshops. A new network group for Menopause Matters has been formed and has been a popular addition.
- The staff age profile has also shown that many staff are likely to become carers for family and friends with a diagnosis of dementia. We have arranged several open meetings on this topic with support from colleagues from the Association for Dementia Studies and a new network group is being formed to provide peer support and advice. We also continue to be in membership of the Worcestershire Association of Carers, and this provides access to legal and financial advice for carers.
- We continue to encourage the use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) on key activities and recently this has included the profile of staff making and receiving research bids. More analysis is being conducted on this aspect and will be shared with the Research EDI Task and Finish group which has been created.
- EIAs on the applications and outcomes of the promotion and reward schemes identified that those working part time (approx. 30% of all staff) were less likely to make an application. Those who made an application had a high success rate. Further investigations are underway with a view to informing the next version of the scheme.

NB. 'Part time' is not a designated protected characteristic under the Equality Act. Those who work part time are protected by other elements of employment law from being less favourably treated than a fulltime person in a similar role. Approx 30% of staff in this University work part time and this is similar in the UK HE.

8.4 Influencing the wider community

- In September 2022, the University hosted the return of its popular Worcester Valencia Basketball Camp, run in partnership with Valencia Basket. The camp provided the opportunity for youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience professional coaching as well as independent living. The University has been working with London-based charity Greenhouse Sports for several years to provide valuable opportunities for inner city youngsters to be inspired into sport and education through such camps.
- In October 2022, the University invited acclaimed journalist, Rachel Sylvester to deliver the annual Worcester Lecture. Rachel Chaired the Times Education Commission, which was set up to examine the future of education in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, declining social mobility, new technology and the changing nature of work. In the lecture she called for reform, giving the audience an insight into the many months of evidence the Commission had heard.

- The University's work to drive social mobility through educational opportunities for children was recognised in July 2022, when it triumphed in the Levelling Up Universities Awards 2022, winning the award for Strong Foundations in Early Years.
- In 2022/23, staff at the University selected Worcester Foodbank as their Charity of the Year, and have raised thousands of pounds in cash, as well as donated hundreds of items, to help people who need basic essentials.
- Staff at the University, including the Vice Chancellor, have openly spoken out several times against all forms of hatred and violence, including when Russian forces launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in March 2022. The University continues to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and held a special event to mark the first anniversary in March 2023. The Ukraine flag continues to fly at the University's campuses.
- The awards ceremony cited how the University had given young children the opportunity to participate in events and provided study opportunities at The Hive.
- A website developed by staff in the University of Worcester's Association for Dementia Studies, is being rolled out across hospitals across Wales. The Care Fit for VIPS website is a free online resource that allows health professionals to self-assess a service or organisation against a set framework to ensure it meets dementia-friendly requirements. It also enables them to identify areas for improvement and signposts to resources relating to each area of the framework. The website also gives professionals a template to put plans into action.
- The University's Association for Dementia Studies (ADS) has authored a pioneering toolkit which will help GPs adapt their buildings and their physical environment for people with disabilities and conditions, such as dementia, neurodiversity and anxiety. The 'Designing for Everyone' kit was commissioned by primary care building specialists Assura and written by the University's Association for Dementia Studies .
- New national guidance for universities on how to respond to a student suicide was published in December 2022, co-authored by Professor Jo Smith at the University of Worcester. *How to respond to a student suicide: Suicide Safer guidance on postvention*, sets out the steps institutions should take to plan for, respond to and learn from deaths, and includes advice on serious incident reviews and attending inquests. Jo Smith was awarded an MBE in the 2022 New Year's Honours in recognition of her work in this area.
- The University of Worcester Arena celebrated its 10th anniversary in April 2023. In its first decade it has welcomed more than 4.7 million people, including 1.3 million children, who have come to participate in or spectate at a wide variety of events.
- Over the course of 2022/23, the Lakeside Campus ran several hugely successful holiday clubs with more than 600 places for children fully funded via the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme in Worcestershire. The HAF supports children who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM), children assessed by the local authority as being in need, at risk or vulnerable, young carers, looked-after children, and children from refugee families, among others.
- Since 2020, the University has worked with St Paul's Hostel to evaluate *Worcestershire Housing First*, a scheme designed to support rough sleepers back into permanent accommodation and a core strand of *Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy*. Housing First is an approach which provides a stable, independent home to rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs, supporting them with intensive personalised support and case management. The evaluation, led by Dr Peter Unwin, was co-designed with a strategic group consisting of stakeholders from West Mercia Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service, Worcestershire Community Trust and service users and seeks to understand the impact of *Housing First* on individuals and their outcomes;

to assess the fidelity of the pilot in relation to the scheme's principles; and to understand the costs and benefits.

- Dr Pamella Murray Hopkin from Worcester Business School has been part of a collaborative team of academics and health and education professionals brought together by the Children's Alliance to examine the physical health, mental health, educational and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on children and families. A series of four reports published in Summer 2022 set out the fundamental problems facing UK society going forward and present a set of recommendations as to how these problems can be addressed.

8.5 Developing an inclusive approach to Research and Knowledge Exchange

Engaging the community in the University's extensive research activity is a key priority and each year several free exhibitions, displays and lectures take place. The 2023 Pint of Science Festival saw several events take place in local pubs, where members of the public could hear about a range of research at the University, from using drones in flood management to forensic science. Meanwhile, the annual Images of Research exhibition held at The Hive gives the community further insight into the vast array of research and its impact on wider society.

8.5.1 Families

A collaborative project between colleagues in the Three Counties Medical School, Worcester Business School and external partners, was awarded funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) i4i funding scheme to develop technology to help parents care for babies with complex heart conditions. This project developed a prototype mobile application of a paper-based Congenital Heart Assessment Tool (CHAT2) to help parents to monitor their baby's condition at home using a traffic light system to indicate the need for involvement of healthcare professionals, based on the daily monitoring of their baby's condition and behaviour.

8.5.2 Gender

Dr Anna Muggeridge, Lecturer in History, is being funded by the British Academy to explore the role of women in local government. This project will rethink our understanding of the impact of enfranchisement on women's politics in Britain, taking a new methodological approach to the historical debate surrounding the difference the vote made to women's lives. It takes a collective biographical approach, centring on the experiences of sixteen women mayors from across England and Wales in the interwar years. These women were involved in political and non-partisan women's organisations on a local level, with their activism taking place exclusively within their communities. Much existing research into women's participation in politics and public life to date has centred on participation at national level, with comparatively limited attention paid to activism at a local level. This project will begin to correct this, revealing the significance of the local to women's politics in

this period, and reshaping our understanding of women's activism post-suffrage, which may contribute to overcoming women's low participation rates in politics today.

Dr Muggeridge also worked with Emeritus Professor Maggie Andrews on a Leverhulme Trust funded project examining the role of Lady Denman in the women's movement in the first half of the twentieth century. Both these projects are part of a longstanding focus in our Department of History on gender politics in the 20th century.

Researchers in our Interpersonal Relationships and Wellbeing Research Group have published a number of outputs in the last 12 months focused on domestic violence and abuse, including studies examining the professional Quality of Life of domestic and sexual violence advocates; peer mentoring among survivors of abuse with disabilities or multiple disadvantages; and Improving the 'victim journey' when reporting domestic abuse cyberstalking to the police.

A special edition of *Frontiers in Education* focusing on *Women in STEM Education* as a means to promote educational inclusion was edited and presented by Dr Karen Blackmore.

The special edition provided an opportunity for researchers across the international STEM community to explore the challenges and facilitators for STEM learning environments and evidence and share best practice of innovative STEM pedagogy. The special edition was promoted through a variety of international networks and was open to contributions from any first or last author who identified as a woman. It enabled the exploration of long-standing biases and gender stereotypes which discourage girls and women from science-related fields and from pursuing a career in academia and in different professional environments. The edition highlighted the diversity of research performed across the entire breadth of STEM education and presented advances in theory, experimental pedagogy, and methodology, with applications to compelling on-going issues. Articles included the exploration of stereotypes in the German physics Olympiad competition, a sobering exposition of the learning climate experienced by Korean female engineers at university and cutting edge pedagogical approaches including deploying mobile technology in primary science classrooms and the use of block and unplugged programming to foster computational thinking.

In summary, the SE promoted the work of women scientists and educators, across all fields of STEM education including mathematics and engineering, whilst advocating for female representation in key roles in the field. Ultimately it informed current debate on ways the scientific community can ensure equitable education contributes to fairer and less biased academic and professional STEM environments worldwide.

8.5.3   Disability

Researchers in our Social Pedagogy Research Group, led by Dr Carla Solvason and Dr Alison Prowle, are working with Blaenau Gwent Disability Services on a longitudinal project that seeks to better understand the support provided by Blaenau Gwent for children and young people with a range of disabilities, at various phases during their lives. Data will be collected at regular intervals across a five-year period, with four groups of children aged 14, 17, 20 and 23 at the start of the research. The aim of the project is to create a picture of the child's support experience across their transition from teenager to adult and to provide

recommendations for the future development of the service. The project also has the potential to feed into disability services elsewhere in the UK.

A team of researchers from the School of Sport and Exercise Science and the School of Psychology have been conducted an interdisciplinary evaluation into the impact of the Invictus Games Düsseldorf 2023. The principal on-the-ground researcher throughout the evaluation has been Dr Emma Richardson, supported by Professor Don Vinson (project lead), Professor Győző Molnár and Dr Gabriela Misca. This evaluation has been commissioned by the Royal British Legion as part of their ongoing mission to support wounded, injured and sick military personnel in their ongoing recovery. The research focuses on the British team which for the Düsseldorf Games comprised 59 competitors, 6 reserves, 11 lead coaches and a number of support staff, assistant coaches, ambassadors and medical personnel. More specifically, the project will focus on the experiences of three key groups:

- Competitors – exploring how the competitors' mental health and wellbeing will have been impacted by their Invictus Games experience and how their identity will have been shaped;
- Families – understanding how families are impacted by the competitors' injury and their recovery journey; and how they support the recovery journey of the competitors;
- Coaches – investigating how coaches are supported to facilitate the most valuable recovery environments possible and how they balance their roles supporting performance and aiding recovery.

As the evaluation's timeframe goes beyond the Düsseldorf Games in September, the project will continue for a further 18 months to help understand the longer-term impact of involvement with the Invictus Games programme as a whole.

8.5.4 Mental Health/Neurodiversity

Researchers in our **Mood Disorder Research Group** continue to publish experimental studies in collaboration with institutions all over the world which have explored the genetic make-up of bipolar and other mood disorders: for example the group has been part of a global study that has implicated genetic factors in suicide attempts. This work will have longer term translational impacts, but the team have also engaged in work that is bringing more immediate benefits to those affected by mood disorders, for example, through its mood monitoring which enables people with a mood disorder to better track and understand changes in their mood. Another key area of work within the group is focused on understanding perinatal mental health, in particular risk factors for postpartum psychosis and depression, and on how midwives and health visitors can better support women in these contexts.

Professor Derek Farrell is engaged in a series of projects exploring trauma response and mechanisms for alleviating these responses. Thus, he is engaged in funded collaborative research with Northumbria University and Veteran organisations examining the experiences of veterans suffering PTSD and loneliness. He is further involved in research funded by the National Institute for Health Research led by Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust looking at how EMDR therapy can alleviate PTSD symptoms in adults with intellectual disabilities.

Thinking Differently was initially conceived by Meadow Arts and UW (led by Simon Taylor) as a small-scale project to explore how artists think, promote innovative creative practice in educational settings and new ways of gathering evidence of the wider community benefits of creativity. The project had very clear aims and a remit to explore and test the potential link between how contemporary visual artists express ideas and the way children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) uniquely approach the world. Initially it posed the following question:

Can well-structured, in-school arts projects, led by specialist artist practitioners, help children with SEND attain improved school results, communicate better and show improved self-confidence?

The project included a neurodiverse group of children and young people based in three specialist SEND schools in the West Midlands, some with social, emotional, and mental health issues, some with Autism Spectrum Disorder and others with severe or complex learning difficulties or physical disabilities and complex health needs, supported by their teachers and teaching assistants. All three settings had experienced teachers (or in a minority of cases an art specialist), but as education practitioners they had received little or no subject-specific or arts-based professional development.

To fully realise the potential of pupils who face barriers engaging with the traditional curriculum the project involved extensive collaboration and knowledge exchange between teachers/assistants and local artists to design accessible and engaging arts based learning opportunities.

Thinking Differently generated tangible evidence of real impact in this area as detailed in the report (https://meadowarts.org/learning/thinking-differently-project/). Specifically, these included the following:

- increased communication (including signing, use of symbols and technology enhanced vocalising) of children with their teachers
- teachers/assistants feeling empowered to let children take creative control
- awareness of the role professional artists can give in inclusive curriculum design.

The project also encouraged the key partners to *think differently* about partnership itself and the sharing of expertise and knowledge between cultural organisations, higher education institutes (HEIs), teachers and practicing artists.

8.5.5 Race/Ethnicity

Professor Suzanne Schwarz, Professor of African History, is part of an international team from Canada, France and the UK that is using new research methodologies to trace the origins and experiences of individuals in the African diaspora. This multidisciplinary digital humanities project draws on a vast array of original sources from Africa and the Americas to trace fragments of evidence that shed new light on the cultural identities of Africans from the era of the transatlantic slave trade. Professor Schwarz's research on tracing the testimonies and life stories of Africans released at Freetown in Sierra Leone in the early nineteenth century is an integral part of the project. Archival sources held in the Sierra Leone Public Archives (and currently undergoing digital preservation through a British Library Endangered Archives project led by Schwarz) include reference to the ethnonyms

used to describe Africans uprooted and displaced by the trade, thereby shedding light on aspects of their origins and identities.

Dr Peter Unwin is engaging in a programme of research and knowledge exchange focused on the lived experience of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities of health and social services. One strand of this programme, funded by the NHS Race and Health Observatory, set out to identify best practice in mental health prevention in GRT communities and to co-develop with these communities culturally-competent support systems. The project was completed in March 2023 and the subsequent report set out its recommendations for mental health services: https://www.nhsrho.org/research/identifying-best-mental-health-practice-with-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-communities/

Dr Unwin has also been working with Worcestershire County Council, funded by the West Midlands Social Work Partnership, to develop training and development to support best practice for working with GRT communities within public, educational and voluntary sector organisations. This training is now available as an online package for organisations across the West Midlands and wider UK.

Researchers from across three of our Research Groups (Inclusive Sport & Physical Activity, Coaching and Performance, Interpersonal Relationships and Wellbeing) have been contracted by the Royal British Legion to evaluate the 2023 Invictus Games in Dusseldorf.

8.6 Enhancing our Infrastructure

- In April 2023 the University opened the new Elizabeth Garrett Anderson building on its Severn Campus which will be a centre for medical and health training. The refurbishment of the former 1960s print facility incorporates centrally located lifts for ease of access to the first floor, open plan space for social learning with a variety of furniture to address all needs, braille signage, a multi-faith space, and male, female, accessible and gender neutral toilets.
- In April 2023 the University also completed the development of the Severn Campus infrastructure. This work provides broad walkways and wheeled routes through the campus, with way-finding for the visually impaired as well as disabled parking spaces, some of which are also EVC points. The campus development has benefited from improved lighting and CCTV coverage making it a safe space for all.
- During 2022/23 the University's Multi-Faith space provision was reviewed. The Muslim Council of Britain's guidelines has formed the basis of the approach taken with input from student faith groups to ensure that the provision is suitable for a range of faiths. There are now multi-faith spaces on each of the University's three campuses.
- Representatives of the EDI Oversight Group met with the Disabled Students Network to discuss the signage of toilets across the campus in relation to the understanding of access. An audit of toilet signage has been undertaken and work proposed to improve this.

9.   Next Steps

During 2023/24 the newly formed EDI Oversight Group will further develop plans against each of the six themes identified in the University's EDI Framework. This work will be informed by the newly formed EDI Forum building on the outcomes of the World Café event held in November 2023. Amongst some of the activities already identified are:

- The range of multi-cultural events being celebrated at the University will continue to be developed and led by the work of the International Experience Team.
- A review of the University's EDI specific spaces is underway with actions identified from the review being implemented in 2023/24 and 2024/25.