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I am extremely proud to be the Chairman of the Board of Governors for this remarkable university. Our ability to combine academic excellence with genuine and unwavering commitment to social inclusion is what defines and differentiates us.

2015 has been a year of change, and I am extremely grateful to Professor David Coslett for his exceptional leadership of the University as our Interim Vice-Chancellor until February 2016. During this time David oversaw a review of the University’s governance and worked closely with the Board to ensure that the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are ever more firmly embedded into our governance arrangements. I truly believe that properly applied, these principles enhance the ability of any organisation to meet its strategic objectives.

In February 2016 we welcomed Professor Judith Petts CBE as our new Vice-Chancellor. I know that Judith is absolutely committed to continuing the work that David started for us.

2015/16 will be the last years based on the goals and objectives set in the current equality scheme. We have achieved a huge amount. Nevertheless, there are a couple of areas that will require our sharp focus this year – for instance, continuing our work to further improve gender equality and the benefits offered to staff in relation to maternity, paternity and adoption leave to support working parents.

James Brent
Chairman of the Board of Governors
As the new Vice-Chancellor of Plymouth University, this report provides a timely reflection upon all that has been achieved, both under Professor David Coslett’s stewardship and by the broader University community. It reinforces my first impression – that I have joined an institution committed to a culture based on the principles of inclusion and respect; these principles define ‘who we are’ and are fundamental to both our mission and the way we deliver it.

Universities play an important and ever-evolving role in modern society. They provide a forum for open debate, discussion, criticism, reflection and lifelong learning, and are governed by the principles of openness and tolerance. At Plymouth, our culture is underpinned by equality, diversity and inclusion. This ensures a deep connection between the teaching and research work we do and our higher intent to change lives and produce socially responsible graduates who are capable of making a difference on a global stage.

This report recognises the achievements made in 2014/15 and outlines the areas where we need to maintain a focus on continual improvement.

We should celebrate how our equality objectives have underpinned many broader achievements. For example, the opening of our new £7 million performing arts centre, The House, is testament to our commitment to supporting the artistic ambitions of all of our students – the new facility enables us to teach students with serious disabilities. Also last year, we hosted our biggest ever community event, with more than 5,000 visitors to the Big Festival Weekend, which incorporated the Plymouth Respect Festival.

We launched a new partnership with the Unite Foundation that will provide scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, covering free accommodation and a cost of living allowance, prioritising those who have been in the care system.

I look forward to the development of our next Equality Scheme, using it as an opportunity to further embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into a University strategy that remains fresh, focused and challenging.

Professor Judith Petts CBE
Vice-Chancellor
The purpose of this report

Higher Education is an intensely people-related business, and to succeed now and in the future we must attract, develop and retain a diverse range of talented staff to deliver a first class student experience.

Our annual equality report is intended to provide you, the reader, with access to information about the people who make up our organisation, based on individual protected characteristics, and to offer a progress update against our formally stated equality objectives.

Our report is more than a technical or legal document. Our aim is that it acts as a window into our organisation – highlighting the intensely people related nature of our organisation and how each person who works, studies and visits, or otherwise engages with us, experiences and influences our culture.

Culture can be defined in many ways, but in this context we are talking about the attitudes, behaviours and shared values and beliefs that make up Plymouth University.

This culture is shared tangibly through, for instance, our brand, the language that we use, the events we choose to partner in, and the people we employ. On a less visible level, it also shapes the ongoing evolution of the processes we use internally, the way that we talk to each other, and the people who choose to come to work and study with us.

So, our report fulfils the following requirements:

1. For our people (staff and students), it documents the progress we have made against a set of stated equality objectives, captured in our Equality Scheme 2011-16. These objectives are firmly founded on the three aims of the Equality Act 2010 (see page 8) and were developed after analysing data and information about our employees and key stakeholders: specifically, our students. The objectives were finalised in consultation with staff, students and stakeholders, including the Board of Governors, so this annual report is an important way of communicating our progress.

2. For the general public, it provides data about the people who make up our University, and how this profile changes over time. The simplest way for any organisation to do this is through an annual report.

3. As part of our legal obligations, this report provides an annual update on the work we have undertaken to ensure that the University is a place where everyone feels welcome, and respected, and has the same opportunity to succeed and thrive.
The three aims of the Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 is often summarised as having the following three overarching aims for public sector bodies, which are shown in the accompanying diagram on page 9:

• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
Aims of the Equality Act 2010

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
Delivering on our vision

We are committed to the achievement of our equality objectives, and in 2012/13 we refreshed the way that we think about equality, diversity and inclusion and the way in which we deliver our objectives.

As part of this refresh, we identified that to fully realise the true value of the people who make up our University, it was essential for us to encourage a creative and inclusive working and learning environment. As illustrated in the diagram below, we will:

• engage with local and national expertise;
• set up open communications with staff and students;
• and therefore enable culture change.

In 2014/15 we further refined our approach to our formal reporting responsibilities and strived to ensure that our work also linked in with the University’s governance review programme. These changes are the next step in our continuing journey to help people feel ever more empowered to connect with the equality and diversity agenda, and celebrate the rich diversity of our organisation as we all work to deliver the University’s vision and strategy.
Sharing our data

Each year we publish our annual equality data directly on the University’s website to make it more easily accessible for staff, students and members of the public. This information directly underpins the assessment of our progress against our stated equality objectives.

How to view the data
After opening a data file, the viewer can select the tables and charts of interest from the index or click on the tabs at the bottom of the screen.

The equality data may be viewed independently of this report at www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality
Our Equality Scheme contains 14 objectives; the table below gives a summary of progress against the objectives at the end of the 2014/15 reporting period. Each of these objectives is described in more detail in the pages that follow.

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* Progress to date key

**Complete**: Original objectives met. Regularly reviewed and maintained.

**Ongoing**: Improvements initiated in this area and work ongoing, as detailed in this report.
More information about our progress

Equality Objective 1: The three aims of the Equality Duty will be considered as part of the process of decision-making

As outlined in the foreword from our Chairman, during 2014/15 we reflected on how equality, diversity and inclusion could become ever more embedded into our governance arrangements and our decision-making processes. In this reporting period we challenged ourselves to look at three specific points that we consider to be important in meeting the aims of the Equality Duty. These were:

• to actively increase awareness of unconscious bias in teaching and learning and general decision-making
• to commence a planned review of our bullying and harassment advice and support
• to continue to develop our networks for staff engagement.

1. Increasing awareness of unconscious bias

Research shows that people may subconsciously make instinctive or ‘snap’ decisions and judgements about people based on who they are, and who we are. This is due in part to the way in which our brains process information and create ‘shortcuts’ for us, meaning that we all form stereotypical associations and make inaccurate judgements about people (positive or negative), without necessarily being aware that this is happening. This is referred to as unconscious bias.

In 2014/15, we set in motion a programme of awareness raising in relation to unconscious bias that has so far included:

• the development of a range of awareness-raising and educational tools to help our community understand the process and impact of unconscious bias
• the commissioning of our Pedagogic Research Institute and Observatory team who were tasked with developing a workshop for mitigating unconscious bias in teaching, learning and assessment (specifically supporting Equality Objectives 5 and 11)
• a further review of our existing recruitment and selection processes and staff and leadership development training programmes to embed awareness of unconscious bias in our training material
• the establishment of a new reporting framework to actively monitor completion of unconscious bias training, as of 1 September 2015, making it a mandatory requirement for anyone involved in staff recruitment to complete this training.

2. Bullying and harassment advice and support
An important part of realising an inclusive culture is our Harassment Advisor Network, which provides support for staff and students who believe that they are experiencing bullying or harassment. These trained volunteers offer advice and support to help people achieve informal resolution of concerns where this is appropriate, or signpost to the right people for formal assistance where needed.

During 2014/15, as part of our ongoing programme of awareness raising and support, we undertook the following:

• the redistribution of publicity materials across the University to maximise awareness
• monthly advertising of the Harassment Advisor Network on our staff intranet as well as the University extranet to maintain awareness
• the provision of training on mental health awareness and on ‘protected characteristics’ as part of the rolling programme of training and support to our Harassment Advisors
• the commissioning of independent research by one of our MA students into the role of the Harassment Advisor, which we will use to consider further ways in which we could improve the service.

3. Building staff networks
In our 2013/14 report, we stated that we intended to work on building a number of new employee networks to engage with members of the University and encourage inclusivity. During this year we have worked with colleagues to develop the following staff networks – to run alongside our existing LGBT Staff Forum and Multi-faith Chaplaincy Advisors:

• Culture, Heritage and Diversity (Race)
• Disability
• Gender (Women’s Network).

We have been pleased with the successful launch and considerable ongoing interest in our Women’s Forum; however, participation rates for the other two proposed networks has been low. Our commitment to inclusive engagement for all staff remains unchanged and we will therefore be trialling a change of approach in 2015/16, with a view to gaining traction in the areas of race and disability.

We want to take the opportunity in this report to express our thanks to Faye Doris, who retired this year. Faye chaired the former Race Equality Scheme Sub-Committee. We are very grateful to Faye for her long-term dedication to this voluntary role and for her insight and support.
Equality Objective 2: To keep under review HR policies and practices in relation to the removal of a Default Retirement Age

Employees at Plymouth University have not been required to retire at a set age since the abolition of the Default Retirement Age (DRA) in September 2011.

Through our performance management process, each employee can choose to discuss their retirement plans during their annual review. All employees (regardless of age) are asked about their future aspirations, and any retirement plans discussed are non-binding.

We have been monitoring the effect of the removal of the DRA on our staff profile and have found that the percentage of staff in the 65+ age group has remained at 2% from 2013–15.

To understand how we compare with other universities, we reviewed the latest 2014 data produced by DLA Piper. This showed the percentage of staff aged 65+ at participating HEIs to be 3% (see Staff Baseline Data 2013-15: Age 65+). This shows that Plymouth is similar to other HEIs in currently having a low percentage of staff who stay in employment after reaching age 65.

Equality Objective 3: To provide campus access information for disabled students, staff and visitors online

For the last three years, we have successfully worked with DisabledGo to provide website-based campus access information for staff, students and visitors.

Furthermore, during 2014, access guides for several new buildings – including the John Bull Building and the Wellbeing Centre – were added to our website. Following feedback from users as to how they access our guides, we also commenced systems work to enable people to access the guides more easily on mobile devices. A secondary benefit of this work is that it helps us to track the level of online page usage more easily as of January 2015.

We also continue to update all of our guides annually. Our Estates and Facilities teams work alongside a DisabledGo surveyor to assess and review any structural changes that have been made to buildings during the year. The website is then updated with the new information.

Moving forward into 2015/16, we will continue to update our online information. We will be reviewing disabled students’ experiences of campus access, learning from their feedback regarding ideas for improvement that could be integrated into the University’s Estate Strategy.
Equality Objective 4: The percentage of staff with an unknown disability status to reduce

Since 2006, we have made considerable progress in reducing the percentage of staff with an unknown disability status from our starting point of 22%. Over the last three years, the unknown percentage has reduced from 5% in 2013 to just 3% in 2015 (see Staff Baseline Data 2013-15: Disability Status).

We believe that a key factor in achieving this increase 19% in declarations is our practice of raising awareness of the reasons why we’re asking staff for this information: so that we can better support people. Moving forward, we will look to move closer to the benchmark for UK HEIs of 2% unknown values.
Equality Objective 5: Monitor the student gender attainment gap

Attainment is defined as the percentage of ‘good degrees’ achieved by students, i.e. either a first or upper second. Gender and ethnicity attainment gaps remain an ongoing issue across universities in the UK.

The gender attainment gap for 2014/15 graduates is 8% in favour of women. This is similar to the gaps of 7% and 9% in the two previous years. This figure is greater than the national gender gap of 4% reported by HESA for 2013/14 and it is something that we will be focusing on again this year (see Student Data 2014-15: Gender Attainment Gap). Our ethnicity data is provided under Equality Objective 11.

During 2014/15, work on reducing these gaps included the following developments:

• building on our successful 2013/14 pilot programme to offer all first year undergraduates extended induction through an immersive, intensive module in the first term. (Evaluation of the pilot in 2013/14 showed an enhanced sense of student community and belonging, a reduction in withdrawals, and increased engagement with study skills.)

• focusing on interactive teaching and learning, supported by Teaching and Learning Support (TLS)

• ensuring that the new curriculum structure embraced inclusive assessment principles

• agreeing an anonymous marking policy, implemented in September 2015, to reduce any possibility of unconscious bias

• extending our Peer Assisted Learning Scheme (PALS) to include 28 subject areas and 97 programmes

• delivering unconscious bias workshops for academic staff through TLS

• publishing our ‘7 steps’ guide: Mitigating Unconscious Bias in Teaching and Learning

• launching an inclusive teaching, learning and assessment website with a comprehensive range of resources in April 2015

• hosting an Inclusive Assessment conference in November 2014 attended by over one hundred academics from all over the UK. The conference led to the development of the PedRIO guide, 7 Steps to Inclusive Assessment

• establishing an inclusive teaching and learning project in July 2015, to assist academic staff with developing inclusive pedagogies in anticipation of the reduction in the Disabled Students’ Allowance in September 2016.
Equality Objective 6: Increase the representation of women in senior academic and academic managerial roles

The most recent data published by the Equality Challenge Unit highlighted that women continue to be under-represented generally in senior academic roles. For example, only 20% of Vice-Chancellors/Principals in the UK are women (Equality in Higher Education: Statistical Report 2015, Part 1: Staff, p230).

Here in Plymouth, we are committed to gender equality and increasing the proportion of women in senior academic roles, and we report progress against the targets that we set for ourselves. Our results against our 2014/15 targets are as follows:

- 35% of our associate professors (senior lecturers) are women, against our target of 40%;
- 38% of our associate professors readers are women, exceeding our target of 25%;
- 23% of our senior academic managers are women, against our target of 25%;
- 19% of our professors are women, exceeding our target of 18%.

The increasing percentage of associate professors readers who are women is encouraging; however, we know that we have more work to do in 2015/16, for example: making improvements to our range of employee benefits to support working parents, and working with our Women’s Forum to review the current value derived from, and level of engagement with, formal and informal mentoring among female colleagues.

As in last year’s report, we exceeded our targets on two measures (see Staff Baseline Data 2013-15: Gender Targets for more information).

Some examples of the work that we have undertaken during 2014/15 that has supported our progress include:

- monitoring the number of applications and success rates for academic promotion in women – to feed in to a future academic promotions review project
- reviewing our use of peer mentors to support academic staff who are considering applying for a promotion
- actively highlighting our commitment to the Athena SWAN Charter in our recruitment advertising
- maintaining and reinforcing awareness of the regular performance development review process as a time for all staff to discuss promotion plans and development needs
- launching the Plymouth University’s Women’s Network in June 2015
- continuing with implementation of our action plan as a member of the Athena SWAN Charter for women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM).
Equality Objective 7: Undertake regular equal pay audits for all staff

Plymouth University is absolutely committed to equal pay, and conducts equal pay audits every two years. The most recent audit available took place on 31 December 2013. The most notable figures reported are detailed below (these exclude allowances and associate lecturers/demonstrators):

• Looking at pay for women and men, the gender pay gap for grades 1–9 was 16% in favour of men. This is an improvement on the gap of 19% in the previous year. Similarly, the gender pay gap for all of our staff was 22% in favour of men, representing an improvement on the previous year’s result of 24%. The University is therefore making good progress in reducing the gender pay gap. The UK benchmark gap in April 2013 – of 20% in favour of men (Office for National Statistics) – shows that, along with other employers, we need to maintain our focus in this area.

• In terms of disabled staff, the pay gap for grades 1–9 narrowed to 5% in favour of non-disabled staff from the previous year’s 8%. Our aim is to continue our improvements in reducing this gap.

• The ethnicity pay gap for grades 1–9 increased to 11% in favour of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff, from 5% in the previous year. This pay gap was heavily influenced by the proportion of BME staff in academic roles (54% of BME staff were employed in either the Academic or Senior Manager Academic categories in 2013).

Equal pay data is regularly considered in the annual salary review process, and the outcomes of the December 2015 audit will be discussed in the 2015/16 Equality Report.
Equality Objective 8: Continue to gather and review anonymous data on staff sexual orientation

In August 2012, we started to collect staff sexual orientation data as part of our equality monitoring procedures. However, the number of staff who have completed this field has not yet reached the level at which the results are statistically significant.

The staff survey, which takes place every three years, was last held in 2013. The survey found that 3% of our staff chose to self-identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). This was the same percentage as that shown in the previous staff survey in 2010. However, 13% of survey respondents chose the ‘prefer not to say’ option when answering this question. Information from the government and organisations such as Stonewall suggest that 5–7% of the UK population regard themselves as LGB.

In our 2016 staff survey, we will ensure that staff who identify as LGB continue to have the same opportunity to self-identify, and will use the outcomes to assess whether the work we are engaged in to support sexual orientation equality encourages fewer respondents to choose ‘prefer not to say’ options.

The University became a member of Stonewall’s Diversity Champions programme in 2013, and last year – in consultation with our LGBT staff forum – we worked collectively to make our first submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index in 2014/15. In 2015/16 we will receive the results of our submission and look forward to working with our Stonewall advisors and members of the LGBT staff forum to review the outcomes and feedback from this.

The year was a successful one for our LGBT staff forum in terms of partnership-working and awareness raising events. Activities included co-hosting an ‘Evening with Clare Summerskill’ with colleagues from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary in February 2015, and supporting the Respect Festival in June. The forum also worked closely with Pride in Plymouth, who organised Pride 2015, having a stand at the event. As a university, we were also pleased to be one of the main sponsors of Pride 2015.
Equality Objective 9: Make the support we offer to LGBT students more visible

In 2012/13 we completed the update of the LGBT information in the Student Handbook. During 2013/14, we updated our external website information to ensure that LGBT students and University applicants had clear information on the support offered by Plymouth University. 2014/15 saw us further demonstrate our commitment to equality for LGBT students by hosting the Respect Festival and sponsoring Pride 2015.

Through our Students’ Union, there are forums on 15 key areas that allow students to feed back into the Union Executive Committee, which votes on issues affecting the student body. One of these is an LGBT Forum, which provides a route for students to provide feedback on the service they receive and their experiences as an LGBT student at Plymouth, so recommendations can be considered for improvements at a university-wide level. Our Students’ Union is regularly consulted and helps inform our equality and diversity policies and practice through its representation on the Culture, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

We will continue to advance equality for LGBT staff and students in 2015/16, when we will receive and build on the results of our submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.
Equality Objective 10: Continue to increase the ethnic diversity of the UG and PG student body

In 2014/15 we made further progress towards this objective, having increased our percentage of BME undergraduates to 13%. This represents a further year-on-year increase from 10% in 2012/13 to 12% in 2013/14 (see Student Data 2014-15: Undergraduate Ethnicity).

The HESA benchmark data for first year, first-degree students shows our BME percentage as 8% in 2013/14, which is the same as in the previous year. (HESA data treats non-UK students as having unknown ethnicity values.) This figure is close to the average of 9% for south-west institutions, the UK average being 19%.

For postgraduate teaching (PGT) students (see Student Data 2014-15: PGT Ethnicity) our BME percentage was 13% in 2014/15, compared with 17% in the previous year. Our BME benchmark figure of 4% (HESA) for first year PGT students in 2013/14 was close to the South West average of 5%, the UK average being 11%.

For postgraduate research (PGR) students (see Student Data 2014-15: PGR Ethnicity) our BME percentage decreased slightly from 30% to 29% in 2014/15. Our BME benchmark figure of 7% (HESA) for first year PGR students in 2013/14 compared favourably with the South West average of 5%, and is close to the UK average of 8%.
Equality Objective 11: Annually monitor and review the attainment gap for UK BME students

As described earlier in this report (see Equality Objective 5), ethnicity and gender gaps in attainment are a national issue, and Plymouth University is committed to working to reduce these gaps through a wide variety of planned initiatives.

This year’s results show that we have made important progress in reducing the attainment gap for UK-domiciled students. Considerable work has been done to reduce our student attainment gaps by creating an inclusive learning and teaching culture.

The attainment at Plymouth of BME students domiciled in the UK tends to be higher than that of BME students domiciled outside the UK. However, there is still a significant attainment gap for both groups when considering the percentage of good first degrees obtained by white students (see Student Data 2014-15: Ethnicity Attainment Gap).

For UK-domiciled students during 2014/15, white student attainment was 72% for those achieving good degrees, compared with 59% for BME students. The ethnicity gap for UK-domiciled students is therefore reducing and, at 13%, is slightly less than the latest national benchmark gap of 14% (HESA institutions 2013/14).

For non-UK-domiciled students during 2014/15, white student attainment was 68%, compared with 46% for BME students. The ethnicity gap of 22% for non-UK-domiciled students rose from the more promising 16% found last year to return closer to the level of 24% recorded in 2012/13.
Equality Objective 12: Increase the representation of BME groups in under-represented staff grades

We have made notable, but mixed, progress against this objective during 2014/15, with professional services posts remaining an area of ongoing focus.

When looking at our ethnicity data for 2015 and comparing against our targets for 2016:

- We have been successful in academic posts, where 10.5% of our staff are BME, against our target of 9.3%. As well as exceeding our target, this figure of 10.5% is on a rising trend (see Staff Baseline Data 2013-15: Academic Ethnicity Target);

- We have been less successful in professional services posts, where 1.9% of our staff are BME compared with our target of 2.8% (see Staff Baseline Data 2013-15: Professional Services Ethnicity Target). This figure was also 1.9% in the previous year. It is clear that we need to do more in 2015/16 to encourage BME applications to professional services posts. The demographic challenge for Plymouth University was demonstrated by the 2011 Census, where the local economically active BME population was much lower than the rest of England and Wales (4% vs 13% respectively in 2011). This local profile has a significant bearing on our ability to recruit BME staff.

We are committed to encouraging people to view the University as an attractive prospective employer, and believe that working with our local communities to open up the University is one way of encouraging local BME people to see us in this way.

In June 2015, the University hosted the Respect Festival, which is organised by Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council, as part of our Big Festival Weekend. We also look forward to assessing whether planned advertising in October 2015 with the Black History Month website and magazine generates an increase in awareness of Plymouth University as a welcoming and inclusive local employer.
Equality Objective 13: Continue to gather and review anonymous data on religion and belief through the staff survey, reviewing the availability of question options

As previously referenced in Equality Objective 8, we conduct a staff survey every three years, the last survey being conducted in 2013. Respondents had the opportunity to share information about their religion and belief.

The data shows that, in the last survey, the two largest groups of respondents described their religious belief or affiliation as either ‘no religion’ (41%) or ‘Christian’ (40%).

In our next survey, we will continue to encourage our staff to provide anonymous data to help us develop our support for all our diverse groups across the University.
Equality Objective 14: Make the support which we offer to students of diverse faiths more visible

As detailed in previous reports, the information provided about the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy was reviewed in the earlier years of this equality scheme to ensure that it was easily accessible and presented attractively on the extranet, and that this continues to be the case.

In addition to online resources, the Chaplaincy team regularly promote events organised by them and our religious societies through campus posters and staff and student announcements. For example, we publicise lectures and conferences that consider ethical and academic issues. Students can additionally choose to join a regular mailing list, which will keep them up to date on all such events.

In 2015, we completed our regular review of the University’s Religious Diversity Policy and updated the associated guidance documents for staff and students in relation to Religious Observance in Teaching, Learning and Assessment, to ensure that they remain current and reflective of our staff and student population.
Looking to the future

This year’s report continues to show important progress against a number of our objectives from the Equality Scheme 2011–16, for example actively reducing the level of undeclared disabilities from our staff; improving the attainment of our BME students; and year on year continuously improving the visibility of support we offer to our disabled staff, students and visitors. We have also made good progress in strengthening our governance processes, investing in the development of our staff networks, hosting the Respect Festival, enhancing our equality monitoring systems, and moving our Athena SWAN action plans forward.

Challenges ahead

While we recognise that good progress has been made we are not complacent, and next year will see us both drawing our current Equality Scheme to a close and establishing the objectives we will focus on following on from this. There is more work to be done to support equality of opportunity and an institutional culture of inclusion during a period of intense change for higher education in the UK.

The priorities for 2015/16 are:

- to complete the initiatives commenced in 2014/15 as to how equality and diversity is embedded into our governance processes and the support for our staff and student networks
- to review the outcomes of our 2015 equal pay audit and ascertain the impact of ongoing measures to reduce the pay gap between men and women
- to improve the benefits that we offer staff in relation to maternity, paternity and adoption leave to support working parents
- to further improve our gender equality, particularly for women in senior academic roles, and maintain our focus on our Athena SWAN action plans
- to work with Athena SWAN teams and our women’s network in particular to review the effectiveness and use of current mentoring processes
- to enhance our strong equality monitoring systems to help understand our progress in supporting an inclusive culture, whilst being sensitive to each individual’s right to privacy
- to evaluate the impact of initiatives trialled during the period to raise awareness of Plymouth University as a local employer of professional services staff amongst the BME community
- to analyse our equality data and feedback from the 2016 staff survey, the Stonewall Equality Index submission, and the staff and student consultation to develop our next Equality Scheme
- to review the outcomes of commissioned research into our Harassment Advisor network.

We enjoy collaborating with talented and dedicated colleagues across the University, who are focused on working with all our stakeholders to maintain our progress. We look forward to highlighting our achievements in next year’s report.