# A group of people walking in a plaza with a clock tower Description automatically generatedA black and white logo Description automatically generated

**2023 – 2024**

**Annual Diversity & Equality (PSED) Report**

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## Introduction

The University of Liverpool (UoL) is a globally recognised institution, which is deeply committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment that attracts exceptional talent from around the world. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are fundamental to our mission, reflecting our dedication to not only meeting but exceeding the statutory obligations outlined in the [Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty) as outlined within the Equality Act 2010.

This report outlines the significant progress made in advancing EDI across the University during academic year 2023/24, with a particular focus on; Gender, Race, Disability and LGBTQIA+ equality, as well as, activity relating to; bullying and harassment, Pay Gaps, recruitment, promotion and development, including the implementation of Positive Action measures.

Accompanying this report is (**Appendix A**) an infographic which provides a comprehensive overview of both employee and student demographics for the academic year 2023/24. Further information and analysis relating to specific protected characteristics by workforce (**Appendix B**) and student population (**Appendix C**) data comparisons between 2021-2024 and 2023-2024, are also provided

## Terminology & Language

For this report, the categories align with those used in UK census data to facilitate comparison and benchmarking. However, it is important to acknowledge that individuals may self-identify using alternative terms that better reflect their personal identities.

* **‘Gender/Sex’** refers to sex categories (male and female) as well as gender-identities which may include (but are not limited to) non-binary, gender-fluid and Transgender.
* **‘People of Colour (POC)’** refers to the calculation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in comparison to White colleagues/students.
* **‘Mature Students’** are students who are 21 years of age and above.
* **‘International/Overseas’** are those who study/work at the University from outside of the UK, including the European Union and Overseas.
* **‘LGBO’** refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Other sexual orientations, commonly compared to Heterosexual colleagues/students.
* **‘Prefer Not to Say (PNTS)/ Unknown’** indicates where equality monitoring information has not been disclosed.
* **‘Known Disability’** refers to colleagues who have actively indicated that they have a disability. **‘No Known Disability’** refers to colleagues who have actively indicated that they do not have a disability. ‘**Unknown Disability**’ refer to colleagues who have not provided this information and therefore unknown.

**NB:** Student disability related data is provided as ‘**Known Disability’ vs ‘Unknown Disability’** due to the way in which this data is currently recorded/captured on internal systems, with unknowns reflecting students who are *not known* to have a disability or have *not provided this information*.

## Governance of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Governance for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is overseen by the University’s [EDI Committee](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/governance/university-committees/equalitydiversityandinclusioncommittee/) chaired by Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Science & Engineering, Professor Wiebe Van Der Hoek, BSc, PhD. The University’s EDI Committee provides critical oversight for all aspects of EDI across the University whilst day-to-day delivery and implementation of strategic EDI related objectives sits in the Academy within the Human Resources (HR) Team.

In order to create an inclusive environment, where everyone is respected and feels a sense of belonging, there needs to be a collective effort, and so it is acknowledged that all colleagues and students of the University of Liverpool have a significant part to play in the application of EDI and upholding of the University’s inclusive ethos. The University has therefore adopted a distributed leadership model, where a diverse range of colleagues (100+) have voluntarily taken on EDI Champion roles. These Champions act as visible role models and provide leadership within their respective areas and help to further embed EDI principles across the institution.

A copy of the[**University’s current EDI Governance Structure**](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/hr/diversity-equality/governance/)can be found [here](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/hr/diversity-equality/governance/). Work will be undertaken this year to ensure that governance structures remain fit for purpose.

## Staff Networks

The University of Liverpool’s equality Staff Networks also play a pivotal role in fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace culture. These networks provide a platform for colleagues to connect, share experiences, and collaborate on initiatives that promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across the University. Each network offers unique support for its members while actively contributing to University-wide EDI goals.

Examples of our equality staff networks include:

* **Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) Staff Network**
* **Disabled Staff Network**
* **LGBTQIA+ Staff Network**
* **Menopause Support Group**
* **Trans and Non-Binary Peer Support Network**
* **Women@Liverpool**
* **Neurodivergent Staff Support Group**

These networks contribute significantly to the University of Liverpool’s EDI agenda by providing platforms for staff to connect and collaborate while helping to shape policies and practices that promote diversity and inclusion across the institution.

For a full list of equality staff networks and to find out more, please visit: [www.liverpool.ac.uk/hr/diversityandequality/staffnetworks/](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/hr/diversityandequality/staffnetworks/)

## Summary of the Equality Objectives Progress Report (2023-2024)

The Equality Objectives Progress Reportdetails significant progress toward four key objectives outlined in the [Equality Objectives Action Plan (EOAP) 2022-2028](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/media/intranet/humanresources/2014/diversity-equality/UoL,Equality,Objectives,Action,Plan,(2022,-,2028),-,Webpage,edition.pdf):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective 1** | Increase diversity & representation within our staff & student population |
| **Objective 2** | Make significant improvements to enhance staff & student experiences, with a particular focus on those who identify as People of Colour & or Disabled |
| **Objective 3** | Promote a culture where bullying and harassment is not tolerated (with a particular focus on sexual harassment, racism and sexism) |
| **Objective 4** | Reduce the awarding gap between People of Colour and White students, with a particular focus on Black student outcomes |

Progress made during academic year 2023/24, includes:

**Obj 1 – Employees and Student Diversity & Representation:**

* Improvements in diversity data including; a rise in Undergraduate students who identify as People of Colour (PoC) and Black student enrolment across all three faculties. As well as, percentage increases in the representation of Women Professors, a percentage increase in the number of University Council members who identify as People of Colour (PoC), as well as a more general increase in known equality monitoring information, indicating a positive increase in the number of disabled and LGBO employees.

**Positive Action and Recruitment:**

* New Positive Action (PA) initiatives were launched to promote diversity in staff recruitment, including new PA webpages and resources such as guidance documents, check-lists and information on internal training available.

**Obj 2 – Race Equality and Campus Inclusivity:**

* The University received its first Race Equality Charter Bronze Award in January 2024 ([UoL REC Action Plan 2023 – 2028](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/2023,self-assessment,document,and,action,plan.pdf)) and began to develop a new Inclusive Campus Action Plan to enhance accessibility and inclusion for employees and students, with a particular focus on advancing disability equality.

**Obj 3 – Bullying and Harassment:**

* Bullying & harassment awareness campaigns continued, with a focus on addressing reports of sexual harassment, racism, and sexism. Although incidents/reports of this nature increased, this reflects growing confidence in reporting and understanding of the support available.

**Obj 4 – Awarding Gaps:**

* During academic year 2023/24, the University undertook a major project to develop a new draft Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2025-2029, which would address the fluctuations in the Awarding Gaps between students who identify as PoC/Black, in comparison to White peers. As part of the new APP, the University set targets to reduce the degree awarding gap from 8.8% (in 2021/22) to 4.3% by 2028/29, with a commitment to eliminate the gap by 2032.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Activities (2023-24)

During the 2023-2024 academic year, significant efforts have also been made to address the following areas:

**Race Equality**

The University has made considerable strides toward race equality, with the introduction of the [Race Equality Charter (REC) Action Plan (2023-2028)](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/2023,self-assessment,document,and,action,plan.pdf). This comprehensive plan outlines specific objectives for addressing racial disparities within the institution. In January 2024, the University of Liverpool achieved the REC Bronze Award on its first attempt, a sizable achievement given that fewer than 50% of first-time applicants receive this distinction. The University's success was not only attributed to its robust REC Action Plan but also to its strong EDI governance structure, which is considered a beacon of best practice within the sector.

The Race Equality Action Plan focuses on improving the experiences of People of Colour (PoC) employees and students. It aims to tackle barriers to equality, such as underrepresentation of PoC in senior leadership and academic positions and addressing the Awarding Gap. As part of its broader mission, the University has begun to implement new race-conscious inclusive recruitment practices, ensuring that positive action measures are used to support diversity and inclusion. An example of which includes work carried out during 2023/24 to enhance community engagement, working with local and national stakeholders to strengthen its racial equity strategies.

Furthermore, by adopting an intersectional approach that integrates REC and Athena Swan activities, the University ensures that race and gender equality are addressed holistically, promoting an inclusive culture that supports all employees and students.

**Gender Equality**

Gender equality remains a priority for the University, supported by its continued retention of the Athena Swan Silver Award, which recognises its commitment to gender equity in academic roles and research environments. During academic year 2023/24 work has been underway within the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences, and the Faculty of Science & Engineering (S&E), as preparations are being made for several School/Institutes to submit applications for silver and gold awards, furthering their commitment to gender equality.

In 2023, the University successfully launched Women@Liverpool, a network aimed at academic women, which has quickly grown to 185 members. This network provides a space for women academics to connect, share experiences, and support one another's career advancement. Furthermore, the Menopause Network, which was founded in 2019, now has over 300 members. Menopause awareness has become an important focus, with over 50 male colleagues participating in menopause awareness training, reflecting the University’s holistic approach to gender-related challenges in the workplace.

Additionally, the University’s family-friendly policies have been reviewed ahead of legislative changes, ensuring that policies remain aligned with best practices. These efforts are designed to foster a supportive and inclusive working environment for all genders, particularly in balancing work-life demands. This builds on positive improvements to University policy, including the introduction of increased maternity and paternity leave and pay, which was approved during the previous academic year.

In terms of promotion and career development, the University is actively working to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions and has embarked on a project to review its current development offering. The University also continues to monitor and address gender pay gaps, with some positive results. For more information, please visit the Promotion & Development and Pay Gap sections of this report.

**Disability Equality**

The University is deeply committed to improving the experiences of colleagues and students living with disabilities. As part of this effort, a new Inclusive and Accessible Campus Action Plan has been in development. This plan aims to create a more inclusive environment by addressing not only accessibility improvements (physical and virtual campus) but also wider inclusivity factors, such as the enhancement of visual representation, the provision of gender-neutral facilities, consideration regarding wellbeing spaces, etc. This holistic approach ensures that individuals with disabilities, amongst other protected characteristics, feel fully supported in all aspects of their university experience.

Furthermore, a key initiative also in development, is the exploration into a new Reasonable Adjustment (RA) Passport and process. The RA Passport will outline an employee’s workplace adjustments and transfer with them, if they change departments or line managers, ensuring continuity and consistency in accommodations. Designed to simplify the communication of individual needs, the RA Passport aims to create smoother transitions across the University.

Additionally, the University has launched Disability and Wellbeing Drop-in Sessions, which have already been attended by over 100 colleagues. These sessions provide a safe and supportive space for employees to discuss any challenges they may face and seek advice on accessing further resources. Training for managers has also been expanded to enhance their understanding of reasonable adjustments and to increase their capability to support colleagues with disabilities effectively. Events such as the Neurodiversity Symposium and Feel-Good-February have further encouraged employees to explore and implement reasonable adjustments, and consider wellbeing more broadly, fostering a supportive workplace culture that celebrates diversity.

In line with broader institutional goals to align with best practices for accessibility in both academic and operational contexts, the University is also working to improve its digital infrastructure. By taking a proactive approach to disability equality, the University aims to ensure that all employees and students have equal opportunities and the tools and support they need to succeed.

**LGBTQIA+ Equality**

The University remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment for all employees and students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. As part of its efforts, the University has maintained its long-standing relationship with Stonewall, a leading national LGBTQIA+ charity, ensuring ongoing support for LGBTQIA+ equality initiatives. This partnership emphasises the University’s commitment to promoting inclusion and safeguarding the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

In addition to this, the University has hosted a number of LGBTQIA+ inclusion related workshops with colleagues, including LGBTQIA+ Staff Network members and representatives from the Guild of Students, aimed at exploring the development of a new LGBTQIA+ inclusion related action plan/strategy. Guest speakers from Stonewall and Navajo, a locally based charter that focuses on LGBTQIA+ equality in Merseyside, where invited to share information and take questions. It is hoped that by engaging with grassroots organisations can help to bring community-based perspectives and local expertise to the broader conversation about LGBTQIA+ inclusion. The staff network is enthusiastic about pursuing a benchmark for LGBTQIA+ inclusivity, as part of the University’s strategy to ensure that all individuals feel welcomed and supported.

**Promotion & Development**

The University is committed to reviewing and enhancing its promotion and development pathways, particularly for employees from underrepresented backgrounds. During academic year 2023/24 the University successfully launched the new Contributions Framework, which allows colleagues with responsibility for research and teaching to be recognised for the many and varied contributions they make to the research environment. In 2023, the ‘Insight into Promotion’ sessions were attended by 126 colleagues, providing clarity on the promotion process, with ringfenced sessions for different demographic groups. The introduction of the Research Technical Professional (RTP) Career Pathway in February 2023 led to the successful promotion of 18 technical employees between Grades 7-10. Additionally, tailored unconscious bias training has been rolled out for academic promotion panels. Efforts to improve unconscious bias training for all colleagues are ongoing, with future plans for a new e-learning module.

**Positive Action**

To further reduce recruitment biases and promote diversity, the University has been proactive in implementing **Positive Action** initiatives. Training programmes for recruitment panels have been introduced, ensuring that panel members are aware of biases and equipped to make fairer, more inclusive decisions. The University intends to explore and introduce the use of positive action statements into job vacancies and advertisements where relevant, emphasising our commitment to diversity and encouraging candidates from underrepresented communities to apply.

Additionally, the University is reviewing its **Apprenticeship Scheme** to address gender imbalances in lower grades and career pathways where men are currently underrepresented. This review is part of a broader strategy to ensure that all career paths, including apprenticeships, offer equal opportunities for progression, regardless of gender or background. By focusing on both recruitment practices and career development, the University aims to reduce disparities in pay and representation, creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace.

**Pay Gap**

The University is steadfast in its commitment to closing pay gaps across all groups and continues to implement long-term strategies to address this disparity. Central to this effort is the use of **Positive Action** and the exploration of new or enhanced leadership and development opportunities. These initiatives are detailed in the [University Pay Gap Report](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/hr/diversityandequality/pay-gaps/#:~:text=The%20University%20of%20Liverpool%20gender,16.19%25%20(UK%20HE%2C%20ONS) **2024**, which outlines the steps being taken to create a more equitable environment.

In 2024, the University achieved reductions in both the mean and median gender pay gaps, from 20.38% in 2023 to 19.60% and 16.19% in 2023 to 15.28% respectively. While this reduction is small, it demonstrates progress and reinforces the institution’s ongoing efforts to address pay inequality. One targeted initiative involved hosting a **clinical career progression event**, attended by 60 clinical academic colleagues, with the aim of encouraging more women to consider the field, which has traditionally dominated by men. In addition to the event, focus groups with female clinical academics were conducted to identify the specific barriers to career progression and recognition. The insights gained from these discussions have led to the creation of a **female clinical network**, aimed at supporting women in clinical academic roles and ensuring greater representation in leadership positions.

**Bullying & Harassment**

During the 2023-2024 academic year, significant efforts have been made to address bullying and harassment within the University. These initiatives include the launch of a new Mediation Service aimed at providing a formal avenue for conflict resolution for employees. A new e-learning module on bullying and harassment has also been in development, specifically targeting managers and supervisors to increase awareness and provide tools for handling cases effectively (official launch to take place during academic year 2024/25). The University also revised the language on the Report & Support forms, encouraging employees and students to submit named reports rather than anonymous ones, fostering greater transparency. A brand new training session on the topic of Cultural Diversity has been developed and launch for all colleagues to access, with sessions provided to Conflict Resolution Advisers and Mediators, equipping them to better support cases with diverse cultural contexts.

**Equality Monitoring**

The University is committed to enhancing the accuracy of its equality monitoring data, especially in relation to ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. Supported by a comprehensive communications plan, these efforts have led to a slight increase in employee’s willingness to disclose personal information in a number of equality categories. This improvement in disclosure rates allows the University to identify underrepresented groups more effectively, enabling targeted interventions and fostering a more inclusive environment. Ongoing efforts to further improve on equality monitoring data sets is an EDI priority for academic year 2024/25 and beyond.

## Looking ahead

The following EDI priorities have been identified for academic year 2024/25 (Year Two):

**Equality Objective 1:**

* Improve Equality Monitoring & Inclusive Recruitment

**Equality Objective 2:**

* Improve experiences of students & colleagues who identify as disabled and or People of Colour

**Equality Objective 3:**

* Improve knowledge & understanding regarding approaches to address bullying & harassment

**Equality Objective 4:**

* Implementation of Awarding Gap interventions

For more information on the progress made against the [Equality Objectives Action Plan 2022-2028](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/media/intranet/humanresources/2014/diversity-equality/UoL,Equality,Objectives,Action,Plan,(2022,-,2028),-,Webpage,edition.pdf) and Year Two Priorities, please see the Equality Objectives Progress Update Report (2023/24).

## Acknowledgements

The University would like to extend its gratitude to all those who have contributed to improving the inclusivity of its culture at Liverpool. These individuals/groups include:

* EDI Champions
* EDI committees, steering/working groups
* Chairs, advocates and members of the Staff Networks & groups
* All colleagues and students working on the Race Equality Charter (REC)
* All colleagues working on the implementation of Athena Swan related action plans
* All action holders listed within the University’s Equality Objectives Action Plan
* The Guild and Student Societies
* Academics who are research active in the EDI space
* Senior Leadership colleagues