

Access and Participation Statement

At Waltham Forest College - "We will deliver responsive, outstanding teaching, learning and support to meet the needs of individuals and employers and inspire our students to develop the high quality skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their future lives."

Waltham Forest College has a strong record of providing fair access for all to higher education. We have taken an inclusive approach engaging with individuals and groups with protected characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). Our Learner Involvement Strategy clearly defines how we will embrace learner views and offer structured opportunities for students to have direct involvement in assessing and shaping their own learning experience in order to develop the College's quality improvement processes, to increase student success and develop as active citizens in the wider community.

We are one of the most diverse colleges in London and are even more diverse than the local community. Our borough is one of the most culturally rich areas in the country - 48 per cent of residents are from a minority ethnic background. There are 97 different languages spoken by students at Waltham Forest College - the top five languages spoken locally other than English are Urdu, Polish, Romanian, Turkish and Lithuanian. Fewer than 10% of our H.E. students describe themselves as "white British".

More than 90% of our H.E. students are over 21 on enrolment on to our H.E. courses. We have subject specialist tutors and members of our Services for Students team are dedicated to supporting adult learners specifically. The team also works hard to support the 66% of our H.E. students who live in the most deprived areas of Waltham Forest - in itself London's 7th most deprived borough. Our students in H.E. take part in a mentoring programme that supports success and develops key employability skills.

The College's H.E. population shows an approximate 75/25% split between females and males. Females tend to dominate Health & Social Care and Fashion and Textile courses in particular and this reflects progression from our successful, and growing, study programme and Access provision in these areas. The introduction of H.E. provision in Public Services in September 2018 may impact on this gender imbalance.

Our extensive new build that includes the Creative Arts building where H.E. courses in Fashion & Textiles are delivered, and our new STEM centre, has been purposely designed to accommodate students with disabilities - 18% of H.E. learners which is higher than the local population average of 15% (2011 census).

The College's strategic approach to its HE provision promotes progression to its courses both by internal FE students, and by the wider community and employers. We work with the 9,200 micro-businesses in the borough to develop pathways from Study Programme to our H.E. curriculum offer and beyond to employment.

At all levels we are committed to providing appropriate resources to enable and encourage access and participation in further and higher education. This takes a number of forms - funding to the Student Association, direct staff support, resources in kind in the form of accommodation and office costs, time off for student representative activities, and a wider staff development commitment to

developing and embedding learners in to all decision making, evaluation and quality improvement measures in the College.

Student engagement is constantly being reviewed and developed through the Student's Union, Student Governors, Course Representatives, Student Ambassadors, Student Council and the Senior Leadership Team listening to feedback from regular student surveys and focus groups.

We have adopted and apply Nelson Mandela's words "Education is the best weapon you can use to change the world" to help individuals be the best they can. Using our college values of Fairness, Openness, Respect, Excellence, Success and Teamwork, we aspire to change lives through every aspect of our provision from pre-Entry to Higher Education.