

Preston's College

**ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION  
STATEMENT**

## **Ambition and Strategy**

Preston College is firmly grounded in its community and plays a significant role in supporting young people and adults in developing their knowledge, skills and education in preparation for employment, career advancement or further study. Preston College provides the culture, environment, facilities, resources and services to enable learners at all career stages, to make effective progress and contribute to a thriving local economy. Preston College does and will continue to play a critical role in the place making and regeneration of Preston City and the Central Lancashire City Deal area. The college is committed to widening participation, providing opportunities for all learners to achieve and progress.

Preston's College is proud of the inclusive nature of its intake, which reflects the town's growing diversity and population change. We have recently reviewed our Equality Policy in line with the general and specific duties outlined in the Equality Act 2010. We have Corporate Equality Objectives which are set for 4 years and reviewed annually by the Corporation Board. The measures outlined within this plan will complement the college Equality and Diversity Strategy Group and the measures will support the achievement of the Equality objectives. The college has ensured that the plan is underpinned by the Equality Act so that no one is directly or indirectly discriminated against.

Preston College has a clear mission and vision and is clear in its strategic positioning both within the education and training sector and geographically, in its accountability to its City and region.

The College has 3 main area of business:

- Community provision
- Technical professional and higher level skills
- Apprenticeships and employer based training.

Our Mission is 'Making our learners the most employable':

In working to deliver to our key strategic objectives, we have very much aligned our curriculum offer to regional and local economic needs. Significant focus is placed on developing practice in Teaching, Learning and Assessment in recognition that this is at the core of our provision, and the recently published 'Preston's Approach' to Teaching, Learning and Assessment reinforces our commitment to continuous improvement and development in this area. Our provision not only supports learners to achieve formal qualifications, but to also develop the skills and personal qualities that employers need and want. Maths and English development is prominent across all areas of the college curriculum and we recognise the importance of these subjects in relation to qualification success, but also in supporting and enhancing the employability of our learners.

In-line with our mission, we continue to deliver:

- A high quality overall learning experience.
- Quality teaching, learning and assessment at the core of our activities.
- Exposure to the world of work, professional CPD and enhancing employability skills for our learners, all focussed on clear career pathways.

- A critical role in the regeneration and forward planning of Preston City and its surrounding areas and the region.
- A sustainable, effective and financially sound business.
- A highly responsive approach to markets; where appropriate by operating through focused, separately branded operations, including the creation of effective partnerships.

Significant work has been carried out to align the college curriculum to regional demand and key LEP priorities, and sector body and employer engagement has supported significant improvements in terms of curriculum design, content, delivery and assessment. This enables the college to maximise opportunities for our learners, and support and often facilitate, progression into employment. The college recognises and understands its key learner groups and will ensure our strategic approaches to growth and development of HE provision is reflective of this. These key learner groups can be summarised as follows;

- 16-19 learners progressing from full-time level three studies
- Adult learners who have returned to study and undertaken an Access or HE (or equivalent) qualification.
- Adults in Employment who are wishing to upskill
- Apprentices looking to progress on to Higher or Degree Apprenticeship programmes.

Facilitating access for these groups is a key focus and we will continue to work closely with employers and our learning community to raise awareness of the impact of higher level skills development in promoting access to employment and career development. Alongside the proposed growth in full and part-time learner numbers, we aim to grow the provision of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships across key employment sectors including Engineering, Construction and Health.

Widening Access and Participation is a fundamental element of the college strategy and we are passionate about ensuring that students from under-represented groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds have fair access to higher education. A key aspect of our strategy is to build aspiration and achievement through our continuing focus on access, participation, student success and progression. The college embraces a responsive approach to student support, intervening early in relation to student challenges to maximise success for all.

### **Access and Participation Priorities**

Following the self-assessment process for Higher Education, the college has identified the following gaps:

- A. Access
  - Decline in the proportion of students from ethnic backgrounds
  - Decline in the proportion of students from low higher education participation areas
  - Decline in the number of enrolments on HE courses for those students from a deprived area
- B. Success
  - Mature learners perform better than young graduates at the college

- Learners from deprived areas do not achieve as well as those learners from non- deprived areas.

#### C. Progression

- Analysis of the TEF data identified that there has been a decrease in BME students going onto employment or further study.

The college is committed to increasing access, participation and achievement as outlined below:

- Raise participation for those learners from an ethnic background.
- Raise participation for learners from areas of low higher education participation and deprived areas.
- Raise the high grade achievement for young graduates.
- Increase progression of learners from ethnic minority backgrounds into employment or further study.

### **Activities and Support for students**

#### Advice and guidance

The College has invested into expanding its careers advice function and this activity will be embedded in the tutorial system for all HE learners. This will provide a stronger programme of support for HE students both around careers information and guidance also around further programmes of study. This will also be further highlighted in all information to prospective students. The advice and learning centre teams offer group tutorials, booked appointments and a drop-in service for confidential and impartial information, and advice guidance services.

#### Pastoral and additional support

As students are in small tutor groups, the personal tutor is able to build up an effective working relationship and ensure that needs are being met. The college is ensuring that more targeted and specialist support can be provided through central college support systems and has recruited a dedicated co-ordinator for pastoral support for HE students. The increased monitoring and support will also facilitate the identification of students who may not have applied for DSA and who would benefit from doing so. This support is beneficial in ensuring that students have support with respect to their broader needs that could be impacting on completion of the course. Further support is offered to students in a variety of ways through Learning Support Coaches who provide support on a 1:1 basis helping to break down personal, social and economic barriers to learning. Where appropriate the team signpost learners to both internal and external agencies to offer appropriate advice and support when required.

#### Academic Support

The College has an enhanced induction and study skills support so that it becomes more tailored to the needs of individual students and so that there is improved co-ordination of cross college activities. This commences pre-enrolment to enable students to prepare effectively for their course of study utilising materials on aspects such as academic study skills. The college has an additional

support team and a range of assistive technology to enable effective support for any student studying on higher education.

#### Further activities

- Visits to local schools to raise awareness and aspiration
- College based events such as taster days and open events to build confidence
- 14-16 School Links and ESOL discrete provision
- Primary and Secondary engagement, competitions, visits and access to college facilities
- College based progression events to raise awareness and build confidence, particularly in those who may not previously have aspired to higher education – Progression Ready interviews
- Events for parents and carers to raise awareness of opportunities
- University visits and increased access to national events and competitions
- Master classes for Key Stage 4 & 5 learners to improve attainment
- Employer & Engagement - Account Management
- HE Student Support Co-ordinator (pastoral)
- HE Co-ordinator
- Work placement Officers
- Career Advisors
- Financial support for hardship
- A fund will be set up to provide bursary monies to support study and buy specialist equipment
- Low fee strategy