

# EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025

# FOREWORD



**Professor Evelyn Welch**  
Vice-Chancellor and President of  
the University of Bristol

The 2024–2025 academic year was particularly challenging for the higher education sector in England. Economic pressures, shifting national policy, and wider societal debates have tested the sector's resilience and resolve. Amid these challenges, we have held firm to our core values and mission: as a place of learning, discovery, inclusion, and lawful free expression.

In this context, the University of Bristol has much to celebrate. Our ranking of 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world in the 'equality' category of the 2025 QS World Sustainability Rankings, alongside our rise to 51<sup>st</sup> in the QS World University Rankings and 9th in the Times Higher Education UK University rankings, recognises the outstanding work we continue to deliver with pride.

Our success as a global civic university hinges on our capacity to deliver tangible, positive impacts on society. Being named Social Justice Employer of the Year in the regional finals of the National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards 2024 and reaching over 4,500 young people aged 14 to 19 to discuss future job and apprenticeship opportunities, demonstrate the excellence of our Apprenticeships and Employment Outreach Team.

But there is much more to do. Our most recent Staff Experience Survey shows ongoing disparities in how our colleagues experience the University workplace, particularly in terms of disabled staff and Black staff. I am personally committed to making Bristol a university for everyone. But leadership alone cannot achieve this; every one of us shapes each others' experiences through how we collaborate and treat one another.

This doesn't mean that we stay silent or avoid contentious views. Collaboration and mutual consideration co-exist with freedom of speech and academic freedom—values that underpin the pursuit of knowledge. Universities like ours remain spaces where challenging conversations can occur with mutual respect and intellectual rigour. We must continue to navigate the balance between upholding these freedoms and fostering an environment where everyone feels safe and valued, doing so thoughtfully and collectively.

As this report indicates, there is much still to accomplish, but we achieve far more when we collaborate, communicate, and connect—guided by our values, united by our purpose, and driven by our shared ambition for the University of Bristol to be a force for good in the world.

# CONTEXT

This report outlines the action taken during the 2024/25 academic year to advance equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) at the University of Bristol. These actions align with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 that require us to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that we are operating in compliance with these requirements and operating in alignment with the Higher Education Code of Governance.



## Higher Education Code of Governance: Inclusion and Diversity

The governing body promotes a positive culture which supports ethical behaviour, equality, inclusivity and diversity across the institution, including in the governing body's own operation and composition. Diversity in this context does not just mean protected characteristics – namely age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, sex, sexual orientation and religion or belief. It includes a diversity of viewpoint, attitude and experience. It is a means of ensuring that underrepresentation and differences in outcomes are challenged and, where practicable, followed by a course of corrective action that ensures fair outcomes for all. HEIs are required by law to comply with equality and diversity legislation, and governing bodies are legally responsible for ensuring the institution's compliance. Legislation in this area does not distinguish between domestic and international students and staff.

Governing bodies need to review and report on the institution's approach to equality, inclusivity and diversity. As a minimum, they must receive an annual equality monitoring report setting out work done by the institution during the year, identifying the achievement of agreed objectives and summarising the data on equality, inclusivity and diversity that they are required to produce and publish. The report needs to consider any significant differential educational outcomes by protected groups. For most institutions, an Equality Impact Assessment and proposals for widening participation in, and increasing access to, HE will be included in report. The governing body must routinely reflect on its own composition and consider ways it can encourage diversity in all its forms, thus leading by example. This includes consideration of the impact of decisions on equality, diversity and inclusion. Each institution will decide how best to implement the Code and adopt a governance model which is proportionate and effective for their set of circumstances.



# HIGHLIGHTS

- We were ranked 2nd in the world in the 'equality' category of the 2025 QS World Sustainability Rankings.
- We were named Social Justice Employer of the Year in the regional finals of the National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards 2024.
- The School of Biological Sciences became our second school to receive a Gold Athena Swan award.
- Over 130 senior leaders engaged in an event exploring the vital role of inclusive leadership to build accountability and responsibility.
- We expanded our Chaplaincy team to better support our vibrant community, including our first-ever Hindu Chaplain and new voices from a range of faiths, cultures, and languages.
- We hosted our first Black Academic Innovation Symposium—an inspiring day of research, networking, and action, led by the Black PGR Network.
- We have had 2315 recorded engagements with our central staff EDI work in this academic year.
- Over 4,500+ 14- to 19-year-olds have learned about future job and apprenticeship opportunities via our Apprenticeships and Employment Outreach Team.
- 2,028 (22%) of our staff belong to a Staff Network.
- We launched a toolkit on supporting fathers and partners in the workplace.
- We introduced a new staff survey to improve our understanding of how colleagues experience the workplace.
- Our Returning Carers' Scheme supported 15 academic colleagues in re-establishing their research career following extended leave.
- We designed and launched workshops on being an active bystander for our staff and student communities under our Stand Up Speak Out culture-change initiative.

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Fostering equality, diversity and inclusion is a cross-cutting theme in our Vision and Strategy, meaning that this theme should be embedded in all areas of our work as a strategic imperative. And this strategy is led by our institutional values. We see our values as more than just words on a page. We want to bring them to life, so that they guide everything we do, enhancing our sense of belonging and purpose. If people shape our culture, then it follows that our values should guide the behaviours that will help build an inclusive workplace community for everyone.

## Our Values

Curious and creative

Listening and learning

Caring and inclusive

Bold and Bristolian

## Strategic aims and objectives

To drive the transformational cultural and structural change essential for creating a caring and inclusive environment, we have established specific EDI aims. These aims are designed to support all students and staff – regardless of background or identity – and are underpinned by equality objectives that ensure EDI is woven into the fabric of the University's operations.

### The aims of our EDI Sub-Strategy:

**AIM 1:** Go beyond statutory compliance to ensure equitable outcomes for our students and staff through tackling discrimination and embedding equality of opportunity across our institution. EDI Governance structure.

**AIM 2:** Attract, recruit and retain students and staff with different experiences, backgrounds and perspectives because diversity - of people and ideas - remains integral to our success.

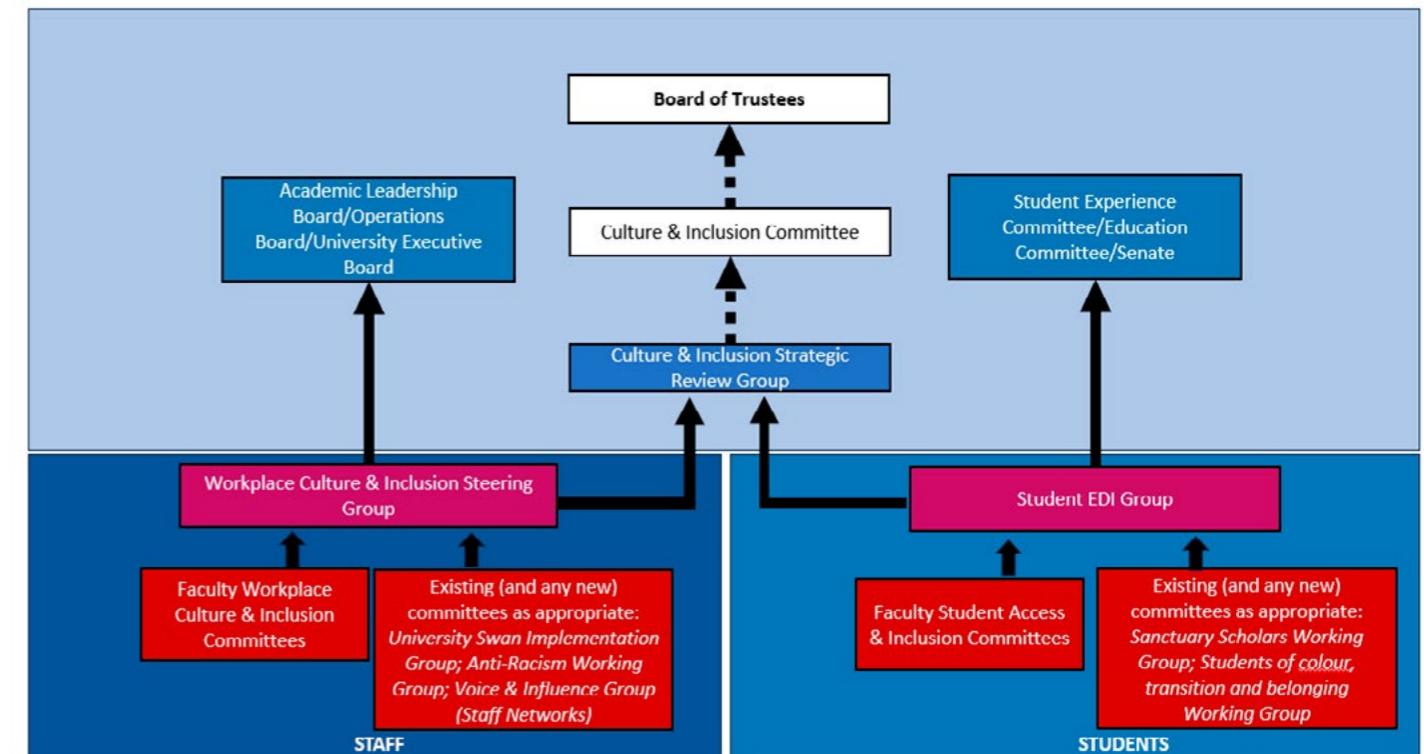
**AIM 3:** Engage all members of our University community in building a culture of inclusion and belonging, where all students and staff feel connected, empowered and respected.

**AIM 4:** Develop deeper and mutually beneficial relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders across our vibrant city to build confidence and trust in the University as an employer and provider of education and strengthening our position as a civic university delivering a brighter future for Bristol's people.

## EDI Governance structure

In 2024 we initiated a review of our EDI governance framework to develop a clearer framework for decision-making and accountability. This resulted in new central and faculty committee structures with a renewed emphasis on purposeful action to address the root causes of any inequalities rather than the symptoms.

Terms of reference have been strengthened to position equality and free speech as relational rather than in opposition, enabling us to meet legal and regulatory requirements while we continue to pursue an EDI strategic agenda that is forward thinking, agile and responsive to change.



# ACTIVATING OUR EDI STRATEGY

We've made a firm commitment to engage all members of our University community in building a culture of inclusion and belonging, where all students and staff feel connected, empowered and respected. And we must do this in a way that values difference of opinion and diversity of thought without restricting lawful free speech: we all need to be part of the conversation.

That's why we have expert teams that set our direction and ensure that collectively we can make this commitment a reality.

## The central EDI Team

Located within Human Resources, the central EDI Team are expert practitioners building organisational and individual capacity to ensure that our University is a great place to work for everybody, regardless of background or circumstance. The Team plays a pivotal role in shaping the University's strategic direction for equality, diversity and inclusion and translating it into innovative, high-impact initiatives to create and sustain an inclusive and collaborative working environment where diversity of people and perspective is valued and where everyone can reach their full potential. They also provide an internal consultancy service, providing their time and expertise to teams across the University to drive cultural and structural change.

Their work is evidence-based, informed by a nuanced understanding of staff demographics, organisational culture, and the broader legislative and regulatory landscape.



Tracy Brunnock, Head of EDI

“Equality, diversity, and inclusion are not just strategic priorities—they are fundamental to creating a thriving environment that benefits all members of our University community. Attracting and retaining people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives brings a wider range of experience, leading to improved decision-making, innovation and problem solving. Our work in this space includes intellectual diversity, difference of opinion and freedom of speech. As an institution that is dedicated to the pursuit of learning and advancement of knowledge these aspects of diversity remain critical to our success.”

Tracy Brunnock, Head of EDI

## The Student Journey Teams

Based in the Division of Education and Student Success, our Student Journey Teams bring together a range of services and activities for prospective and current students to provide an outstanding experience, including a focus on student diversity and inclusion. This includes leading the development and implementation of the University's Access and Participation Plan, which sets out our strategic commitments to addressing equality of opportunities and outcomes for students. Their remit is broader than the Equality Act – for example, considering the needs of care-leavers, estranged students, students from refugee, asylum seeker or other forced migration backgrounds, and socio-economic background.

The **Widening Participation and Postgraduate Recruitment Teams** work to diversify Bristol's student body by empowering and supporting prospective students from underrepresented or marginalised backgrounds to access the University. They deliver a range of innovative outreach programmes, collaborating with schools, colleges, educational charities and community organisations. The Team also collaborates internally to ensure we offer a range of entry routes into undergraduate study, including a transparent contextual offer system; Foundation Years for learners with no traditional qualifications; and through the sector-leading Bristol Scholars programme.

The **Student Communities Team** supports students to build a sense of community, connection and belonging at the University. The Team's focus moving forward is expanded to include transitions throughout a student's journey to improve students' experience and progression rates in their studies.

The **Student Inclusion Team** promotes a culture of inclusion and belonging for current students, supporting students to reach their full potential and enjoy a positive university experience. They are involved in work to address inequalities in student outcomes including retention and awarding gaps, providing targeted support and programmes for students such as: the Bristol Scholars scheme, peer mentoring for new students, Peer Assisted Study Sessions, mentoring for trans and non-binary students, and support for mature students, care leavers and estranged students.



“While staff and student focused teams operate with distinct yet complementary priorities, they work in close partnership adopting a ‘one community’ approach to tackle shared challenges. Key examples of this collaboration are the expansion of our Stand Up Speak Out campaign to include both students and staff and ensuring that anti-racism is considered across the entire University community—from applicants to current students and employees.”

Zoë Pither, Assistant Director, Student EDI Strategy

# EQUALITY

## Progress against our strategic aims

Our strategic aim for EQUALITY is to go beyond statutory compliance to ensure equitable outcomes for our students and staff through tackling discrimination and embedding equality of opportunity across our institution.

### The University of Bristol ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> for equality in the 2025 QS World Sustainability Rankings

The QS Quacquarelli Symond's World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025 placed Bristol at 2<sup>nd</sup> in their 'equality' category. This is the world's largest international education network. 1,744 universities were assessed in areas such as staff gender balance and disability support.



## Anti-Racism Work

### The Anti-Racism Working Group

The Anti-Racism Working Group continues to influence people-focused policy and practice. Over the last academic year, they received regular updates on involvement with WHEN's 100 Black Women Professors NOW! Programme, including recommendations for further action which will be subsumed into the institutional anti-racism action plan. The Group welcomed the Chief People Officer to a meeting to discuss future governance for equality, diversity and inclusion. They also shared ideas on how to close the ethnicity pay gap for Black staff with the Head of Reward and Benefits, reflecting on how this was a symptom of recruitment, promotion and the representativeness of staff composition.



Dr Jane Khawaja, Director of Bristol Innovations (Programmes) and Chair of the Anti-Racism Working Group



## Being Anti-Racist: Building awareness and accountability

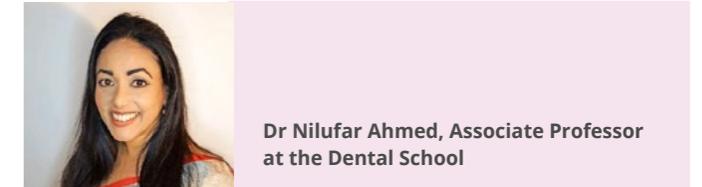
Two targeted workshops were delivered by the Real and Authentic Representations of Africans and Caribbeans (RARA) Education Project as part of the Being Anti-Racist development programme. In the five years since it was launched by our Anti-Racism Working Group, 2,141 staff have engaged with the Being Anti-Racist programme, representing 23% of the workforce.

We've also been delivering Anti-Racism in Practice workshops to teams of colleagues who work together that are designed to strengthen participants' understanding of their own relationship with race and reflect on individual and team practice. The workshop culminates in the development of a team action plan. 156 staff from 10 teams attended these workshops in 2024/25. Over 70% of our Student Experience services have now completed the workshop and are embedding the learning in their work.

"I found it so helpful to link this to work and our team throughout the day as it helped to think about meaningful changes I could make individually and what we can do better as a team."

Anti-Racism in Practice participant

116 colleagues engaged with our Everyday Exclusions: Understanding and Managing Racial Microaggressions workshops. These sessions are expertly led by Dr Nilufar Ahmed, Associate Professor at the Dental School, and a multi-award-winning Accredited Psychotherapist, Diversity and Inclusion trainer, and consultant. Nilu's facilitation has consistently received 100% positive feedback, reflecting the value and impact of this important work.



Dr Nilufar Ahmed, Associate Professor at the Dental School

## Reparative Futures Programme

This year saw Reparative Futures achieve significant progress across its foundation and mobilisation phases. As the core principle is co-creation, a key focus has continued to be listening to and learning from people of the Black African & Caribbean diaspora, and those with experience in reparative justice, to inform how the programme can achieve a positive impact.

In September 2024, in the Malcolm X Centre St Pauls, we held our second community focused event, hosting panel experts Professor Robert Beckford and Professor Gary Younge. Despite heavy rain the venue was full, with local people sharing their views of what they wanted to see from the University. Ideas included greater investment in community engagement, celebration and archiving of cultural work, and acting as a catalyst fund. All feedback encompassed a reoccurring theme of including communities in decision making, and the notion of "nothing about us without us". Whilst the event hosted some difficult conversations, there was a recognition of the University being open to this.

Understanding the meaning of reparation and reparatory justice also came through loud and clear at the community event. Following that event, led by Professor Robert Beckford

we co-designed and delivered training to our community Accountability Partners. This took the form of a Citizens Assembly series with lectures and discussions over ten weeks led by global experts to provide the historical context, and introduce frameworks and considerations required for driving effective change within the University. These lectures have since been distilled into impactful short videos, now available to our staff and students. In 2025/26 we plan to make them accessible to the wider public.

Reparative Futures also commissioned reflective training for the University senior team, 'Re-imagining Leadership: Journeying Towards Anti-Racist Repair'; the training was designed to provide leaders with the space to reflect, learn, unlearn and relearn, both individually and collectively as leaders.

We held a successful second student engagement event and our first stakeholder event bringing together our three key community groups: our students, staff and community Accountability Partners. The event was facilitated by Dr Mena Fombo and used the 'Three Horizons' framework to help capture a vision of the programme's future and the steps needed to get there. This milestone event concluded with a voting exercise to prioritise everyone's ideas, which consistently highlighted the importance of sustainable resourcing and funding for this work, and improving understanding of reparatory justice work.

It's been a busy time; to date we have captured almost 1,000 pieces of feedback through our engagement events which will help shape the programme roadmap going forward. In addition to events and training, the Programme has also sponsored the creation of the Caribbean Studies Studio – a collective of thinkers and makers, working to establish Bristol as an internationally recognised hub for Caribbean studies; tasked the community Accountability Partners to help develop equitable frameworks for the Programme; funded an Archives Apprenticeship to help support further research and continued work on the contextualisation of our building names.

We are proud to conclude this year by confirming that in response to feedback, a permanent Reparative Futures Programme team has been recruited. From September, this team will support the Programme Lead, Dr Marie-Annick Gournet, now the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor Reparative & Civic Futures. We are excited by the prospect of having a dedicated team in place to deliver this ambitious and necessary Programme.



The Three Horizons Event



Race Inclusion Advocates

### Race Inclusion Advocates

Our Access and Participation Plan sets out our commitments to address the awarding gap affecting global majority students. Research shows that one of the factors contributing to the awarding gap is students' experiences at the University which affect their sense of belonging. The Race Inclusion Advocates are students employed to work with the University to improve students' experience and help us foster a culture of belonging in different areas of our work.

In May, around 50 senior leaders attended the powerful and inspiring Dear University forum, which was conceived, planned, and led by the Race Inclusion Advocates. It was a day of important and productive discussion about how we can best partner with global majority students to build an anti-racist culture that celebrates diversity and challenges exclusion. There were open and honest conversations about closing degree awarding gaps, creating stronger communities, and turning intentions into real action.

Over the course of the year, the Advocates have also:

- Worked with Sports, Exercise and Health on developing the Black Student Sport project.
- Developed a framework with the Student Wellbeing Service to help them better understand and navigate conversations about racialised experiences and racism.
- Helped shape the processes for the Belonging Fund, open to all students from global majority backgrounds to support student-led, unique and innovative efforts to improve the sense of belonging and community. Over 700 students have engaged with this Fund.
- Worked with the Student Inclusion Team to develop the new Horizons programme as part of our new Access and Participation Plan.
- Worked with the Global Lounge and Student Inclusion Officer (International) to run a stall as part of the Study Recharge festival which engaged over 100 students.



### Be More Empowered for Success Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Programme

Now in its fourth year, this Programme was developed to build meaningful connections and enhance the student experience of Home PGRs of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage. Key to its success is the team of PGR Advocates, who bring their experience and understanding to the role. In 2024-25, the programme engaged with approximately 26% of its demographic of interest, with 57% of participants attending multiple events. Activities included a careers-focused event, movie night, theatre trip and craft workshops.

*"I attended a careers event... it was brilliant because it really focused on inclusion and diversity, which is never really the case in these events... Very inspiring actually."*

**Be Empowered: Transforming Academic Expertise into Career Success participant**

### PhD Scholarships for applicants of Black heritage

In 2024-25, the University took targeted action to address underrepresentation of students of Black heritage in our postgraduate research (PGR) community. A ringfenced scholarship was created to address inequalities and support the pipeline into research careers for Home fee-paying, UK-domiciled applicants of Black African, Caribbean or other Black heritage. Six of these scholarships were awarded across the Faculty of Arts, Law and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences for 2024-25 entry, and all faculties are recruiting to scholarships for this demographic for 2025-26 entry.

### Perivoli Africa Research Centre (PARC) – Update on the Africa Charter

PARC has continued to champion a transformation in research relations with Africa, expanding the scope and reach of the Africa Charter for Transformative Research Collaborations. Highlights from the past year include:



Brussels workshop participants

### Embedding the Africa Charter in the European Higher Education landscape

A workshop in Brussels, co-convened with the Coimbra Group of Universities, brought together around 120 university leaders, officials from the European Commission, UN representatives, and funders to explore how to build equitable and transformative research partnerships. Several further organisations signed the Charter, and a new Africa Charter subgroup of the Coimbra Group's Global Partnerships Working Group was launched, to develop joint funding proposals.

### Building and equipping a community of Africa-facing researchers at the University

PARC's successful bid for £100,000 EPSRC-ESRC Impact Accelerator Account support funded a major new initiative: Developing Impact in Equitable and Transformative Partnership Working with Africa. One outcome is a playbook which supports researchers and research managers at every

project stage to co-create partnerships that are aligned with the Africa Charter's vision for transformative change.

### Tripartite institutional agreement with UCT and UNISA

PARC, with partners at the Universities of Cape Town (UCT) and South Africa (UNISA), established a formal tripartite agreement between the three institutions. This agreement will help us work together to promote the Africa Charter globally.

### Looking ahead

In early 2025 PARC welcomed a new Academic Director, Professor Leon Tikly, who will guide the Centre's work alongside PARC's Chair in Africa Research and Partnerships, Professor Isabella Aboderin. Having undertaken a strategic planning process, PARC 2.0 will now expand its work, including increased engagement with diverse University communities and the diaspora in Bristol.



Professor Leon Tikly

## Spotlight on.....The Inclusive Research Hub

The Inclusive Research Hub is a dynamic, evolving resource developed by the Inclusive Research Collective in partnership with the University of Bristol's People Development Team, with financial support from an Enhancing Research Culture award. It was created in response to increasing calls for research that is not only more equitable and inclusive, but also intellectually robust.



Stages of Inclusive Research poster

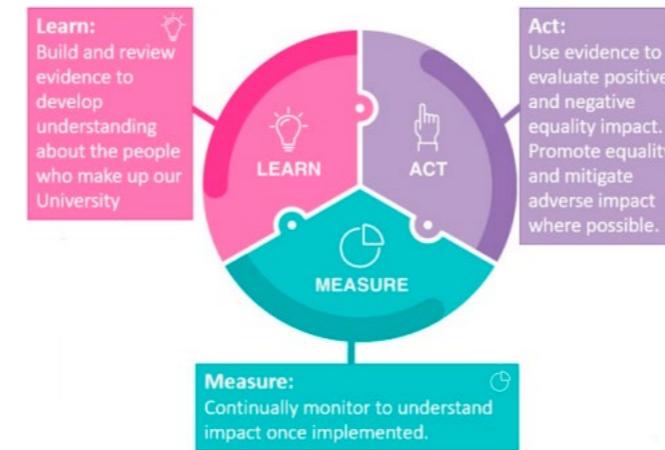
Acknowledging that research can often perpetuate societal inequalities, the Hub serves as a starting point for researchers across disciplines to critically examine their practices, engage with key concepts, and discover practical strategies for meaningful change. Rather than offering a rigid framework, it promotes flexible, context-sensitive approaches and invites ongoing contributions to foster collective growth and improvement.

Now available as a free external website for the higher education sector, the Hub is organised around six core stages of the research process. It features over 20 sections covering topics such as reflexivity, literature reviews, budgeting, pre-registration, open-source tools, and effective communication. It also includes a selection of case studies showcasing real-world research that exemplifies the principles of inclusive practice.

Colleagues are encouraged to explore the Hub, share feedback, and reach out, via the webpage, if they are interested in contributing or collaborating in its continued development.

# ENSURING OUR POLICIES ARE INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN

## Enhancing our approach to Equality Impact Assessment



During 2024/2025 the policies and processes that were impact assessed include:

- Pregnancy loss guidance
- Neonatal care leave
- Volunteering Policy
- Work-Related Stress policy
- Harassment and Sexual Misconduct
- Conflict of interest outside work
- Smoking Policy
- PGR Start Dates Policy
- University Academic Calendar Policy

Over 50 staff members involved in policy development and decision-making participated in workshops to help embed EIA as 'business as usual'. Going forward, EIAs will also take into account freedom of speech within the law, reflecting our commitment to protecting and promoting this right.

Our LEARN-ACT-MEASURE model and resources continue to play a pivotal role in embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion into our decision-making processes. This approach equips colleagues with the tools and resources needed to proactively assess the equality impact of policies, decisions, and activities, ensuring they are inclusive by design. This not only fosters a more inclusive environment but also enables us to demonstrate 'due regard' to the aims of the Equality Duty.

# 20 Years of Athena Swan



CELEBRATING  
**20**  
YEARS

Celebrate with us  
#AthenaSwan20



Professor Judith Squires,  
Deputy Vice Chancellor and  
Provost

We were one of the founding signatories of the Athena Swan Charter in 2005 and, although significant progress has been made, many challenges remain. As a signatory, we've committed to a rigorous self-assessment process and the setting of clear goals that would represent real efforts to improve gender equity, including fundamentally revising our academic promotions framework and leadership training, and introducing flexible working

In addition to this increase of women in senior roles, we now have better support for parents and caregivers, and a shift in workplace culture because of the policies and practices that we have introduced. Our last institutional submission looked at the intersection of sex and race, evidencing the underrepresentation of both female and male global majority staff in our career pipelines and we are developing targeted actions, as part of our work with the Anti-Racism Working Group, to tackle this issue. However, gender equity isn't just about representation, but the creation of a culture where everyone, feels valued and supported. Athena Swan awards have not been the driver for our gender equality work, but rather a gauge of where we are. In a time when the higher education sector faces unprecedented challenges we will continue to listen, adapt, and push for deeper cultural shifts, because gender equality isn't just about policies: it's about people, progress, and the pursuit of fairness.

arrangements. With the signing of our landmark agreement with UCU in 2020, we have taken steps to tackle the level of female professors, exceeding our target set for 2023, with 35.2% female professors currently, as compared to the sector representation of 29.7%.

2024/25 saw three schools being recognised for excellence in gender equality under the Athena Swan Charter: Bristol Dental School and the School of Physiology, Pharmacology and Neuroscience).

We now hold an institutional Silver award, along with 9 Bronze, 9 Silver and 2 Gold School-level awards. Moving forwards, and to ensure alignment with the new EDI governance structure, Athena Swan applications will be made at faculty-level, where greater impact towards gender equity can be made. A member of the central EDI Team will attend faculty Self-Assessment Team (SAT) meetings to help guide the process and provide support during this transition period.



## Currently held School-level Athena Swan awards

### BRONZE

- Bristol Veterinary School
- School for Policy Studies
- School of Economics
- School of Education
- School of Geographical Sciences
- School of Sociology, Politics and International Relations
- School of Psychological Science
- School of Humanities
- Business School

### SILVER

- Bristol Dental School
- Bristol Medical School
- School of Cellular Molecular Medicine
- School of Chemistry
- School of Earth Sciences
- School of Law
- School of Mathematics
- School of Physics
- School of Physiology, Pharmacology and Neuroscience

### GOLD

- School of Biochemistry
- School of Biological Sciences

## Working with the EDI Caucus



We worked in collaboration with the EDI Caucus, a multidisciplinary team led by Professor Kate Sang (Heriot-Watt University Business School) funded by the ESRC, AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, Innovate UK and the British Academy, as a test site looking at how to increase support for staff and students who

experience problematic menstruation and symptoms of the perimenopause or menopause. Additionally, the Equality, Liberation & Access Officer (Bristol SU) and colleagues within the Student Experience Team have worked with the Campus Division to run a successful trial of provision of free sanitary items, which is now being rolled out at eight locations around campus.

## Supporting fathers and partners in the workplace toolkit

We initiated efforts to enhance support for fathers and partners in the workplace, with the long-term goal of boosting the uptake of Shared Parental Leave over a 5-year period. To kickstart this initiative, we launched the 'Supporting fathers and partners in the workplace' toolkit, bringing together a mix of pre-existing internal support and external resources.

## Faculty and Divisional EDI Committees

### Arts Law and Social Sciences

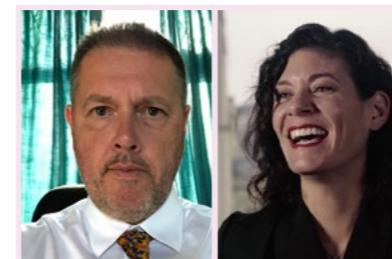
The Faculty of Arts, Law and Social Science has continued to work in partnership with the central EDI team on three focused priorities:

1. **An inclusive culture** – acceptable behaviour and inclusive culture training for students across all Schools and Centres helps to create a culture of belonging, acceptance, and respect. Feedback from the Staff Experience Survey has informed action to support a healthy and inclusive workplace culture. For example, the School of Humanities hosted a family and carers day picnic which had such positive feedback that it will become an annual event. The School for Policy Studies and have active mentoring schemes (with Economics piloting a specific scheme for junior female academics). Colleagues within the School of Arts (Film & TV) and School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies have established networks to positively support First Generation Scholars. The Centre for Academic Language and Development have created newsletters detailing resource and support to ensure that colleagues feel valued and part of a community. We are proud that all Schools and Centres have an active agenda of hosting and promoting EDI related events within and beyond our communities.

2. **Diversity of representation** – We continue to aim to diversify our workforce of academic and professional services colleagues, focusing on opportunities to support and attract members of the global majority. The Bristol University Press has launched a new initiative to support Early Career Researchers in the Global South and Diasporas. An interview protocol for academic recruitment was developed to enhance consistency and fairness for all candidates. Colleagues in the Centre for Innovation are working on an ERC funded project to improve the outcomes of People of Colour within the University using participatory and design led methods.

3. **Governance and compliance** – Schools have taken proactive steps to embed the Public Sector Equality Duty into School governance, raising awareness of legal responsibilities and laying the foundation for more inclusive decision making. All of our Schools and Centres have implemented the Sexual Harassment Preventative Duty through risk assessments.

All of our EDI leads look forward to the year ahead as we form our new strategic priorities aligned with the new committee structures and transition to faculty-led Athena Swan submissions.



Professor Melissa Allen Associate Dean and Dominic Freda Faculty Operations Manager, Faculty EDI Lead for Arts, Law and Social Sciences

## Faculty of Health and Life Sciences (FHLS)

The FHLS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee focused work around three strategic priorities:

1. **Increasing Diversity of Representation** - Stand Up, Speak Out Active Bystander workshops were delivered across several Schools and cross-faculty groups. This initiative will continue into 2025/26, expanding access for both staff and students to support a culture of respectful engagement. Committee members delivered tailored workshops on Decolonising the Curriculum to staff in Biochemistry, Cellular and Molecular Medicine (CMM), and Biological Sciences. Each session focused on decolonising the science curriculum and shared a consistent core structure, with feedback indicating strong engagement and valuable insights gained. Further work in this area includes the launch of an EDI and Sustainability Education Pledge within the School of Anatomy, focusing initially on inclusive curriculum design.

2. **Fostering a Culture of Belonging** – The faculty hosted nine major events that celebrated identity, culture, and community, including a LGBTQ+ in STEM Half Day Conference, Chinese and Lunar New Year Cross-Department Celebration, an International Women and Girls in STEM Day event and a Beyond Labels: Understanding the Spectrum of Neurodivergence panel. Feedback gathered revealed that 98% of respondents enjoyed the events and would recommend to colleagues, with 88% feeling the events fostered a sense of belonging. In addition, the Bristol Veterinary School launched an Underrepresented Student Support Network and School of Psychological Science ran a visibility campaign for women and non-binary staff.

**3. Ensuring Equitable Access and Partnerships** - A dedicated Task and Finish Group has been established to improve systemic support for staff and students with long COVID and related conditions. The group is focused on enhancing resources, raising awareness, and strengthening peer support and accessibility within the Faculty. The Faculty celebrated 3 successful Athena Swan awards (Biological Sciences – Gold award, Bristol Dental School – Silver renewal, Physiology, Pharmacology and Neuroscience (PPN) – Silver award) and the Bristol Medical School embedded co-produced EDI priorities into its new strategy, which will be overseen by its newly-formed EDI Board.

Over the next academic year, we are implementing governance changes to establish separate, but complementary, staff and student EDI committees, enabling more targeted action. Key priorities include strengthening support for international communities, diversifying civic partnerships, and improving event planning. We are also planning a faculty-level Silver Athena Swan submission by November 2028, with a Self-Assessment Team to be formed in late 2026 to oversee and support this application.



Dr Dave Lawson,  
Faculty EDI Lead Health  
and Life Sciences and  
Dr Lara Lalemi, Faculty  
EDI Officer

## Faculty of Science and Engineering

The faculty's strategic priorities were developed jointly by the Staff and PGR EDI Committee and the Student EDI and Widening Participation Sub-committee, focusing on three key areas:

1. **Gender Equity and Inclusion** - the Faculty supported two 'Picture a Scientist' film screenings for staff and students, to raise awareness of gender inequality in science. Six Schools (Civil, Aerospace and Design Engineering; Computer Science; Earth Sciences; Electrical, Electronic, and Mechanical Engineering; Engineering Mathematics and Technology; and Geographical Sciences) began the Athena Swan application processes, which will now feed into the faculty-level application. A Task and Finish Group involving the Bristol Doctoral College led to a new Parental Leave Guide for PGRs, based on research into experiences of PGRs taking parental leave. We increased our collaboration with student societies, such as the Women in STEM and Women in Engineering groups, who expanded their programmes, and the faculty funded 60 students to attend the National Women in Engineering Student Conference.

2. **Anti-Racism** - the Faculty joined the Association of Black Engineers, offering staff and students access to mentors and industry-led career events. Additionally, our Black in STEM events included a careers panel with professionals from underrepresented backgrounds and a series of social events to build community and belonging.

3. **Accessible and Inclusive Workplaces** - the School of Physics submitted an application for the Institute of Physics Inclusion Award. We were proud to fund the 'Rethinking Fieldwork' project, which explored more inclusive alternatives

to traditional field-based learning and updated the AccessAble pages for both Queen's and Merchant Venturers' Buildings, following a report by WECIL. We have also engaged with several training provisions to promote inclusive workplace environments including: Empowering Behaviours workshops (Chemistry), Inclusive Recruitment training (Mathematics) and the Stand Up Speak Out (SUSO) Active Bystander facilitated sessions (delivered across the faculty). To further foster belonging, our First Gen Ambassadors supported community-building and tutor guidance, and we hosted 160 placements delivered through the faculty's Work Experience Programme for young people from underrepresented backgrounds.

Moving forwards, the Faculty will restructure its EDI governance. The Staff and PGR EDI Committee will become the Workplace Culture and Inclusion Committee, and the Student EDI and WP activity will be led by the Faculty Education Team. The Faculty will prepare its first Athena Swan Charter application by November 2027.



Dr Neha Chandarana Faculty EDI Lead,  
Science and Engineering

## Campus Division

### Strategic Objectives / Aims of the Committee

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the Campus Division prioritised three key strategic objectives to advance equality, diversity and inclusion. The first focuses on enhancing internal engagement to foster stronger collaboration and a greater sense of belonging among colleagues. The second centres on embedding our values through the development and implementation of a Framework of Behaviour, designed to promote a respectful and inclusive working environment.

The third objective aims to improve recruitment practices by making them more inclusive, with a particular emphasis on expanding apprenticeship opportunities. This approach supports the Division's commitment to nurturing the next generation of talent and ensuring access to career pathways for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

### Key Achievements & Impact

- **Campus Division Discovery Day (October 2024):** A flagship outreach initiative, this event welcomed 65 students from three local schools and colleges, including Year 8 and post-16 groups. Through nine interactive stalls featuring teams such as the Campus Division, Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus, the Dental School, and Apprenticeships & Employment Outreach, students explored a variety of career paths and opportunities. The event played a vital role in engaging underrepresented groups and raising awareness of potential career trajectories within the University.

- **Launch of the Framework of Behaviour:**

A significant step toward fostering a respectful and inclusive culture, this framework was launched division-wide. An interactive roadshow, attended by 80 colleagues, introduced the key principles and encouraged meaningful discussions about expectations, respect, and accountability in the workplace.

- **International Women's Day Panel Discussion:**

Celebrating women's achievements within and beyond the Division, the panel discussion offered an inspiring platform for dialogue around gender equality. This event reinforced the Division's ongoing commitment to inclusion and representation.

### Looking Ahead to 2025–2026

Our committee will remain proactive, with planned work including reviewing the results of our Inclusion Survey to identify priority areas for improvement and rolling out targeted workshops on acceptable workplace behaviours to all members of Campus Division.



Oliver Ramsey, Lead Statistical Analyst,  
Campus Division EDI committee Chair

## Finance Services

### Strategic objectives / aims of the committee for 2024-2025

The committee's strategic objectives focused on supporting the broader University Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Sub-strategy by embedding its principles and goals within the Division. A key priority will be the development and ongoing monitoring of a divisional Diversity Action Plan, which will guide our efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable working environment for all members of Finance Services.

### Key achievements and impact

- **Recruitment**

The Interview Schedule Pilot ran in Finance Services from January to June 2025, covering 18 vacancies. This initiative shares the interview agenda with all candidates in advance of their interview, allowing them to focus their preparations accordingly without needing to ask for this as a reasonable adjustment. Candidate feedback was positive, highlighting reduced nerves and a better experience. Managers also responded well, with feedback for clearer agenda templates, which have been incorporated. Results have been shared with the Chief People Officer, who has given his approval to adopt this as standard practice.

- **Staff Culture & Engagement**

» We've celebrated various cultural and religious festivals during our six-weekly all-staff office days this year, with themed breakfasts, decorations, and activities, for example, Shrove Tuesday, Chinese, or Lunar, New Year, and Easter.

- » Hosted a charity bake sale for Switchboard, the LGBTQ+ charity.
- » Following feedback from the 2024 staff survey, it was identified that colleagues who are disabled felt better support was needed within the Division. In response, a disability and wellbeing survey was conducted, followed by a roundtable discussion, open to all staff, which led the entire Finance Senior Leadership Team and members of the EDI group to explore ways to improve support. As a result, a number of improvements have been put in place to support staff who need it, including transport arrangements for colleagues unable to walk to different locations to attend Finance Town Hall meetings.

### Looking ahead to 2025-2026

Over the coming academic year, the Division's committee have identified several areas of focus including:

- Promote volunteering opportunities to Finance Services colleagues, encouraging greater uptake of their annual volunteering day and fostering team-based participation.
- Diversify our supply chain by engaging more local suppliers and sharing Procurement rates with local charities to support community partnerships.
- Increase workforce diversity by utilising apprenticeships, including reviewing existing roles within the Division to identify opportunities for adaptation into apprenticeship positions.
- A neuro-inclusive workshop on reasonable adjustments, led by the central EDI Team is scheduled for the Extended Leadership Team's September meeting.



Aubrey Slade,  
Strategic Finance  
Director and Rebecca  
Blake, Executive  
Assistant, members  
of the Finance EDI  
Committee

## Global Engagement Division (GED)

### Strategic objectives / aims of the committee for 2024-2025

Our aims are to support and enhance the experience of working in GED, ensuring that all team members feel empowered, recognised, and valued. We are committed to having a positive impact on our workplace culture by identifying and delivering meaningful actions that remove barriers and promote a sense of inclusion and belonging across the team and in all areas of our work.

To achieve this, our objectives focus on embedding a culture of inclusion by design throughout GED's processes and practices. This includes integrating inclusion and belonging into our recruitment and induction processes and gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences of disabled and neurodivergent staff. By doing so, we aim to provide targeted support and foster an environment where everyone can thrive.

### Key achievements and impact

- We have redefined our aims and objectives, and created clear, deliverable action plans for the coming year.

- We have input into the creation and launch of new resources to support recruitment and induction, providing guidance to line managers and teams on making sure these processes are inclusive and providing an enhanced experience for new starters, helping to create a welcoming environment where they feel that they belong and are able to thrive from the start.
- We have enhanced our links with the Global Engagement Leadership Group, ensuring that conversations, accountability and delivery of a truly inclusive culture are a key part of the GED leadership agenda.

#### Looking ahead to 2025-2026

Looking ahead, the EDI Committee will continue to drive forward our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion with the following aims:

- We will be upskilling our committee on Equality Impact Assessments and embedding these as a tool that is frequently used across the Division.
- We will continue to listen to and learn from our colleagues, delivering focus and peer support groups for line managers and colleagues across the Division to learn from challenges faced and share best practice.
- We will identify ways to effectively highlight and share key resources, networks and opportunities from across the Division.
- We are embedding increasingly collaborative ways of working across our leadership, Staff Engagement Group, and Learning and Development Group, to ensure that together we have a clear impact on the culture and experience of being part of GED.



Sandra Jackson, Director of Strategy and Operations Global Engagement Division and Chair of the GED Workplace Culture & Inclusion Committee

### Targeted Leadership Development Opportunities

#### Elevate



This year saw the fifth cohort of the award-winning Elevate programme, with 30 participants from across six partner universities - Bristol, Bath, Bath Spa, Cardiff, Exeter and UWE.

Developed in partnership with the Ubele Initiative, Elevate brings together women from global majority groups in a transformational environment which centres the lived experiences of the participants.

The programme provides a developmental experience not only for the participants, but also for their line managers, mentors and peer learning facilitators. These individuals play an important role as part of the Elevate community, helping to facilitate the success and sustained impact of the programme.

Evaluation of the 2025 programme demonstrates significant impact; not only in terms of career progression and achievement, but also enhanced confidence, self-awareness, and development of powerful networks.

*“The programme has given me the confidence to be more visible in my institution and to be more strategic in my own development. I will be more active in seeking opportunities for developing my leadership skills and being more ready for promotion.”*

Elevate participant

- Active contribution to an inclusive environment
- Enhanced interpersonal and communication skills
- Development of reflective practice
- ‘Stepping into’ leadership with greater proactivity
- Participants sharing their learning with colleagues and ‘paying it forwards’
- Clearer sense of own leadership style and identity

### The Bristol Women’s Mentoring Network

In January 2025 the network was opened up to include colleagues on all grades (previously Grade J and above) from across Professional Services and academic pathways. 120 new mentees were paired with mentors, and a further 22 mentees joined 6 mentoring circles.

The Network provides opportunities for quality conversations to support and develop leadership and career progression. Key areas covered within mentoring include:

- Reviewing career options, planning, promotion, and progression
- Developing interpersonal skills and working relationships
- Understanding the expectations and requirements of mentees’ existing roles
- Working out work-life balance, wellbeing and managing flexibility

### FLi – our leadership initiative for women

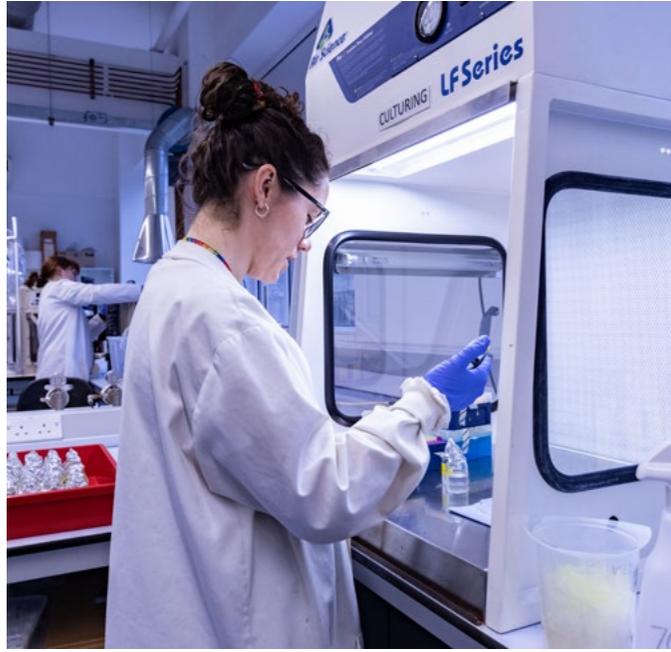


Now in its seventh year, the FLi programme welcomed 32 participants in 2025-26. Participants engaged in an extensive blended programme, encompassing: online seminars, in-person workshops, 360° feedback, Action Learning, mentoring, independent activity and self-reflection. An

important element is the opportunity to learn from peers as well as guest speakers and facilitators.

This year 100% of respondents felt that participation made a “moderate” or “significant” contribution towards developing their leadership skills, knowledge and behaviours. The wide-ranging impacts of the programme include:

- Increased confidence
- Career development and progression
- Self-awareness and appreciation of strengths
- Network and community-building



There has been an extremely positive response to the expansion of the scheme to all grades, and the People Development team is currently reviewing how mentoring activities could be made even more inclusive and accessible through further expansion.

“Expanding the mentoring network to colleagues across all grades has been a powerful step forward in creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture and tackling our gender pay gap. It’s inspiring to see how these mentoring relationships are building confidence, opening up new career possibilities, and fostering leadership at every level. This is not just about professional growth, it’s about empowering people to thrive.”

**Professor Judith Squires, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost**

# DIVERSITY

Our strategic aim for DIVERSITY is to attract, recruit and retain students and staff with different experiences, backgrounds and perspectives because diversity - of people and ideas - remains integral to our success.

## Multifaith Chaplaincy

The Multifaith Chaplaincy provides spiritual and pastoral support, weekly faith activities, lunchtime community-building events, opportunities for interfaith dialogue and cultural exchange, as well as a space for staff and students to simply ‘be’, no matter what their faith, culture or upbringing. During 2024/25 our team of Chaplains was extended to better represent and support our increasingly diverse student and staff community. This included engaging with local faith communities and offering JOIN US! Sessions. The expanded team is notable in its representation of faith, ethnicity, nationality, language and culture, including a Hindu Chaplain for the first time in the University’s history alongside Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim colleagues. This is already paying dividends in student engagement and nurturing a sense of safety and belonging.

“The MFC hosts a remarkably unique and wildly valuable community space, in which all are free to gather, meet others, and spend time with folks they know.... MFC has been a genuinely radical lifeline against the social isolation of our time.”

**End of year Multifaith Chaplaincy picnic**



End of year Multifaith Chaplaincy picnic

## Widening participation outreach work and sponsored partnerships

Work continues to attract students both through our widening participation outreach work, and through sponsored partnerships, to ensure we actively engage with learners from different communities and backgrounds. This is informed by rigorous data analysis, published in our Access and Participation Plan. This Plan sets out which groups are underrepresented in our student body, or experience inequalities of opportunity affecting their success, and the actions we will take to address these inequalities. This is complemented by our inclusive approach to Admissions and programme portfolio, which helps to remove potential barriers to access and supports equality of opportunity for all applicants.



### The Next Step Bristol programme

The Next Step Bristol programme was co-developed with current global majority students and student cultural societies to address the underrepresentation of Black and Asian students in our UK undergraduate population, as evidenced in our Access and Participation Plan. Now in its fifth year, the programme supports around 250 students in their final year of school or college by offering tailored information, application guidance, and opportunities to connect directly our University.

The Destinations Conference was developed in collaboration with The Afro-Caribbean Society. This annual virtual event enables prospective Black, Asian and mixed heritage applicants in Year 12 to attend an academic taster session, hear from cultural societies and talk to students of colour at Bristol. The number of students attending increased by 75% this year, from 106 in 2024 to 186 in 2025.

*“Hearing from the students of colour about their select experiences and accomplishments...helped me to envision the roles and opportunities that I may take on during my time at the University of Bristol. As a Black woman, I was especially overjoyed to hear from 3 other Black women who have made their unforgettable mark, also.”*

**Destinations Conference attendee**



### Access to Bristol

We deliver a range of targeted initiatives designed to engage prospective students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to address underrepresentation from socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

One of our flagship programmes is Access to Bristol, which offers local students the opportunity to experience university life firsthand. The programme acknowledges the multiple and intersecting barriers that local students may face in accessing higher education; particularly at a selective institution like ours. Through subject-specific sessions, tailored advice and guidance, and meaningful interaction with staff and students, Access to Bristol provides participants with both academic insight and practical support.

In 2024/25, 249 Access to Bristol participants selected the University of Bristol as their firm choice - a strong indicator of the programme's continued impact in supporting local progression to higher education.

### eXcelBristol Apprenticeships

Since January 2020, we have created 76 apprentice roles across Professional Services, including an Internal Auditor, Sports Turf Technician, Archivist, and Records Manager. Fifteen of those apprentices were recruited during 2024/25, eleven are based in the local region with four further afield. Six apprentices moved to different roles within the University during academic year 2024/25.

### University recognised as Regional Social Justice Employer of the Year

We were recognised in the regional finals of the Department for Education's Apprenticeship and Skills Awards as the Social Justice Employer of the Year. This earned us a place in the national finals.



Rebecca Scott MBE, Head of Apprenticeships and Employment Outreach (left), with Niah Rhoden-Edwards, Projects Officer (Employability and Opportunities), at the Department for Education's National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards 2024

**100** BLACK WOMEN PROFESSORS NOW.

**Be the change**

## WHEN 100 Black Women Professors NOW! Programme

Our engagement with the WHEN 100 Black Women Professors NOW! programme has been a valuable and timely intervention, shedding light on the specific barriers faced by Black and Black Mixed academic women — barriers often overlooked in broader diversity initiatives. The programme aligned well with the work of the central EDI Team and the Bristol Doctoral College, especially in addressing the disparity in experience, as seen in the employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS), which was -3 for Black staff compared to +6 overall. Many participants initially described feeling “invisible” within the institution, having been discouraged from seeking promotions and excluded from career development opportunities. The programme’s inclusion of line managers and PhD supervisors was key to building psychological safety, strengthening relationships, and equipping managers to better support staff — an area where they had previously lacked confidence and awareness.

“I am really glad that Bristol took this up and that the University is beginning to understand equity in a more genuine and impactful way. Hoping the commitment to equity continues!!”

“I think this was a worthwhile endeavour and I think so many people involved at University of Bristol is telling that there is an appetite for this, and a desire to create real change in terms of the demographics of our staff body.”

“I hope we can do this again in future, and I hope we can also learn from it to support other underrepresented groups in other areas.”

### Feedback from WHEN 100B! participants

## Bristol Future Leaders

Six staff members from Grade K and above, all of Black African or Caribbean heritage, are participating in the Bristol Future Leaders Programme. Evidence-based, this initiative, delivered by the University of Exeter, includes a Level 7 Senior Leader degree apprenticeship, accredited by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

The Senior Leader Apprenticeship is structured around a nationally recognised standard, encompassing a defined set of knowledge, skills, and developing leadership behaviour that participants must evidence throughout the programme. It is further enhanced by a Postgraduate Diploma, delivered over 18 months through a combination of masterclasses, weekly distance learning, and work-based learning. Each participant has been paired with a senior sponsor who will provide support and access to relevant networks. This is an evidence-based positive action initiative targeted at a specific equality group (Black staff): our data show that this group of staff is particularly absent in senior leadership roles, and it is Black staff that experience the widest ethnicity pay gaps. This initiative can flex to focus on other protected groups in future years. In the meantime, upskilling opportunities funded from the apprenticeship levy continue to be available to all staff, subject to line manager agreement.



## Cultural Competency for Line Managers

Recognising that supporting your team to thrive and reach their full potential is both rewarding and, at times, challenging, the central EDI Team introduced a new session - Cultural Competence for Line Managers. Cultural competency offers a valuable framework for understanding how individual and cultural differences shape behaviours, communication styles, and workplace interactions, enabling more inclusive and effective ways of working together.

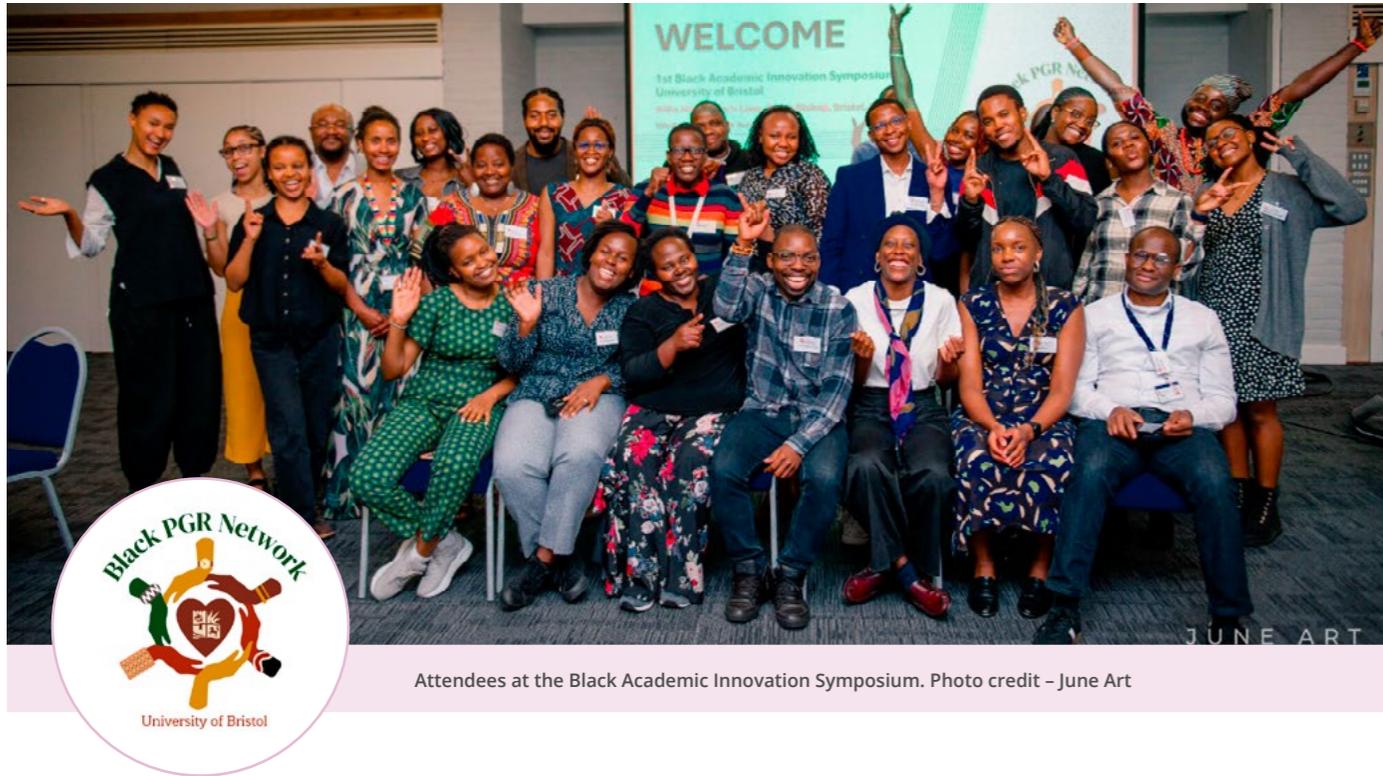
This interactive workshop, led by Dr Nilufar Ahmed, Chartered Psychologist and Associate Professor of Psychology and Inclusion at the University of Bristol, provides participants with the opportunity to reflect on their own approach, learn practical strategies, and exchange ideas with fellow managers to embed inclusive principles into their everyday leadership. To date, 60 line managers have attended the sessions, with 98% of attendees feeling that the session was ‘very useful or quite useful’.

“It was excellent to have the time to think about this. These sessions should be for all managers.”

“Helped me to critically analyse where I actually am in my journey to where I think I am.”

“Thank you so much. This session was AMAZING and I will use it to reflect on myself and my team culture. Nilu is such a great and engaging speaker.”

### Feedback from attendees



Attendees at the Black Academic Innovation Symposium. Photo credit – June Art

## Spotlight on.....The Black Academic Innovation Symposium

We hosted our first Black Academic Innovation Symposium, organised by the Black PGR Network, as part of their successful Enhancing Research Culture grant. Opening the event, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Evelyn Welch, spoke about the importance of the Symposium in celebrating the research from Black academics and the creation of important networking opportunities, whilst recognising the work needed to remove systemic barriers. It was a day of inspiring talks and valuable networking with our Black PGRs, Early Career Researchers, and guest speakers, including a keynote from Professor Jason Arday, University of Cambridge, and innovative alumni,

Dr Neciah Dorh (CEO and Founder, FluoretiQ, and Dr Josephine Dorh (CTO and Founder, FluoretiQ). Special thanks to Winfred Gatua, Helen Natukunda, Amanda Chappell, and Sthembiso Pollen Mkhize for organising, as well as our speakers.

*“Seeing the next generation of Black researchers at the University of Bristol bring together Black academics, entrepreneurs and alumni for this powerful event made a deep impact on me. Our postgraduate researchers are agents for change, and I respect and value the leadership the organisers showed us.”*

**Professor Harry Mellor, APVC PGR**

## Promoting disability and neuro-inclusion

In the 2024–2025 academic year, Disability and Neurodiversity inclusion became a strategic priority following insights from the 2024 all-staff survey. The Net Employee Promoter Score (eNPS) exposed a notable gap: while the overall staff average stood at +6, the score for staff who identified as disabled was -2—an 8-point disparity that underscored the urgent need to improve the workplace experience for disabled colleagues at the University of Bristol.

In response, a series of targeted initiatives were introduced to strengthen staff understanding, build line manager confidence, and enhance accessibility across the University environment.

The launch of 'Being Neuro-Inclusive in the workplace' during Disability History Month 2024 marked a significant milestone in our efforts to build a neuro-inclusive culture and promote awareness through education. The resource offers a rich collection of practical tools, including videos, guidance, and podcasts covering key topics such as:

- Understanding Neurodiversity
- Workplace Adjustments
- Digital Accessibility and the Office Environment
- Financial Support: Access to Work
- University Guidance
- Specialist Support

These materials provide staff with a strong foundation for neuro-inclusivity, enabling a more personalised and informed approach to supporting neurodivergent colleagues.



'Being Neuro-Inclusive in the Workplace' SharePoint site

Since its release, Being Neuro-Inclusive in the Workplace has received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with over 2,093 views to date. This enthusiastic response reflects the resource's value and its growing impact on our journey toward a more inclusive and supportive working environment.

*“We really like this SharePoint site. It's especially useful to have everything located in one place and easy to find with links from other information sources. It was great that Network members were able to provide feedback on structure and content to really make it a comprehensive and relevant source for the neurodivergent community and for those looking for ways to support their neurodivergent colleagues.”*

**Teresa Patten, Research Information Officer, & Zosia Beckles, Research Information Analyst, Co-chairs of the Neurodiversity Staff Network**



### Marking Disability History Month

The theme for Disability History Month 2024 was ‘Livelihood and Employment’, which provided a perfect opportunity to shine a light on the challenges and barriers faced by disabled people within the workplace. It reminded us that building an inclusive and accessible workplace was not just about compliance but about taking an individual approach to each colleague, their experiences, and the support they may require.

To help us celebrate and understand the importance of Disability History Month, Professor Stuart Prior, Professor of Archaeological Practices, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, and Co-chair of the Disability and Wellbeing (DAWN) Staff Network, shared his journey, including barriers faced and overcome, and what inspired him to become co-chair of the Network. This interview has garnered an impressive 2,500+ views, along with positive feedback.

### Reasonable Adjustments for Line Managers workshops

The central EDI Team created and launched a facilitated workshop on reasonable adjustments for line managers. This

two-hour, discussion-based session aims to instil confidence in line managers in approaching, identifying, and implementing reasonable adjustments. The workshop covers essential topics such as normalising conversations, understanding the legal context, defining what is considered reasonable, our approach, and highlighting additional key resources. By utilising experiences and scenarios specifically tailored to meet the School, Faculty or Division’s business needs, each session is designed to maximise its impact. Launched in June 2025, the workshop has been delivered to over 80 line managers across various areas, including Library Services, Admissions, Bristol Students’ Union, and the School of Modern Languages. Additional sessions are scheduled. The course has received positive feedback, with 100% of participants agreeing they would recommend the course to colleagues and providing an average rating of 4.82 out of 5 stars (96.4% positive rating).

*“The presenter was exceptional (this is coming from somebody who teaches teachers) and their authentic experiences added a lot to the session. It was well paced, interactive, gave lots of space to address concerns and issues and had lots of helpful information. An excellent session. It was also very helpful having our HR Business Partner there to give their perspective too.”*

**Feedback from attendee**

### Launch of Access to Work Guidance and webpages

In collaboration with the Disability and Wellbeing (DAWN) Staff Network and the Neurodiversity Staff Network, the central EDI Team developed a guidance on Access to Work for staff and

line managers who wish to make or support a claim to the government scheme. The document covers essential topics, including an overview of the scheme and tips from those who have previously used Access to Work.

### Refresh of Accessibility tools and support SharePoint

As part of IT Services’ commitment to user-centred, inclusive support, feedback from Laura Frude (Co-chair of the Disability and Wellbeing Network) helped spark a redesign of the SharePoint accessibility tools page. IT Services has reorganised the content around user needs including grouping tools by functionality (e.g. Zoom/Magnification, Subtitles, Dictation), rather than by software name, and promoting a wider range of assistive hardware available via self-service - removing the perceived barrier of needing to go through IT first.

*“The changes made to the accessibility software page have been well received by the Disability and Staff Network. Members have noted that the page is easier to read, has more inclusive language, and is easier to find. As a network we are delighted that our feedback was not only received in a positive manner but acted on quickly and implemented with our recommendations in mind. The Network appreciates the invitation to speak with senior leadership and look forward to an ongoing and fruitful relationship.”*

**Laura Frude Futures Scholarship Coordinator, Careers and Skills & Co-chair of the Disability and Wellbeing Staff Network (DAWN)**

### Improving Student Reasonable Adjustment processes

Students can now self-declare and self-describe the impacts of their disability via an improved study support request process. This enables students to request a range of adjustments, such as extra time in exams, without the need to acquire and provide any supporting documentation. This has reduced the burden on students to provide evidence and sped up the process of implementing a Study Support Plan. Since making this change 73% of Study Support Plans were created in 5 working days compared to 19% beforehand. This means staff can access the information they need to make adjustments to teaching and assessments more quickly, so that students are supported to engage in their studies.

### Launch of Supporting Disabled Students essential training

To date, 1356 people have completed the module on supporting disabled students. To complement this, structured referral pathways for staff in academic Schools have been introduced to request support for disabled students directly. These resources and processes embed knowledge and create confidence for staff in talking about disability and creating a culture where disabled students feel seen, understood and included. The recruitment of a People Development Partner to specifically focus on this area will help ensure our training goals are met.

### Specialist counselling services for staff and students

As well as general counselling and wellbeing support, we continue to offer specialist support for specific groups in our community. We continue to offer culturally appropriate counselling to global majority staff and students from a local provider, Nilaari. Twenty-six students and twelve members of staff accessed this service during academic year 2024/2025.

A further twenty-eight colleagues chose to access a specialist LGBTQ+ counsellor for staff who may be struggling with issues relating to sexuality or gender identity. The Student Counselling Service offer therapeutic groups for trans, non-binary, gender non-conforming and questioning students; women; and a group for Mandarin-speakers delivered in Mandarin.

### Returning Carers' Scheme

The Returning Carers' Scheme (RCS) is designed to help academic staff re-establish their independent research careers after taking extended leave for caring responsibilities—such as maternity, adoption, shared parental leave, or time off to care for a dependant.

In the 2024–25 academic year, the scheme supported 15 colleagues, all of whom are female, with a total funding allocation of £135,007.83. This equates to an average award of £9,000.52 per applicant.

Following the launch of our expanded RCS, we were invited to share details of the initiative with the University of Nottingham. Inspired by our approach, they have since implemented a similar scheme within their institution, which has been met with considerable success.

### Maternity/Adoption/Paternity/Partner (MAPP) Coaching Service

The Maternity, Adoption, Paternity and Partner (MAPP) coaching service continues to provide invaluable support and reassurance to colleagues who are preparing to take, or have taken, maternity, adoption, paternity or partner leave. Seventy-nine colleagues accessed the service during 2024/25, seventy-three (94%) women and six (6%) men.

Support for staff as they go through the transition to becoming a parent and then to becoming a working parent is crucial. This is a time of huge upheaval in all areas of life including identity, confidence, workload, time pressure, cognitive changes, relationships (home and work) and more. The feedback from clients is overwhelmingly positive: 100% reported that MAPP coaching had a positive impact and 100% would recommend the service to a colleague.



### Carers Week 2025

Research indicates that one in seven individuals balance employment with caring responsibilities. Many carers do not identify with the term “carer,” often feeling unrecognised and facing discrimination. Within our staff survey, colleagues who declared they had caring responsibilities responded more negatively to questions around their wellbeing and work-life balance compared to colleagues who stated they did not have caring responsibilities. In light of this, we aimed to raise awareness of the support available to working carers.

Aligned with this year’s Carers Week theme, “Caring About Equality,” the central Staff EDI Team and the Parents and Carers Staff Network hosted the charity Carers Support (Bristol & South Gloucestershire) for an informative session. The event focused on the realities of caring, the challenges carers encounter, and the range of services offered by Carers Support. Professor Tansy Jessop, Pro Vice Chancellor, Education and Senior Executive Sponsor of the Parents and Carers Staff Network, opened the session. This session has reached around 50 working carers to date, and it’s available as a permanent resource in our Inclusion Matters Library.

“I thought it was a really great event with such a lot of really helpful information.”

“[The event] contained information that I hadn’t heard about before, which will be useful for being a carer and knowing that the support is there.”

#### Feedback from attendees



# INCLUSION

Our strategic aim for INCLUSION is to engage all members of our university community in building a culture of inclusion and belonging, where all students and staff feel connected, empowered and respected.

Feeling seen, heard and valued at work has a positive impact on our wellbeing, productivity and performance. And when we feel part of a community with a shared sense of values and purpose, we thrive. This in turn enhances our capacity to collaborate and innovate - not only with each other, but with our students, our city and our local, national and global partners.

## Inspiring Inclusive Leadership

Themes of empathy and inclusion are embedded throughout our leadership and management development interventions, with a particular focus on self-awareness and accountability. We draw on key themes such as psychological safety, exploring individual influence and impact upon the climate and culture at all levels of our organisation. As part of this work, more than 130 members of the University Leaders Network took part in an engaging session on Inclusive Leadership, led by Doyin Atewologun and Banke Sotomi of Delta. The interactive event explored the vital role of inclusive leadership in fostering accountability and responsibility, enhancing competitive advantage, attracting and retaining diverse talent, and cultivating a culture of inclusion and belonging across the University.



Delta Consultancy highlighted the participants' strong enthusiasm for ongoing development and their readiness to take meaningful action in their leadership journeys. Of those who provided feedback, 96% reported high confidence in applying the session's insights to their leadership roles, and 98% said they would recommend the session to a colleague.

Participants shared a range of actionable commitments, including:

- "Creating safe spaces for honest conversations and challenge"
- "Modelling vulnerability and curiosity"
- "Being prepared to challenge and disrupt in order to model inclusive leadership"

Looking ahead to the 2025–26 academic year, the EDI Team is excited to continue collaborating with Delta on a similar session tailored for the Resource Managers Group.



## Encouraging our people to Stand Up and Speak Out

As a major cultural change vehicle, our Stand Up Speak Out campaign continues to encourage and equip colleagues to take action against exclusionary behaviours.

### Stand Up Speak Out workshops: being an active bystander

Stand Up, Speak Out facilitated workshops are being rolled out initially to 'early adopters' with reach into all three Faculties and sessions already booked well in to the Autumn for Professional services, Technical and Operational Teams. Importantly, the facilitators work with individual areas / Teams to ensure that the content of the workshop is bespoke and relevant to the audience and covers any key issues identified locally.

This two-hour workshop is designed to empower colleagues to recognise and to stand up and speak out against negative workplace behaviours. These are delivered by the central EDI Team alongside trained facilitators, including HRBPs

where possible, to enable rich and thorough discussion of the legal drivers behind the initiative, such as meeting the legal requirements for the prevention of sexual harassment as stated in The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.

In parallel to this, 79 undergraduate and postgraduate students attended pilot student workshops in 2024/25, with the aim of ensuring that the whole University community understands how to respond if they witness unacceptable behaviour. These workshops build on the Stand Up, Speak Out material in the Community Induction Module for all new and returning students. Facilitator workshops, supported by a good practice network have also been developed to support staff in rolling out workshops for students in their area.

"These sessions are focused on how we can constructively engage with each other to build empathy and accountability through dialogue, rather than social ostracism. Being an active bystander isn't about cancelling others; it's about seeing mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow."

Ames Mosley, Associate EDI Partner

Using scenario-based discussions the workshop equips participants with a 'toolkit' of options that they could use if they were ever to experience or witness issues such as bullying or harassment.



“The Stand Up, Speak Out training offered valuable insight into how we can reflect on and challenge our own behaviours and intentions and their impact in a professional group setting without the fear of getting it wrong. It was acknowledged that with plenty changing within the University, whether that be language or policies, it’s a great opportunity to stop and reflect on how these shifts affect our own practices, assumptions, and the ways we engage with colleagues.”

Feedback from SUSO Workshop attendee

Stand Up Speak Out (SUSO) Champions. Supported by the central EDI Team, these Champions form a dedicated network of 21 specially trained staff members.

During the 2024/25 academic year, SUSO Champions supported 27 colleagues in exploring ways to address and respond to unacceptable behaviours they had encountered or observed.

#### Formal Complaint Data Summary 1 August 2024 – 31 July 2025

We continue to track and share high-level HR data concerning formal complaints related to unacceptable behaviours, along with summaries of the actions taken. This initiative aligns in part with recommendations from the UUK report *Tackling Racial Harassment in Higher Education*, which urged institutions to systematically collect incident data and regularly report it to senior leadership and governing bodies.

**Note:** Some complaints we receive involve multiple issues—such as both bullying and discrimination. In such cases, the complaint is recorded under each relevant category to ensure accurate representation.

Type of Complaint	Number	Outcome (e.g. upheld, not upheld, partially upheld, management action)
Bullying	13	0 Upheld 4 Not upheld 2 Partially upheld 3 Case still ongoing / case not completed 4 Management Action
Disability Discrimination	4	0 Upheld 1 Not upheld 1 Partially upheld 1 Case still ongoing / case not completed 1 Management Acton
Race Discrimination	6	0 Upheld 0 Not upheld 2 Partially upheld 2 Case still ongoing / case not completed 2 Management Action
Sex Discrimination	10	0 Upheld 3 Not upheld 0 Partially upheld 4 Case still ongoing / case not completed 3 Management Action

## Enhancing our Research Culture

Following the launch of the University’s strategic plan for research culture in Autumn 2024, a vast programme of work has been underway to improve the environment and culture for our researchers and research professionals, technicians and postgraduate research students. This year marked the first year of collaboration with Bristol Students’ Union to develop a programme for our research leaders of the future, which focused on PGR students from underrepresented backgrounds working with an external mental health charity to deliver a comprehensive piece of research and gain valuable skills and experience.

In July 2025, leads and stakeholders from across the University came together to celebrate and showcase the work that has taken place so far; this sold-out event marked its fourth year of running and welcomed a diverse range of speakers from across the University and wider community.



“We are excited to continue this important work into 2025-26 which includes some fantastic collaborations with groups and stakeholders across the University. We are pleased to welcome our new Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research Environment and Culture, Professor Daniela Schmidt, who brings a wealth of experience and insight to this crucial role”.

Yasmine Rhoseyn, Research Culture Strategy Manager

## Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus

Work on the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus (TQEC) continues, with the main building's opening date of September 2026 drawing ever closer. The campus will be open and accessible, with an EDI consultant having been employed as part of the Design Team who has advised on the requirements for the building and public realm. The building has been designed with different accessibility requirements in mind, including a range of toilet facilities throughout the building, a changing places facility, induction loops in key spaces, mobility scooter charging, disabled parking and neurodiversity-aware colours/internal design. There is a low distraction entrance and four bookable low distraction student study rooms. The emerging TQ Transport Plan will take into account and plan for

the accessibility needs of different users of the building. There is a multi-faith room and Muslim prayer room with separate male and female ablution facilities. The ground floor has a mix of single sex male and female toilets and gender-neutral toilets and all toilets on levels 2-5 are gender neutral.

The Civic Engagement and Social Purpose workstream is working with a range of partners and local community groups to ensure the building's facilities are open and accessible, including in dedicated spaces such as the Bristol Rooms, Story Exchange, and advice clinic spaces. Ongoing engagement with local communities and partners, and activities at the micro-campuses in Barton Hill and Hartcliffe will ensure that those facilities are actively engaged with and used by people and organisations from across the city, including areas where there are multiple barriers to accessing higher education.



CM1. Photo credit FCBSudios and Secchi Smith

## Delivering our Digital Strategy

Delivery of our Digital strategy continues to be vital for the success of our 2030 vision. The strategy aims to provide the technologies that help create a dynamic teaching and learning environment. Where possible we aim to use these technologies to enable every student, no matter their location, to learn actively, be creative and solve problems. Students will be able to draw on the best combination of in-person and online learning and support, with colleagues empowered to harness the power of technology to teach.

The Modern Network programme has completed a successful series of pilot site migrations and will now begin the roll out of improved Wi-Fi and wired network services to more than 200 buildings across the estate. This will enable our staff and students to pursue innovative research and teaching by providing them with a world-class platform as the foundation for their work. The Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) project has delivered global, remote access to fast and standardised computing services inside the security of the University's IT environment. Users of the service all have access to the same compute power on the virtual desktop irrespective of the power of their connecting device. The performance of the service is the same whether the user is on campus or on another continent. As VDI becomes part of our business-as-usual service and grows it will increase the accessibility of the platform to users. The Self-Service Cloud project is working to enhance the virtual platform launched by the Next Gen project for researchers. They will build on the functionality of the platform to support AI/GPU powered research, improved access to research data while working on the platform, and access to the public cloud to support collaboration.

## Data collection and analysis to listen to staff voices

**Bristol Counts** is our initiative to build a clear and accurate understanding of the people who make up our staff community. By doing so, we can better identify and address barriers, ensuring that everyone has the best possible experience at work.

We periodically invite staff to review and update their diversity information, which can be self-disclosed through the MyERP platform.

Currently, the percentages of staff who have shared their personal data with us, excluding those who chose not to respond or selected "prefer not to say", are as follows: Age: 100%, Disability: 92%, Ethnicity: 93%, Gender: 50%, Gender identity: 62%, Religion or belief: 73%, Sex: 100%, Sexual orientation: 67%

Many of these disclosure rates are higher than the sector averages, allowing us to create more accurate datasets to inform our local work and support evidence-based positive action.

In 2024 we introduced our **new staff experience survey**. Giving an insight into how engaged colleagues are, it also provides one of the ways we measure progress in relation to the 2030 University strategy. The survey asks questions about job satisfaction; working relationships; value and recognition; personal development; wellbeing; management and leadership; change; culture; workplace inclusion and belonging; and connection to the University.

In addition to the new survey, the Staff Engagement Team, working with colleagues from IT Services and the Central EDI Team, have created a bespoke 'data dashboard' to support detailed analysis of the results. The dashboard gives the ability to review results from a whole institutional level to understand wider trends, as well as filtering responses to gain greater understanding of different experiences. With the creation of 120 local dashboards, including a tailored Athena Swan dashboard, we ensure readily available data for each area, Teams can analyse and understand the data from their own perspective, using insights to support data driven decision making.

## Transforming culture one story at a time

**TheirStories** harnesses the power of personal storytelling to foster inclusion in the workplace, strengthen employee engagement, and dismantle biases and stereotypes – ultimately helping to cultivate a true sense of belonging. The initiative was born out of a desire to look beyond the numbers, embracing a more human-centred approach that highlights different experiences, breaks down barriers, and allows people to see the world from someone else's eyes. Storytelling offers a compelling tool for culture transformation – it opens minds, deepens empathy, and sparks understanding. Every individual brings something distinctive and invaluable to our university, and by sharing our authentic stories, we create space to learn and grow together.



Our acclaimed TheirStories programme made its return this academic year with a vibrant series of five events, spotlighting colleagues as they shared heartfelt stories and personal experiences from their unique journeys so far.

## Creating a 'human library'

Every **TheirStories** event has been recorded and added to our growing digital archive – a living 'human library' that celebrates and preserves personal stories for reflection and connection. Over the past year, more than 790 colleagues participated in a live session, with the online library being explored a further 1,358 times. The library has now had over 4000 engagements since its launch. Feedback has consistently shown how deeply the speakers' honest, heartfelt narratives resonate. By sharing both the joyful and challenging chapters of their lives, they've revealed powerful threads of shared experience that connect us all – regardless of job title or role.



"I have to be completely honest — when I was first asked by the TheirStories team to talk about myself and my time on the Langford Campus, the idea filled me with dread. The thought of speaking about myself for an hour, especially opening up about my dyslexia and dyscalculia, was daunting. But as I began to write the presentation, and even more so while delivering it, I experienced a huge sense of satisfaction — not just because I'd done it, but because I felt genuinely comfortable speaking openly about both conditions.

After the talk, I received a number of Teams and email messages — not only congratulating me but also thanking me for being open. A couple of people even said it made them feel more empowered, which meant a great deal. More recently, I became aware of another very senior academic colleague in the University who also has dyslexia — something they shared via their email signature. I think that's another important step forward. It reminds people that while I might occasionally make typos in emails or documents, it's simply because my brain works a little differently — and that comes with its own strengths."

**Stuart Pope, Operations Manager, Bristol Veterinary School and TheirStories participant**



Dr Marie-Annick Gournet, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor Reporative & Civic Futures (Top Left Corner), Professor Palie Smart, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Civic Engagement) (Bottom Left Corner), Stuart Pope, Operations Manager, Bristol Veterinary school (Top Middle), Professor Michele Acuto, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) (Top Right Corner) Michael MacBean, Head of Staff Counselling (Bottom Right Corner)

## Essential EDI Training

Levels of engagement with our essential training module increases year on year, with 85% of our staff completing the training during 2024/25. Going forwards, this module is being revised and updated to ensure alignment with current legal and regulatory requirements, in preparation for its launch in the new academic year.

## Trans Awareness: The Basics by Gendered Intelligence

Gendered Intelligence delivered two Trans Awareness: The Basics training sessions to over 100 staff to learn more about what the term “trans” means, explore sex and gender, legislation relating to trans identities, and increase awareness of how to support our trans staff and students. Specific sessions for staff in student-facing services were also delivered. With a feedback rating of 98% positive from attendees, we look forward to welcoming Gendered Intelligence back to the University next academic year.

“This was a really useful and well-facilitated opportunity to solidify understanding and reflect on current practices to be inclusive to trans and non-binary people and how they can be improved.”

Feedback from attendee



## International Men's Day 2024

The theme for International Men's Day 2024 was *Men's Health Champions*, aligning with the UK's focus on making a positive difference to the wellbeing and lives of men and boys, raising awareness of charities supporting their mental and physical health, and encouraging open, positive conversations around men, manhood, and masculinity.

To mark the occasion, we welcomed **ANDYSMANCLUB**, a men's suicide prevention charity that provides free peer-to-peer support groups across the UK and online. Their mission is to break the stigma surrounding men's mental health and support men through the power of conversation.

The event saw strong engagement, with over 76 staff members participating. A recording of the session is available in our **Inclusion Matters Library** for those who could not attend live.

“Since this session, I have convinced my husband and two of his friends that they should give **ANDYSMANCLUB** a try, as they all have different struggles.”

Feedback from an attendee



## International Women's Day 2025

The 2025 International Women's Day theme, “For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.”, served as a powerful call to action to advance equal rights, opportunities, and representation for women and girls globally.

To mark the occasion, the central EDI Team and Women's Staff Network collaborated to run a special 'TheirStories' International Women's Day event. Professor Palie Smart, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Civic Engagement), and Senior Executive Sponsor of the Women's Staff Network, shared her inspiring journey as a first-generation university student. Palie broke new ground as the first woman of Indian heritage to lead a Russell Group Management/Business School. In her talk, she reflected on overcoming racism and sexism during her education, balancing career advancement with motherhood, and her ongoing advocacy for gender equality.

The event drew participation from over 120 staff members, and a recording is available in the 'TheirStories' Library for those who wish to revisit or explore the session.



Professor Palie Smart, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Civic Engagement), and Senior Executive Sponsor of the Women's Staff Network

## LGBTQ+ History Month 2025



LGBTQ+ History Month is a month-long celebration held every February in the UK, dedicated to honouring the history, contributions, and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals. The month serves to increase visibility, raise awareness, and foster understanding of the diverse identities within the LGBTQ+ community.

It offers a powerful opportunity to reflect on the progress made in advancing LGBTQ+ rights, while acknowledging the challenges that persist. It also reinforces the ongoing need to advocate for equity, inclusion, and justice—ensuring that all LGBTQ+ people can live authentically and thrive. The theme for 2025 was 'Activism and Social Change' and was marked within the University with blog posts from members of staff who spoke about the positive changes they had witnessed over their lives so far, whilst also reflecting on the work that still needs to be done to achieve equality. There was also a special TheirStories event, featuring Professor Michele Acuto, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Global Engagement), where Michele spoke about how the intersectional experiences in his life so far have led him to a role driving to ensure that the University of Bristol is a globally civic-minded university that is welcoming and inclusive for all.



## Black History Month

The theme for Black History Month 2024, *Reclaiming Narratives*, invited a renewed lens on Black history—one that celebrates Black excellence across all disciplines, from education and research to everyday life. Our ongoing mission is to challenge long-standing narratives that have often marginalised or overlooked the contributions of Black individuals, both in the UK and around the world. By highlighting the rich and varied impact of Black communities across fields, we aim to embrace, educate, and empower through the stories we share.

This year's celebrations featured a series of internal events, including:

- **Black Futures in Biochemistry**, spotlighting emerging voices and achievements in STEM
- A **Meet and Greet** hosted by the Black Engineers Society, fostering community and connection
- A 'Paint and Sip' evening, organised by the Black Students' Network, for students to network, relax and get creative

- In addition, the central EDI Team organised a special **TheirStories** session with Dr Marie-Annick Gournet, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Reparative and Civic Futures), who shared her personal journey, which has included facing racism from a young age, navigating challenges that shaped her commitment to social justice, and finding strength and visibility through literature. Her leadership continues to drive initiatives that create opportunities and address systemic inequalities via the Reparative Futures programme.

## Creating a sense of belonging through Staff Networks

Our Staff Community Networks help to create a supportive and welcoming culture, providing members with a voice and influence across our university. Employee-led, they provide a space for colleagues with shared identities or circumstances to connect, share experiences and challenge organisational practices to create a more inclusive working environment for everyone. Each Staff Network is supported by a Senior Executive Sponsor leverage their influence and expertise to advocate for the Networks, while deepening their understanding of how behaviours, policies, and practices affect the experiences of our people. Almost a quarter of our total staff population now belong to a Staff Community Network.

## Apprentice Staff Network



Mary Millard, Executive Director of Faculty Operations

Senior Executive Sponsor for the Apprentice Staff Network

*"It's an honour to serve as the Senior Executive Sponsor for the Apprentice Staff Network, a role that reflects my deep commitment to nurturing talent across the University. Over the years, I've had the chance to get involved with a range of apprenticeship programmes across the University, and it's been a fantastic way to bring in fresh talent and support colleagues as they grow in their roles. I'm looking forward to working with the Network to explore how we can build on what we've got—making our apprenticeship offer even stronger and more accessible, exploring opportunities for AI skills development and increasing access to staff through our evolving skills framework. It's a great way live our civic values and continue building our reputation as a brilliant place to work."*

Mary Millard

The Apprentice Staff Network is vital in offering apprentices a platform to connect, share experiences, and raise issues that matter to them. This kind of peer-driven support system improves individual confidence and job satisfaction and encourages long-term career progression and retention within the organisation. The network also serves as a valuable bridge between apprentices and broader organisational goals, helping to ensure their voices are heard and their contributions recognised, for example, by attending the Voice and Influence Group and Swan Implementation Group meetings.

Leadership within the Network has been a key driver of its growth and success. The Staff Network's Co-chairs, Rowan Kinsella and Idman Abdullahi Mohamed, have created an inclusive, proactive environment where apprentices are empowered to thrive. As the Network continues to expand – we now have 35 members -, it stands as a strong model for how apprentices can be meaningfully integrated into the fabric of our organisation.



## Disability and Wellbeing Network (DAWN)



Lucinda Parr, Chief Operating Officer,  
Registrar & University Secretary

Senior Executive Sponsor for the  
Disability and Wellbeing Network (DAWN)

"I am proud to continue my role as Senior Executive Sponsor for the Disability and Wellbeing Network. It remains vital that we create a workplace where everyone feels supported, understood, and able to thrive.

As part of this commitment, I've been particularly pleased to see the launch of two new resources. The Access to Work guidance and webpages, offers clear support for navigating workplace adjustments; and the Being Neuroinclusive in the Workplace SharePoint page has been designed to help us build a more inclusive environment for neurodivergent colleagues.

These tools are an important step in supporting our community, and I encourage everyone to engage with them and reflect on how we can continue to foster inclusion across the University."

Lucinda Parr

DAWN remains actively involved in consulting on practical concerns and members' feedback, such as advising on an accessibility video for the MyWorld and Bristol Digital Futures Institute buildings and collaborating with the EDI team to develop content for the new Reasonable Adjustment workshops for line managers. Further contributions include input on an Access to Work guide for line managers, consultation on installing hearing loops in the new Temple Quarter Building and advising on content for the Bristol Medical School's Disability and Neurodiversity webpages. DAWN has provided feedback on a range of areas including clean air in the workplace and the complexities around partial ill-health retirement versus part-time work. We also consulted with the Enquiries Team on the importance of distributing free menstrual health products in accessible locations. We have also helped identify broader inclusion barriers by arranging for our network members to meet with Vice-Chancellor Professor Evelyn Welch and her team to discuss the experiences of disabled staff.

On the community-building side, DAWN hosted its first in-person meet-up, attended by around 15 members who expressed strong interest in regular future gatherings.

DAWN membership has continued to grow and currently stands at 69 members.

## Global Majority Staff Network



James Bigwood, Chief People Officer

Senior Executive Sponsor for the Global  
Majority Staff Network

"I am delighted to be the Senior Executive Sponsor for the Global Majority Staff Network (GMSN). As Chief People Officer I want to ensure that our University is a place for everyone, and this means identifying and removing any barriers encountered by global majority colleagues within our existing people processes. As a global civic university, the voices of our GMSN will help ensure we deliver an equitable and enjoyable experience for every member of our community."

James Bigwood



The Global Majority Staff Network currently has 196 members, with a roughly even split between academic and professional services staff. The standout moment of the 2024-25 academic year was the all-network meeting with our Senior Executive Sponsor, the University's Chief People Officer, which provided a critical platform for members to share their lived experiences and highlight structural challenges faced by staff from the global majority. This candid and constructive dialogue marked a significant step toward greater transparency and accountability at the senior leadership level and we look forward to working closely with him to drive forward systemic change.

## LGBTQ+ Staff Network



Michele Acuto, Pro Vice Chancellor,  
Global Engagement  
Senior Executive Sponsor for  
the LGBTQ+ Staff Network

“It’s a privilege to serve as the Senior Executive Sponsor for the LGBTQ+ staff Network. I’m committed to being a strong advocate for my queer colleagues, and my own community more generally, ensuring they feel empowered to bring their full selves to their work. Our University is enriched by the diversity, perspectives, and contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals, and it’s vital that we continue to foster an environment where everyone can thrive.

**Michele Acuto**

In my role as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), I am focused on embedding inclusivity across our international partnerships, programmes, and activities — ensuring that LGBTQ+ members of our community are recognised, supported, and celebrated both locally and globally. In my own experience, I have treasured the intersectional value of connecting across cultures through queer experiences and continue to champion opening up opportunities for queer



Photo credit Bhagesh Sachania

voices to be heard across borders. I am also committed to advancing allyship across the institution, helping colleagues understand their role in fostering a culture of respect, equity, and belonging, and engaging with queer insights and experiences. And, of course, I’m always up for a Pride party!”

The LGBTQ+ Staff Network, which currently has 320 members, has been very active during the academic year. Firstly, the Network said goodbye and thanked long-term Co-chairs Abbi Dayre and Polly Claire-Hudson, with Dr Sandra Duffy and Sonja Foster stepping up to become the new co-chairs. The Network has been vital in raising the concerns and priorities of our members and has worked with the EDI Team and HR to consult on key issues and areas.

One highlight of this year was the LGBTQ+ Staff Network and Student Union LGBTQ+ Society marching together in the Bristol Pride Parade. Members from both joined us, creating a great atmosphere and day.

“Pride is the most important time for our community, and this year we have marked it with a film screening, a picnic, and an event for the whole university community. Marching together on Bristol Pride Day, across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, is a way for us to honour our history, celebrate our chosen families, and protest against hate and division. As a network, we represent our 350+ members and work to make the University a fairer and safer place for them, and we are proud to walk alongside them every year.”

**Abbi Dayre, Senior Student Administrator, School of Management & Co-chair of the LGBTQ+ Staff Network**

Alongside our Pride celebrations and in partnership with the EDI Team, we hosted our TheirPrideStories event for the third consecutive year, with Network Co-chair Abbi Dayre as our host. This year, we were honoured to welcome Dr Sandra Duffy, Lecturer in Law at the University of Bristol Law School and newly appointed co-chair of the Network. Sandra shared powerful reflections on their intersectional journey—navigating life as a disabled, neurodivergent, queer individual growing up in 1990s Catholic Ireland. Sandra’s story is a compelling exploration of identity, resilience, and the path to embracing one’s identity, rooted in an unshakable commitment to equity and justice.



## Neurodiversity Staff Network



**Sandy Payne, Director of Campus Innovation**

**Senior Executive Sponsor for the Neurodiversity Staff Network**

“I’m pleased to be part of the University Neurodiversity Staff Network, as it closely aligns with the work I lead on in Campus Division to support our People Plan and advance our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) commitments. The Network offers valuable insight into how we can create more inclusive environments where all University staff can thrive. It also helps ensure that neurodiversity is meaningfully considered in our policies, workplace design, and day-to-day practices—something I’m keen to see embedded more deeply into our culture.”

**Sandy Payne**

The Neurodiversity Staff Network has 314 members from across our University and are led by Co-chairs (Zosia Beckles and Teresa Patten), Deputy Chairs (Lucy Armstrong and Lily Roff) and Advisor Asha Sahni.

Our Network meets online monthly, alternating business with more informal, conversational formats. We hold one-off meetings for special events such as Neurodiversity Celebration Week, which we marked this year by hosting talks from Network members on their own experiences of neurodiversity in the workplace. We also have several in-person events throughout the year, including lunchtime games and after-work meet-ups, some held jointly with other Staff Networks. Members frequently connect through our very active Teams space, which includes channels for events, planning body doubling or co-working sessions, highlighting research participant opportunities, and general chat. Many members also meet outside of our ‘official’ events for both co-working and social sessions.

We have provided feedback and consultation on a range of issues relating to neurodiversity inclusion, including the ‘Being neuroinclusive in the workplace’ SharePoint site, resources for the Bristol Digital Futures Institute, and Temple Quarter design issues. We’ve also helped to clarify policy on and provision of accessibility tools by hosting talks from members of IT Services.

This past year we had our first network leadership away day, where we met with our Executive Sponsor, Sandy Payne (Director of Campus Innovation) and others working on best practice in neurodiversity inclusion at the University.

## Parents and Carers Staff Network



**Tansy Jessop, Pro Vice Chancellor, Education**

**Senior Executive Sponsor for the Parents and Carers Staff Network**

“I am delighted to have been asked to act as Senior Executive Sponsor for the Parents and Carers Staff Network. Over the years, the Network has had a significant input into policies and practices around the University, ensuring that the voices of colleagues with parenting and caring responsibilities are heard and represented. Importantly, the Network also forms a platform for peer support and the sharing of vital information. I look forward to helping the Network continue their excellent work to make the University of Bristol an inclusive workplace for all.”

**Tansy Jessop**

The Parents and Carers Network has 849 members in our Viva Engage group, making us the largest of the University’s Staff Networks. This online forum enables members to share knowledge, exchange experiences, and support one another.

Throughout the academic year, we have used insights from the all-staff survey to shape our priorities. Notably, work-

life balance and mental health emerged as key concerns for staff with caring responsibilities, more so than for staff without these responsibilities. This data helps us ensure our work is relevant and impactful. Taking inspiration from the TheirStories series, we organised a panel event featuring the experiences of Network members. Panellists candidly shared the challenges they’ve faced in their parenting or caring journeys and how they’ve navigated them. We also partnered with the central EDI Team to co-host an event for Carers Week and continued our LGBTQ+ parent lunches, in collaboration with the LGBTQ+ Staff Network. We have also started a project of work around breastfeeding support; including a crowdsourced mapping resource of the location of rooms around campus for breastfeeding and/or expression and an interview for World Breastfeeding Week with committee member and Infant Feeding Peer Supporter, Ames Mosley.

To ensure that the voices of parents and carers are heard at all levels of the University, we actively contribute to institutional initiatives. This includes representation on the Swan Implementation Group, which supports gender equity across the University, and collaborating with both the Policy and Reward Team and EDI Team to develop a toolkit for supporting fathers and partners in the workplace. Our visibility continues to grow. This year, we presented at an event for parents and carers in the School of Humanities and are looking forward to attending an upcoming Finance Town Hall.

The past year also marked a period of leadership transition. We said farewell to our Senior Executive Sponsor, Dr Jon Hunt, following his move to the University of Bath, and were delighted to welcome Professor Tansy Jessop as our new sponsor. Additionally, Eva Dodding has taken over as Chair of the Network, succeeding Myma Baptist, to whom we extend our thanks for her dedicated service and support.

## Women's Staff Network



Palie Smart, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Global Civic  
Senior Executive Sponsor for the Women's Staff Network

"It's an honour to continue to support the Women's Staff Network. As their Senior Executive Sponsor, I draw on both my personal and professional experiences to help shape the growth and success of the Network—aligning with the University's ongoing commitment to gender equality. It's inspiring to witness the Network's impact over the past year; from collaborating on International Women's Day events, facilitating listening sessions that surface key issues and ensure members' voices are central to shaping future initiatives."

Palie Smart

The Women's Staff Network aims to create a space where members can come together to network, share their experiences and work together to improve the experience of staff in the workplace. We are coming up to our two-year anniversary and currently have 245 members.

Over the course of the last year we have expanded our Network committee, celebrated collaborations with the LGBTQ+ Staff Network, and having worked with the EDI team, SU, and Customer Experience Division (Education and Student Success Management) to inform and launch centrally funded menstrual health products in several locations across campus. In November 2024, we collaborated with the LGBTQ+ Staff Network for Trans Awareness week, hosting a lovely event in the Global Lounge to celebrate Trans lives and raise awareness around issues encountered by the Trans community.

We also organised a fantastic social event in the Global Lounge to celebrate International Women's Day 2025, where one of our Network members presented a video which they'd created to celebrate the event and where our Network members enjoyed a quiz and refreshments. For International Women's Day, we also raised awareness for, and donated menstrual health products to, Bristol North West Food Bank's Period Poverty campaign.

## Improving inclusivity of learning and teaching



Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching (BILT) has recently reaccredited its central teaching development programme for new and experienced staff who teach and/or support learning. The new programme, aligned to a new international teaching framework (Professional Standards Framework 2023) has renewed emphasis on teaching inclusively and supporting students and requires participants to critically reflect on and enhance their inclusive teaching practices. The programme has also undergone changes to make it more inclusive for participants themselves, for example offering new alternative methods of assessment and a move to pass-fail mark (rather than grading) for the postgraduate certificate route.

BILT has also published new institutional guidance which shares institutional principles, practical tips and case studies to support colleagues in making their teaching and assessment practices more inclusive. The guidance includes a practical resource for designing alternative methods of assessment.

## Peer Mentoring

The Peer Mentoring programme provides new undergraduate students with support from a higher-year student who can share relatable advice and guidance from their experience. Peer Mentors provide support via regular contact and 1:1 meetings starting just before the start of the academic year and continuing throughout the first term.

New students are often matched with a mentor in a similar subject area but can also request to be matched with a mentor with whom they share a specific background or characteristic such as faith, LGBTQ+ identity or cultural identity to ensure an inclusive welcome to the University.

Support is tailored to individual mentee needs; mentors are trained to answer mentee questions concerning all aspects of university and city life, as well as connecting their mentees to additional services and sources of support via signposting.

Feedback shows that peer mentoring appears to be particularly effective for global majority and mature students, as well as those with a mental health condition, and representation of these groups in the scheme increased in 2024/25.



## Building Inclusive Student Communities

Between September 2024 and March 2025, the Student Communities team delivered 30 inclusive events to support both Muslim and LGBTQ+ student communities at the University. Over Ramadan, 18 events provided a consistent and welcoming space for Muslim students to celebrate Iftar and Taraweeh, attracting 491 unique attendees—29% of the Muslim student population—and raising £1,200 for charity. Feedback showed 93% felt welcome and part of a community, with 86% making new friends. Alongside this, 12 LGBTQ+ socials engaged 198 students in activities such as wellbeing walks, vision board nights, and trips to LGBTQ+ friendly venues. A monthly newsletter supported ongoing engagement, and 91.7% of attendees reported a strong sense of belonging, with 87.5% feeling more connected to their student community. Both programmes fostered inclusion, connection, and wellbeing by providing consistent, student-led spaces.

*“I loved that I could go to the same place every day and build up my relationship with the place. I also loved how welcoming and warm it felt... Everyone was happy to be there, and everyone felt just at peace, together.”*

*“I enjoyed the food, sense of community and belonging especially in a difficult time such as Ramadan.”*

Feedback from event attendees



## Enhanced support for mature students

We provide a tailored framework of support to address the unique challenges faced by mature students returning to learning later in life. This programme aims to enhance their experience of transition to the University and improve their sense of belonging, academic readiness, and access to support services. These efforts focus on improving retention and degree success for mature students, whilst also boosting students' sense of belonging at the University – areas identified as risks in our Access and Participation Plan. Our support for mature students includes transition events, the Building up to Bristol pre-arrival preparation course, introductory events, community building activities, peer mentoring and personalised support and advocacy.

*“Thank you for all the support you've given me. It's really made a difference.”*

Final year Psychology mature student

## Meetups for mature postgraduate researchers

Mature PGR Meetups were established in 2024 as a supportive initiative open to anyone who self-identifies as a mature PGR. This activity was set up as part of the Returning to Research project in 2024, funded through Enhancing Research Culture and led by Dr Helen Thomas-Hughes and Dr Alice Beck.

Monthly in-person and virtual meet-ups have provided a relaxed, semi-facilitated space for mature researchers to connect, share experiences, and build community. Alongside regular sessions, one meeting focused specifically on academic careers, featuring academics who were also mature students. This enabled PGRs to ask questions and gain a clearer understanding of the process involved in pursuing an academic career. The group plans to hold four meetups in the 2025-26, to encourage greater engagement.



## Neurodivergent PGR Network



The Neurodivergent (ND) PGR Network aims to create a space for connection, resource-sharing, and peer support for students navigating the unique challenges of being a neurodivergent PGR.

The first meeting was held in April 2025. Since then, the Network has grown to over 100 students on the mailing list, 60 members in the WhatsApp community, and 30 regular participants in the weekly meetings. The WhatsApp communities are dedicated to peer support, tips, resources, and a general group chat. Informal socials are also held, including pub quizzes and board game nights.

Growth is anticipated in 2025-26, with the influx of new students and a second advertising campaign of posters and online content, with support from the Bristol Doctoral College.

*“It has been really helpful to have a way to meet other ND PGRs. I don't feel like I have to mask or explain myself as much. I also value the opportunity to contribute to projects that aim to improve the University experience for students like us.”*

Network member

## Trans and non-binary PGR student meetups

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2023 results indicated that transgender and non-binary PGRs at the University of Bristol (UoB) had a less positive experience of their degree programme than their cis peers. As a result of this, a number of focus groups and a survey was used to gather further details on the experience of trans and non-binary PGRs at UoB. Group participants and survey respondents remarked that the existing University networks for trans and non-binary staff or students are a difficult space for PGRs. As a result of this feedback, Dr Damien Mooney (PGR Director, Faculty of Arts during 2024-25) created a programme of trans and non-binary PGR social events, hosted in the PGR Hub in Senate House. These took place twice per term in 2024-25, with plans to continue this activity into 2025-26.



## Join the Dots

Join the Dots is a university transition programme, delivered in partnership with The Brilliant Club, and built on the principles of community, connections, and coaching. It is targeted at students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are at risk of missing out on the lifechanging opportunities that come from successfully earning a university degree. In 2024-25, 58 first-year undergraduates at Bristol were supported through the Join the Dots transition programme. These students made strong progress over the course of the programme, with survey data showing that they experienced significant improvements in academic self-efficacy as well as cognitive and metacognitive strategies, at rates above the national average.

Students who participated reported meaningful gains in confidence, particularly around managing their studies. One Bristol student shared "Join the Dots is a great head start to Uni as it equips you with essential skills." This feedback highlights the powerful role of this support in fostering academic resilience and a sense of belonging.



## Access Postgrad

Access Postgrad provides successful interventions to increase participation of students from non-traditional backgrounds into Postgraduate Taught (PGT) study at the University of Bristol. The scheme has grown over the past 8 years to annually support up to 30 final-year undergraduate students currently studying at the University. Scheme aims are to positively impact upon confidence levels and help participants feel more empowered and confident to study at postgraduate level. Confidence levels grew in 17 of the 18 areas assessed over this year's scheme's delivery.

Access Postgrad is delivered by current postgraduate students and staff via 1:1 mentoring, a range of skills/knowledge sessions, optional postgraduate lecture tasters and prioritised University accommodation eligibility. 16 of the scheme's 2024/25 participants have applied to master's programmes at the University of Bristol. Additional funding was sourced for the 2023/24 cohort, resulting in 10 master's students receiving fee-waivers of £6,500 for study in 2024/25.

"The Access Scheme gave me the confidence and guidance to apply for postgraduate studies, supporting me at every stage of the application. Even when I didn't think there would be an application! Another participant commented 'I am so grateful for my experience on this programme - it empowered me to follow through with my applications and supported me in considering the different facets of the reality of postgrad and how to prepare myself for these so I can put my best foot forward'".

### Feedback from participants

# DIVERSE CIVIC PARTNERSHIPS

Our strategic aim for Diverse Civic Partnerships is to develop deeper and mutually beneficial relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders across our vibrant city. This will continue to build confidence and trust in the University as an employer and provider of education and strengthen our position as a civic university delivering a brighter future for Bristol's people.

## Bristol Women in Business Charter



BRISTOL WOMEN IN BUSINESS CHARTER

*We're not just about gender. Equity through an intersectional lens.*

As a founding signatory of the Bristol Women in Business Charter, launched in 2019, the University of Bristol is proud to continue contributing to its mission and annual report. With 45 signatory organisations collectively employing over 45,000 people across the region, the Charter is making a tangible and growing impact on gender equality—supporting strategic, sustainable change.

Over the past five years, the University has actively engaged with the Charter by hosting and participating in events, sharing best practices with fellow signatories, and contributing to the Charter's Mentoring Programme. This collaborative, cross-sector approach is driving lasting and meaningful progress, and we remain committed to supporting its vision for a more equitable future.



## Supporting Bristol Pride 2025

We were proud to serve as an Accessibility Partner for Bristol Pride 2025. Our sponsorship contributed to wheelchair track mapping, British Sign Language interpreters, and accessible viewing platforms and facilities throughout the festival.



## Widening participation

Age should never be a barrier to education and supporting mature learners to (re) engage with higher education at Bristol remains a key priority. We have set out our ongoing commitment to welcoming and supporting mature learners and in our Access and Participation Plan. We continue to employ our innovative Guaranteed Offer (or Interview) policy for students studying Access to Higher Education courses. This admissions policy is supported by a programme of innovative targeted information, advice and guidance (IAG) to local and national FE colleges, and a tailored framework of support once they join the University. In 2024/25, IAG has been provided to over 400 adult learners studying at levels 1, 2 and 3 in local colleges and community settings.

## Employment Outreach

This year, we have worked with 10 schools across the region, supporting over 4,500 14- to 19-year-olds learning about future job and apprenticeship opportunities. Some of this year's highlights included hosting our first Campus Discovery Day, contributing to GCSE Boost and piloting our reverse work experience initiative with support from our colleagues at Merchants Academy and The West of England Combined Authority (WECA).



GCSE Boost event

## Working with Bristol and Beyond

Working collaboratively with a range of external partners and stakeholders, the central EDI Team represents the University on boards and committees across the city and on national and international EDI groups to address common challenges and share best practice. We contribute to a range of groups focused on improving representation and opportunity in employment, including:

- **Bristol Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group** - the multi-agency Bristol Race Equality Strategic Leaders' Group (BRESLG) looks at ways we can all work together as one city, to tackle some of the challenges we face and find ways to improve opportunities and experiences for our global majority communities. BRESLG works closely with a range of sectors and includes representatives from local public sector organisations as well community groups and the voluntary sector.
- **HR Race Practitioners Group** – a cross city working group that supports Bristol's Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group, where organisations share best practice as well as delivered this year's job events such as Our City, Your Jobs.
- **Building Better** – a cross city strategic board that looks at how successful Bristol planning applicants can make a commitment to employment, skills and education, with a particular focus on areas of high deprivation.

- **Temple Quarter Recruiting Differently** – made up of some of the Temple Quarter Partners, this group share inclusive recruitment best practice and focuses on apprenticeships as a career path. The group hosts apprenticeship information sessions and connects potential apprentices with potential employers.
- **Bristol Future Talent Partnership** – cross city group providing work experience for those from global majority backgrounds.
- **Coimbra Equality & Diversity Working Group** - an association of leading, European multidisciplinary universities, supporting member institutions in advancing inclusive education, gender equality, diversity, and intersectionality.
- **Russell Group EDI Directors Group** – a cross-institutional forum bringing together Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Directors from across the Russell Group to exchange best practices and drive sector-wide progress.
- **Russell Group Athena Swan Leads Group** - a cross-institutional group uniting Athena Swan Leads from across the Russell Group to share best practices and advance sector-wide progress, with a dedicated focus on gender equity.
- **Equity and Inclusion in Research Funding Group** – a group that brings together colleagues across higher education institutions and research funders to undertake collective work to address inequities within research funding.





## LOOKING AHEAD

Even though we are all different, there is one thing that unites us - we are all part of the University of Bristol. We want all our students and staff to feel that they belong to a supportive, collaborative and vibrant community where their individuality and perspective are valued, and where they can reach their full potential.

Working closely to further our 'one community' approach to an inclusive work and study environment will remain a priority over the coming year. Our culture is powered by our staff and our students. When we belong to a community with a shared sense of values and purpose, we thrive. When our people thrive it enhances our capacity to collaborate and innovate - not only with each other, but with our students, our city and our local, national and global partners.

As part of this ongoing commitment to creating a culture of inclusion and belonging, we will continue to take meaningful action to embed inclusion across all levels of our institution. This includes integrating inclusive practices into School governance structures and ensuring that everyone has a role to play in shaping an environment where all feel valued and respected. We are also reviewing our leadership development offerings to ensure they reflect and promote our values, equipping our leaders to build, support, and sustain inclusive teams and cultures.

We recognise that some members of our community still face unequal experiences. We will continue to address the lower reported sense of belonging and satisfaction among our disabled students and staff and working to improve representation and experiences of our Black staff and students.

We are supporting cultural change through initiatives like our Stand Up, Speak Out Active Bystander facilitated sessions, which are now available to both staff and students. Using real-life scenarios helps to equip participants with practical tools to challenge inappropriate behaviour and foster a more respectful and inclusive University culture.

Creating a truly inclusive University is a shared endeavour. We are committed to engaging our entire community in this journey, ensuring that inclusion and belonging are not just principles we talk about, but values we actively live every day.



Tracy Brunnock, Head of EDI and Zoë Pither, Assistant Director, Student EDI Strategy



If you need all or part of this publication in an alternative format please contact the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team  
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