Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Report
2023/2024

Luminate

Contents

Foreword

I am pleased to present this annual report, which reflects our ongoing determination that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is central to all we do and underpins outstanding teaching, learning and assessment, a positive workplace culture, social mobility and the wellbeing of our staff and students.

At Luminate, we believe that diversity enriches our community, drives innovation, and strengthens our collective success. We have made good progress over the last year and this report highlights and celebrates this. I'd very much like to thank all staff and students for the progress we've made, and particularly our EDI team, led by our Group Head of EDI, Tanya McCalmon, our EDI Champions and staff forums for the time, thought, and care they've put into embedding inclusive practice into everyday work.

Through leadership at all levels, we seek to continuously improve our positive learning culture. Our commitment to EDI remains at the heart of our values and our mission. We have made significant strides in implementing inclusive practices, promoting diversity, and addressing barriers to equality. However, we recognise that this journey requires continuous effort and collaboration.

The report also identifies those areas where we need to do more (and with more urgency) such as tackling disparities in student outcomes, or listening more deeply to the lived experiences of staff who feel progression opportunities are unequal. These are shared challenges, and it's through collective responsibility that we will make progress.

As an Anchor Institution, we recognise our role as civic leaders and our responsibility to be part of change beyond our walls. At a time when many of our EDI objectives are under threat we need to stand firm and ensure that where possible we do not allow the many equality objectives achieved over decades are not threatened. To that end, I invite all colleagues, stakeholders, and partners to stay committed to this work; to take a joined-up, holistic approach, to model inclusive behaviours in every space we occupy, and to keep shaping an organisation where everyone feels able to thrive.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment.

Bill Jones
Deputy CEO & Executive Principal Leeds City College

Executive summary

Luminate Education Group, which consists of Leeds City College, Leeds Sixth Form, University Centre Leeds, Leeds Conservatoire, Harrogate College, and Keighley College, remains committed to fostering Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across the Group. This report highlights key achievements and progress made against our six EDI objectives, key demographic trends, workforce analysis (this data also includes our higher education (HE) members: Leeds Conservatoire, and University Centre Leeds), further education (FE) student outcomes, and FE post-education destinations, providing insights, and recommendations to strengthen EDI practices.

Key achievements and progress

1. Celebrate diversity

Enhanced representation and inclusivity through curriculum development, cultural awareness events, and tutorial materials that reflect diverse identities and histories.

2. Champion disabiity and neurodiversity, and improve accessibility

Contributed to creating more inclusive environments for disabled, and neurodivergent staff and students by focusing on both access and wellbeing.

3. Challenge discrimination and foster inclusion

Continued to support the organisation in building a culture where fairness, respect, and inclusion are actively promoted. Work has focused on policy influence, leadership development, and tackling bias.

4. Invest in the Race Equality Roadmap

Integrated race-inclusive teaching materials and supported career development initiatives for underrepresented ethnic groups.

5. Amplify voice and influence

Expanded Student Parliament, strengthened student-led groups, developed professional development to support EDI discussions, and continued to consult with staff forums to support deicison-making.

6. Promote social mobility

Secured funding for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) projects, developed HE pathways for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) students, and tackled stigma around socio-economic challenges.

Key findings

Workforce demographics and gender pay gap

Women make up 61% of the workforce

but are slightly underrepresented in management relative to their overall proportion.

Disability disclosure is low (6.82%)

compared to the national average (24%), suggesting potential barriers to self-reporting.

The gender pay gap has improved

with a mean difference of 4.1% (71p less for women), ranking Luminate in the top 8% of UK education providers with the lowest gap.

Staff survey insights

- 96% of staff believe in Luminate's commitment to EDI, but trust in leadership communication is lower among some ethnic minority groups.

- Career progression confidence is lower among bisexual (50%) and ethnic minority staff.

- Digital accessibility remains a challenge, with only 53% finding IT systems user-friendly.

Student diversity and outcomes

- Ethnic minority representation is high (44% White British, significantly lower than the national FE average of 73.7%).

- 22.7% of students declared a disability, exceeding national averages.

- Achievement rates for 16-18s are close to national benchmarks, but pass rates for SEND and care-experienced students remain below average. Strong emphasis is placed on safeguarding and wellbeing for students in these groups which appears to be showing up in the retention rates which are above national benchmarks for both groups.

Student destinations

- Females are more likely to progress to HE, while males favour employment.

- White British students transition into employment at higher rates than ethnic minority students.

- SEND, educational health and care plan (EHCP), and care-experienced students primarily continue in FE but struggle with employment and HE progression.

- Not in education, employment or training (NEET) rates are highest for EHCP and care-experienced students.

Key recommendations

- **Career progression and leadership support** - Enhance promotion pathways for underrepresented groups and increase access to flexible work.

- **Improve data transparency** - Strengthen disability and ethnicity disclosure to better inform policy changes.

- **Retention and success strategies** - Expand academic support for vulnerable student groups, particularly care leavers and SEND learners.

- **Pathways into employment and HE** - Strengthen employer engagement, improve apprenticeship uptake, and support alternative career routes for SEND and care-experienced students.

Luminate has made progress against its EDI objectives, in workforce diversity, student engagement, and reducing the gender pay gap, but challenges remain in career development, digital accessibility, and post-education opportunities. By implementing these targeted interventions, the Group can continue to advance an inclusive and equitable education and work environment.

Introduction

At Luminate EDI is fundamental to our mission of transforming lives through education, training, and support. With four Further Education colleges - Harrogate, Keighley, Leeds, and Leeds Sixth Form - we are well-placed to foster inclusive cultures that extend beyond our campuses.

As an Investors in People and Disability Confident Employer, we are committed to embedding EDI into every aspect of our work. Some of our members have been awarded College of Place of Sanctuary status, recognising the good practice and provision we have in place to support refugees and people seeking asylum. We are also pursuing Investors in Diversity Silver UK accreditation, focusing on excellence and working collaboratively to fully embed EDI across our member organisations. However, it is important to note that external accreditation is not our final goal; we are dedicated to ongoing improvement and strategic action.

Our social purpose drives significant investment in community engagement, strengthening relationships to make education more accessible and relevant. We champion relational practices to create welcoming, safe environments where everyone belongs.

This report is published in line with the statutory requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. As a public sector organisation, Luminate Education Group is committed to demonstrating transparency and accountability in how we promote equality, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations. This annual EDI report reflects our compliance with the duty to publish information on our workforce and the people affected by our policies and practices. It also outlines our progress and recommendations for continuing to advance EDI across our FE colleges and services.

Equality, diversity and inclusion at Luminate

We take a structured approach to embedding EDI across the Group, with leadership teams and governors providing strategic direction, supported by staff and student voices.
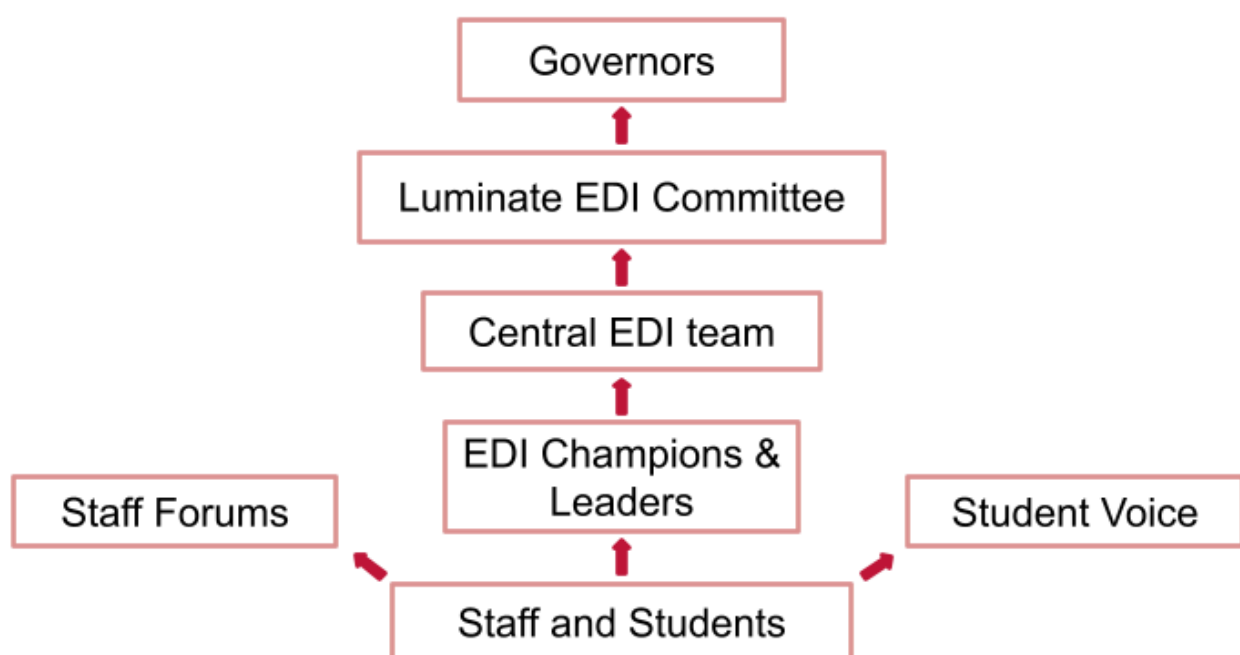
Our EDI structure

Governance and oversight - The EDI Committee, chaired by the EDI link governor, consists of senior leaders and key stakeholders. It oversees EDI at a strategic level, monitoring progress against our objectives.

The central EDI team - Part of the Student Life Directorate, alongside Careers, Student Engagement, Wellbeing, Safeguarding, and Food and Catering. Working closely with HR and other departments, the team provides expertise to support strategic goals, develops EDI policy, ensures quality in Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), supports learning and development, and manages external accreditation processes.

EDI champions and leaders - EDI Champions, nominated from curriculum and business support teams, advocate for inclusion, provide advice, and participate in campaigns. EDI Leaders deliver in-person EDI learning and development sessions for staff.

Staff forums - Our six staff forums offer safe spaces, host workshops, advocate for inclusion, and provide staff voice to inform decision-making.

Disability and Neurodiversity   LGBT+   Men's Wellbeing   Race Equality   Women's Forum   Working Carers Forum

Interfaith network - An interfaith network was established to create a space where colleagues can come together, engage in inclusive dialogue and build interfaith relations.

Student voice - The Students' Union Executive attends EDI Champion meetings, while the SU President represents students at the EDI Committee, ensuring student perspectives shape our EDI approach.

Progress on our EDI objectives

Luminate's EDI champions play a vital role in embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion across our member organisations. Their work, aligned with our six Group EDI Objectives, has led to tangible improvements in curriculum inclusivity, staff and student wellbeing, policy development, and accessibility.

1. Celebrate diversity

Champions have enhanced representation and inclusivity across the curriculum and learning environment.

Key contributions:

- Inclusive Curriculum - Hair, Beauty, and Media Makeup incorporated Black History Month content, diverse beauty products, and gender awareness initiatives; Maths and English integrated differentiated teaching resources; Pastoral and Digital Learning developed EDI-focused tutorial materials and staff development.

- Cultural Awareness and Community Engagement - Events for Neurodiversity Celebration Week, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and menopause awareness; creation of a democracy and voting pack for ESOL and SEND students.

Impact: Improved representation in teaching and learning, fostering greater student engagement in EDI discussions.

2. Champion disabiity and neurodiversity, and improve accessibility

Champions have worked to enhance accessibility and inclusion for neurodivergent and disabled staff and students.

Key contributions:

- Physical and Digital Accessibility - Advocated for quiet spaces, improved accessibility in farm-based learning, and introduced sensory toys in ESOL programmes.

- Wellbeing Support - Facilitated suicide awareness training for the Men's Wellbeing Forum; strengthened support for students facing homelessness and financial hardship.

Impact: More inclusive learning environments and improved awareness of disability and neurodiversity challenges.

3. Challenge discrimination and foster inclusion

Champions have helped tackle discrimination and strengthen inclusive practices.

Key contributions:

- Policy Development and Training - Strengthened inclusion policies, developed a gender identity toolkit, and led training on unspent criminal convictions disclosure.

- Inclusive Leadership - Designed professional development to challenge bias in recruitment and teaching, embedding EDI in leadership decision-making.

Impact: Strengthened policies, fairer hiring practices, and increased staff confidence in challenging discrimination.

4. Invest in the Race Equality Roadmap

Champions have supported race equality through curriculum and policy initiatives.

Key contributions:

- Curriculum and Career Development - Developed race-inclusive lesson materials and supported career progression initiatives for underrepresented ethnic groups.

- Policy and Recruitment - Input into Safer Recruitment Policy reviews to promote diverse hiring practices.

Impact: A more inclusive curriculum and improved recruitment processes supporting racial equity.

5. Amplify voice and influence

Champions ensure staff and student voices are heard and valued.

Key contributions:

- Student Engagement - Strengthened Student Parliament and Voice initiatives, supported student-led groups (e.g., student LGBTQ+ societies, Students United for Palestine).

- Staff Development - Equipped tutorial staff to lead EDI discussions, organised listening forums for diverse student perspectives.

Impact: Greater student participation in decision-making and staff confidence in facilitating inclusive discussions.

6. Promote social mobility

Champions work to increase access to opportunities for students from less advantaged backgrounds.

Key contributions:

- Career Progression and Funding - Secured funding for SEND and inclusion projects (e.g., Makaton gloves for hearing-impaired learners); developed alternative HE pathways for ESOL and first-generation university applicants.

- Workshops and Outreach - Led campaigns to de-stigmatise free school meals, developed career resources tailored to SEND students.

Impact: Expanded funding and career pathways, ensuring greater support for underrepresented students.

In 2023 - 2024, our EDI Champions supported over 180 initiatives across the Group that have contributed to progress against our EDI objectives.

### Initiatives facilitated by EDI champions
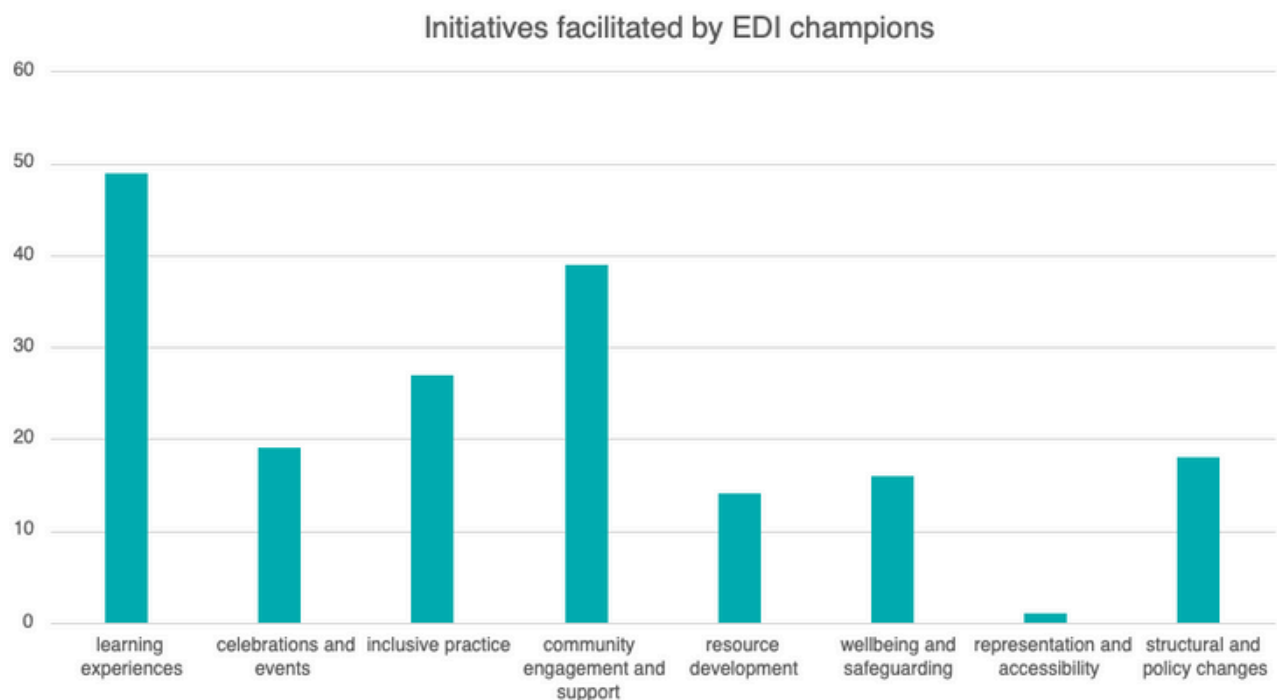
Moving forward with our EDI strategy

In September 2024, Luminate launched a three-year EDI strategy with a clear action plan to advance equality, diversity, and inclusion for staff, students, and stakeholders.

Our strategic priorities

- **Clarity** - Defining and communicating Luminate's EDI identity and purpose.
- **Cohesion** - Strengthening leadership and collaboration.
- **Engagement** - Maximising stakeholder involvement.
- **Development** - Delivering flexible, impactful learning experiences.
- **Insight** - Using data to inform decisions and measure progress.
- **Communication** - Celebrating success stories and sharing impact.
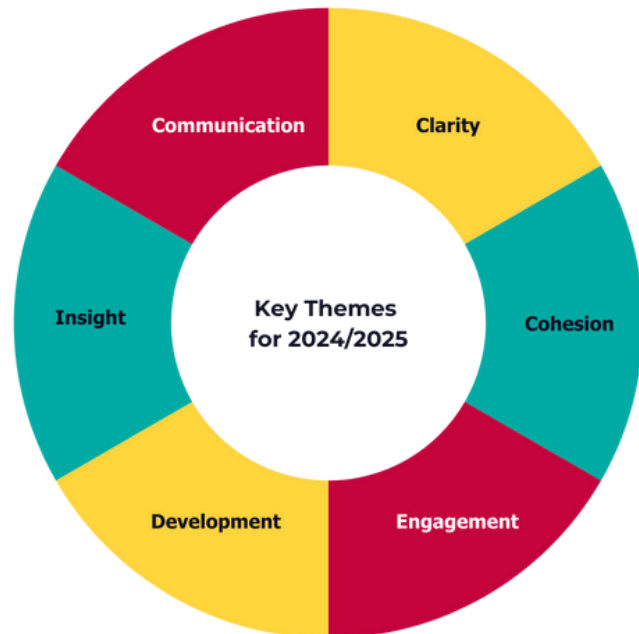
Key priorities for 2024/2025:

- Reviewing and rebranding the EDI Champions Network to increase visibility, expertise, and impact.

- Co-creating local, data-informed EDI action plans to drive progress across curriculum areas and group services.

- Streamlining EDI systems and processes to enhance effectiveness.

Early indicators show increased engagement, improved data insights, and cultural shifts. Over the next year, we will continue to embed these priorities and anticipate significant progress in our next annual report.
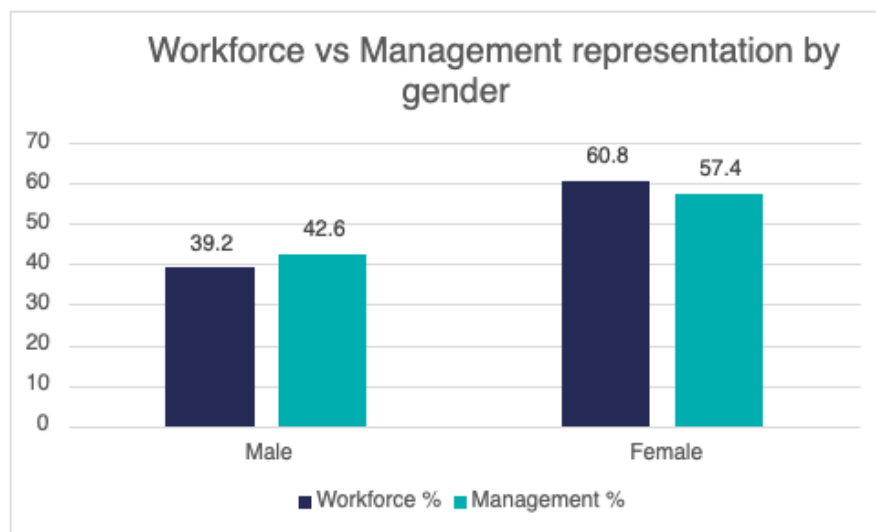
Workforce demographics

Gender representation and career progression*

Luminate's total workforce
(including Leeds Conservatoire and
University Centre Leeds) consists of 2,449 staff:

- Male: 959
- Female: 1,490

Percentage of staff by sex

39.16%

60.84%

■ male ■ female
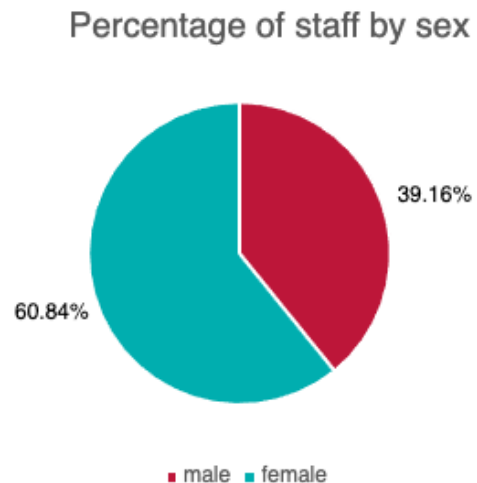
Although females make up a larger share of the workforce, men are proportionally overrepresented in management, and women are slightly underrepresented. Further analysis of promotion pathways could provide insights into potential gender disparities in career progression.

Workforce vs Management representation by gender

| | Male | | Female | |
| Workforce % | 39.2 | | 60.8 | |
| Management % | | 42.6 | | 57.4 |

■ Workforce % ■ Management %

**We have insufficient data to report meaningfully for staff who identify as transgender or non-binary.
**Both managerial and leadership are included in the term 'manager' as our data does not provide a distinction between mangerial and leadership roles.

Workforce gender distribution by role

Gender representation varies across different role types. Looking at representation across areas, the most significant disparities exist where females are over-represented in support roles (72.67%) which almost mirrors national patterns where females are over-represented in administrative (71.3%) and support (71.8%) roles. Addressing potential barriers to career progression for women in leadership remains a priority. In teaching roles, males are better represented than is seen in national trends by 6.1%, suggesting successful campaigning, recruitment, and inclusion efforts to attract and retain males.
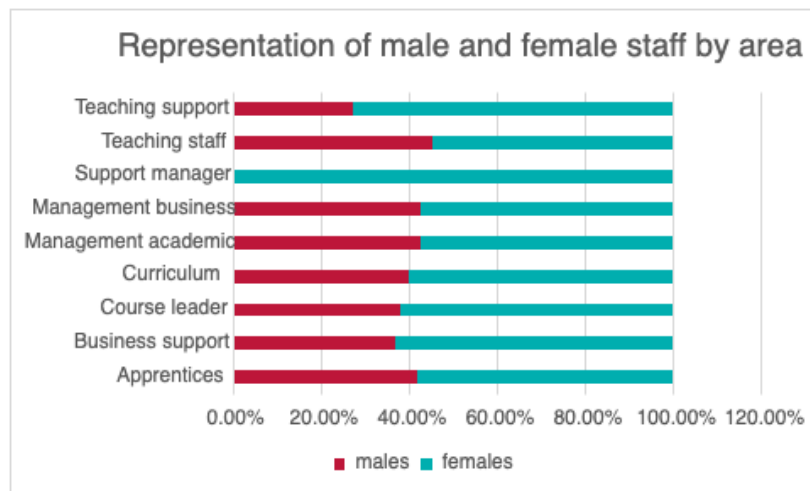
Workplace flexibility

37% of roles at Luminate are taken up on a contract that offers some flexibility:

- Full-time (compressed hours): 0.32%
- Part-time: 15.68%
- Part-time (reduced year): 14.17%
- Variable: 7.23%

The majority of these posts are held by females and the overwhelming majority of roles sit either in teaching and curriculum (51%), and business or teaching support (39%).

Where males are either not taking up flexible working options or do not know they exist, reflects males' broader perceptions of flexible working arrangements. Research from the University of Kent suggests men are more likely to perceive flexible working arrangements negatively or as potentially having a negative impact on their career development and progression. This creates an opportunity for Luminate to raise awareness of the benefits of flexible working. This could include benefits to health and wellbeing, making employment more accessible for more people, addressing labour and skills shortages, improving retention and recruitment, and creating more diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Workplace flexibility in management

Flexible work arrangements are less common in management and leadership. Only 6.77% of management roles are on contracts offereing flexibility. This may be due to increased calendar autonomy in these roles, or that culturally, flexible working options are not taken up by those in these roles. The risk is that there is no modelling of potential pathways to leadership for those who wish to or those who can only work flexibly. Encouraging flexible work arrangements across all leadership roles may improve inclusivity and career sustainability, particularly for women, carers, and disabled staff.

Workforce age distribution

Age diversity across Luminate staff:

19% of staff are under 30   **51% of staff are 30 - 49**   **30% of staff are 50+**

The under-30 workforce remains relatively low, highlighting opportunities for targeted recruitment efforts such as apprenticeships and internships. Meanwhile, retention strategies for older employees could help sustain experienced talent through mentoring schemes, for example, and support knowledge transfer planning.

Disability representation

Self-reported disability status among staff:

- Staff with disability: 6.82%
- Staff without disability: 59.74%
- Not disclosed: 28.66%
- Not known: 4.78%
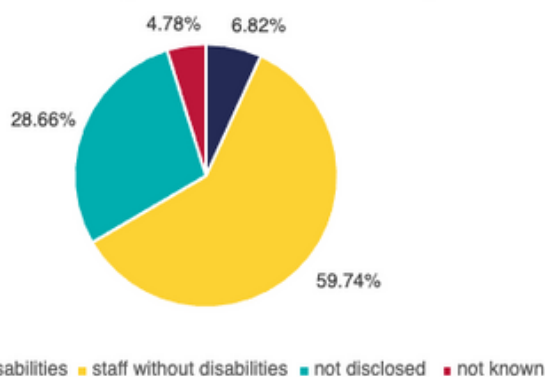
This underreports national trends, where 24% of the UK population identifies as disabled. Potential barriers to disclosure may include concerns about stigma, lack of visible support, or unclear policies. Improving confidentiality and proactive support mechanisms could encourage greater disclosure, allowing for the development of more inclusive working practices.

Ethnicity representation

Currently, ethnicity data collection is incomplete, limiting a full understanding of workforce diversity.

Gender pay gap

Mean gender pay gap is 4.1%

(£0.71 difference) - a £0.35 improvement from last year.

Median gender pay gap is 2.91%

(£0.47 difference) - a £0.04 increase from last year.

National comparison: 11.89% lower than the UK median (14.8%) and significantly better than the education sector average (20%).

Sector ranking: Luminate is in the top 8% of UK education providers with the lowest gender pay gap.

Luminate outperforms both national and education sector pay gap averages. However, key gender imbalances remain:

- **Upper quartile leadership:** More females needed in senior leadership roles.
- **Entry-level roles and apprenticeships:** More males encouraged into lower quartile roles.
- **Flexible work and family-friendly policies:** Could further reduce gender disparities and improve workforce balance.

Staff survey insights

1. Celebrate diversity

Strengths:

- 96% of staff agree the organisation is committed to EDI.
- High job satisfaction (94%) and peer support (98%) suggest a positive workplace culture.
- 94% report strong line manager support, highlighting leadership's role in inclusion.

Areas for improvement:

- Confidence in senior leadership communication is lower among some staff groups, including those who prefer not to disclose their ethnicity (43%) and Bangladeshi staff (60%).
- Career progression concerns exist, particularly for bisexual staff, of whom 0% of those who responded feel there are opportunities for progression, and some ethnic minority respondents (White: Other, 50%).

2. Champion disabiity and neurodiversity, and improve accessibility

Strengths:

- 95% of staff report fair treatment and dignity at work.

Areas for improvement:

- Limited data on disabled and neurodivergent staff makes assessing inclusion challenging.
- Digital accessibility remains a concern, with only 53% of staff finding IT systems efficient and user-friendly.

3. Challenge discrimination and foster inclusion

Strengths:

- 98% of staff report effective teamwork, reflecting a strong culture of inclusion.
- 94% workplace satisfaction suggests most staff feel they belong.

Areas for improvement:

- Better data collection is needed to assess workplace discrimination.
- Some groups, particularly 43% of Bangladeshi staff, report lower confidence in leadership.
- 50% of Pakistani staff report feeling there are fewer career progression opportunities.

4. Invest in the Race Equality Roadmap

Strengths:

- 96% of staff across all ethnic groups acknowledge the organisation's EDI commitment.
- 98% report positive peer relationships.

Areas for improvement:

- 50% of those from White: Other backgrounds and 60% of those from Bangladeshi backgrounds have perceptions of career progression disparities.

5. Amplify voice and influence

Strengths:

- 85% of staff feel comfortable expressing ideas and opinions.
- 91% report effective departmental communication.

Areas for improvement:

- Some staff feel their voices do not translate into action.
- Lower confidence in ELT communication among bisexual respondents (50%), prefer not to say respondents (58%), and Bangladeshi respondents (60%).

6. Promote social mobility

Strengths:

- 82% of younger staff (18-34) report strong optimism about career progression.
- 85% rate professional development opportunities positively.

Areas for improvement:

- Career progression confidence declines with age and tenure (55+ staff: 61%, 5-10 years of service: 67%).
- Training quality concerns among "Prefer not to say" (40%) and bisexual staff (50%).
- Limited data on staff from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The findings highlight strong EDI commitment, high team collaboration, and effective line manager support. However, there are opportunities for Luminate to improve IT accessibility, leadership communication, and career progression disparities.

Student demographics: gender, ethnicity, disability, and deprivation (2021-2024)

Analysing student demographics at Luminate FE colleges over the past three academic years (2021/22 – 2023/24) provides insights into student diversity across gender, ethnicity, disability, and deprivation. Findings are compared against national FE sector data and the 2021 Census to understand representation trends.

Gender*

Female students remain the majority, but their proportion has decreased slightly from 59.9% (2022/23) to 58.2% (2023/24).

2022 - 2023

1.7%

2023 - 2024

Male student representation increased slightly from 40.1% to 41.8% in the same period.

2023 - 2024

1.7%

2022 - 2023

*We have insufficient data to report meaningfully for students who identify as transgender or non-binary.

Ethnicity

Luminate member's student population is significantly more ethnically diverse than the general population (gen. pop):

Asian students 15.5% **Black students 14.%** **Mixed ethnicity students 6.7%** **Other ethnic groups 8.4%** **White British students 44%**
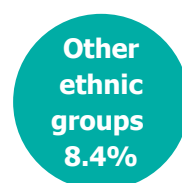
Asian students (Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other Asian backgrounds): 15.5% (gen. pop: 9.6%)
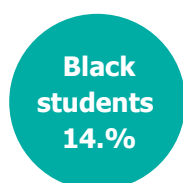
Black students (African, Caribbean, Other Black backgrounds): 14% (gen. pop: 4.2%)

Mixed ethnicity backgrounds: 6.7% (gen. pop: 3%)

Other ethnic groups: 8.4% (gen. pop: 2.2%).

White British students: 44% (2023/24), down from 49.2% (2021/22) (gen. pop: 81%).

The declining proportion of White British students may reflect local demographic shifts, targeted outreach, or recruitment strategies. Higher enrolments of ethnic minority students suggest strong engagement with diverse communities, and is reflective of the increasing diversity across Bradford (which includes Keighley), Harrogate, and Leeds between 2011 and 2021.

Disability

Students declaring a disability or learning difficulty has increased from 16.5% (2021/22) to 22.7% (2023/24).

2023 - 2024

6.2%

2021 - 2023

Comparison to national averages: The latest Census (2021) reports that 17.7% of the population in England and Wales has a disability.

National disability declaration trends:

- Younger people are increasingly reporting disabilities.
- Females report disabilities at higher rates than males.
- In the 15-19 age group, disability declarations rose from 4.6% (2011) to 12.2% (2021) for females and from 4.9% to 10.4% for males.
- A similar increase is seen in 20-24-year-olds, with female declarations rising from 5.2% (2011) to 15.1% (2021) and male declarations from 5.3% to 11.2%.

The increase in disclosure aligns with national trends, suggesting greater awareness, improved disclosure processes, and stronger support mechanisms. Further evaluation will ensure support systems keep pace with growing demand.

Deprivation

Students from areas of deprivation make up a large proportion of the student body, with a slight decrease from 42.3% (2021/22) to 41.8% (2023/24). This reinforces Luminate member's role in promoting social mobility and ensuring access to education for underrepresented groups.

While the percentage remains stable, further insights into retention and progression could help tailor support strategies for social mobility.

Student outcomes and destinations

Student outcomes and EDI impact

At Luminate Education Group, our commitment to EDI is reflected in how we track and analyse student outcomes. By evaluating achievement, retention, and progression across different demographic groups, we aim to understand where disparities exist, celebrate successes, and identify areas for further improvement. It is important to note that known destination data is based on a sample of students who were contactable, and further work is needed to enhance data collection and insights.

Successes in student outcomes*

Over the past academic year, we have seen notable progress in student engagement and attainment. Ethnic minority students, particularly those from African, Bangladeshi, and Caribbean backgrounds, have demonstrated high levels of achievement and retention, frequently exceeding national benchmarks. The national benchmark for 16-18-year-old African students is 83.7% achievement, while at Luminate member institutions, they achieve 84.1%. Similarly, Bangladeshi students nationally achieve 89.7%, compared to 91.4% across the group. These results suggest that targeted curriculum interventions, inclusive learning resources, and strengthened student support systems have made a positive impact.

Similarly, students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 19 and above continue to perform strongly, achieving 87.5%, which is 2.7% above the national benchmark of 84.8%. Our work in improving accessibility and inclusive teaching practices has contributed to these outcomes. For students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), achievement rates have risen to 85.7%, surpassing the national benchmark by 6.1% (national rate: 79.6%). This improvement highlights the effectiveness of tailored interventions, structured support, and staff development in creating more inclusive educational environments.

*Achievement is generally seen as the clearest indicator of how well students are supported throughout their course, as it takes into account both whether learners stay on their programme and whether they pass.

Challenges and areas requiring attention

Despite these successes, there remain areas where additional focus is needed. Care-experienced students and EHCP learners continue to face challenges in progressing into higher education and employment. Retention rates for some student groups, particularly Pakistani students (78.1%) and White British students (79.6%) aged 16-18, remain below the national benchmarks of 82.7% and 81.2%, respectively. Understanding the barriers to retention - whether they stem from financial hardship, academic challenges, or lack of engagement - will be crucial in shaping future interventions.

Additionally, gender disparities persist in employment outcomes, with males transitioning into work at higher rates while females are more likely to progress into higher education. Apprenticeship uptake remains low across all demographic groups, suggesting that further work is needed to strengthen vocational engagement, employer partnerships, and awareness of alternative career routes.

Summary of areas for improvement

While this report highlights significant progress Luminate has made in embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion across its member organisations, there remain areas that require sustained attention. On the student side, persistent achievement and progression gaps exist for specific groups, including Pakistani, White British, and care-experienced learners, particularly in transitions into higher education, employment, and apprenticeships. Accessibility in learning environments, both physical and digital, must continue evolving to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

From a systems and workforce perspective, gaps in ethnicity and disability disclosure data limit full insight into representation and progression. Females remain slightly underrepresented in managerial roles relative to their overall workforce presence, and flexible working practices in senior roles are not yet fully embedded. Additionally, digital systems remain a barrier for many staff, impacting accessibility and inclusion.

Addressing these interconnected issues, for both learners and staff, will be key to embedding EDI across the member organisations. The recommendations that follow are structured to reflect this balance, ensuring that both the student experience and systemic change remain and are at the heart of future priorities.

Student-focused recommendations

Expand targeted support for student progression:

- Introduce mentoring programmes for at-risk student groups.
- Continue the development of inclusive personal development and careers guidance frameworks.
- Monitor the impact of intervention strategies through disaggregated data.

Improve support for transition into employment, HE, and apprenticeships:

- Develop employability and HE access pathways for marginalised groups.
- Strengthen employer and university partnerships to provide inclusive opportunities.
- Expand transition support for SEND and care-experienced students.

Enhance student voice in decision-making:

- Involve students in reviewing and co-creating inclusive curriculum content.
- Ensure representation from all protected groups in students' union and College Parliament networks.
- Use forums to test new approaches before group-wide rollouts.

Ensure equity in digital and learning accessibility:

- Co-create accessibility audits with students, particularly those with SEND.
- Embed accessibility standards into learning resource creation.
- Provide continuing professional development (CPD) for staff and students on the use of assistive technology.

People and systems-focused recommendations

Improve staff ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic background data collection:

- Raise awareness through internal campaigns on why disclosure matters to ensure staff understand how their data is used and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Introduce socio-economic background questions to stay aligned with current and predicted trends and to support the objective of promoting social mobility.
- Use insights to inform workforce planning, including inclusive recruitment, retention, development, and progression strategies, and track disclosure rates over time.

Strengthen career development for underrepresented staff:

- Introduce sponsorship or career progression support for staff from underrepresented groups.
- Track promotions and access to leadership programmes by demographic characteristics.
- Include EDI competencies in appraisals and development planning.

Model flexibility and inclusion at all levels:

- Normalise flexible working in senior leadership.
- Promote case studies of successful flexible leaders.

Address digital accessibility for staff:

- Conduct organisational digital accessibility audits.
- Invest in platforms and training that are inclusive by design.
- Ensure all new systems meet accessibility standards from procurement onwards.

Final Thoughts

This report reflects the ongoing journey of Luminate Education Group to embed EDI at the heart of its members. Our three-year strategy sets out a clear vision to advance equality of opportunity, continue to diversify student, staff, and other stakeholder communities, and create a psychologically safe environment that fosters a culture of inclusion and belonging. The evidence and insights shared throughout this report illustrate not only the progress Luminate has made but also the areas where continued attention is required.

By aligning our actions with the strategy's six core themes: clarity, cohesion, engagement, development, insight, and communication, we will ensure that EDI is not a standalone initiative but a guiding principle across all levels of the member organisations. The recommendations set out in this report are designed to drive forward this vision, strengthening inclusive culture, addressing disparities, and enabling every member of our communities to thrive.

As we look ahead, our commitment to create an educational and working environment that is equitable by design and inclusive in practice, and one where diversity is not only welcomed but recognised as a key driver of excellence and transformation, remains unwavering.