

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE

Learning and Teaching Committee – 18 February 2026

Widening Participation and Inclusion Report

Report by Vice Principal Education, Skills and Student Success

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of Glasgow Kelvin College's approaches to widening participation (WP) and inclusion, aligned to our mission to widen access for learners from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. It evaluates the effectiveness of these approaches using data evidence and outlines next steps to further enhance engagement among under-represented groups.

2. College Approaches to Widening Participation

Glasgow Kelvin College delivers widening participation through six broad approaches that reflect our role in the communities of North-East Glasgow and our commitment to accessible, inclusive learning pathways.

2.1 Delivering an Accessible, Inclusive and FE-Focused Curriculum

The College maintains a strongly inclusive curriculum structure with the majority of activity at Further Education levels, including meaningful provision at SCQF Levels 1 and 2. High levels of part-time study support adults balancing complex or competing priorities, including work, caring and health challenges.

Example evidence of this approach includes:

- 89% of all enrolments in 2023–24 were at FE level (10,837 out of 12,218).
- The College enrolls learners at SCQF Levels 1 and 2, often not offered elsewhere due to the additional support needs required.
- Around 70% of students study part-time.

2.2 Embedding Community-Based Learning and Outreach Across North-East Glasgow

Learning is delivered by the College through a wide network of community venues and partnerships, ensuring accessibility for those facing geographical, financial or cultural barriers to campus-based study. The Community & Youth Hubs strengthen family learning, wellbeing, ESOL and youth access provision.

Example evidence of this approach includes:

- The College works with nearly 40 community centres across NE Glasgow.
- Over 4,000 learners annually participate in community-based programmes.
- Community learning represented 36% of all enrolments in 2024–25.
- Community & Youth Hubs at Springburn and Easterhouse support 150+ learners annually in family learning and youth engagement.

2.3 Strengthening Pathways and Articulation to Higher Education

The College works with regional universities and national access programmes to ensure meaningful progression routes for learners from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Example evidence of this approach includes:

- The College is the largest SWAP provider in the West of Scotland, with 235 SWAP learners enrolled in 2024–25.
- 48% of GKC learners progressing to HE move on to university (compared with 17% nationally).
- Around 200 learners annually progress to university with advanced standing.

2.4 Providing Targeted Support for Vulnerable Learners

The College offers wrap-around support for learners with additional challenges, including care-experienced students, those facing poverty, and those experiencing mental health difficulties.

Example evidence of this approach includes:

- The STAY Project supported 426 learners in 2024–25, offering 1:1 mentoring, practical support, crisis intervention and transition support with 97% of participants reporting feeling they had strong support around them.
- Around 10% of learners are care-experienced—significantly above national HE averages.
- Wellbeing and counselling services received 340+ referrals in 2024–25.

2.5 Promoting Inclusive Admissions and Personalised Guidance

Admissions processes and learner guidance practices are designed to remove structural barriers and ensure fair access for applicants from diverse backgrounds and with varying educational histories.

To support this, the College Admissions Policy emphasises fairness, contextualised judgement and equality of opportunity. College applicants are assessed holistically, recognising non-traditional routes and personal circumstances and Student Support Services offer impartial support tailored to the needs of WP applicants. In academic session 2024/25, 439 students completed a full Learner Support needs assessment, enabling detailed discussion around student disclosure and the recommendation and implementation of tailored support strategies to enhance their learning experience. This demonstrates strong student awareness of the service and highlights the department's proactive approach to early intervention and inclusive support across the college.

2.6 Supporting Participation through Digital Inclusion and Youth Pathways

Digital inclusion, youth access learning, and strong school–college partnerships support early engagement, reduce digital poverty, and provide pathways from school and community learning to mainstream FE and HE study.

Example evidence of this approach includes:

- 300+ devices are embedded in community venues through the NE Digital Learning Network.
- Youth Access participation rose from 546 to 600 learners over two years.
- School-college partnership activity involves 1,100+ school pupils, representing almost 10% of all College learners.

3. Evidence of Effectiveness

Across WP priority groups, the College approach demonstrates a positive impact from its approaches. This includes very high representation of disadvantaged groups with, for example, 41% of GKC students living in the 10% most deprived areas, more than double the

national average for colleges. A significantly high proportion of College learners also reside in Glasgow City, with 69% in 2024–25, demonstrating the College's deep engagement with its local communities.

In terms of student outcomes, SIMD10 students' retention rates remain within 2 percentage points of the College average and community learners have exceptionally strong successful completion rates of 96% (2024–25). Youth access and school-linked learners similarly maintain attainment rates comparable to College-wide benchmarks.

With respect to progression, internally around 40% of full-time students continue their studies into the following year and 95.4% of successful full-time leavers progress to work or further study supporting long-term learner journeys and sustained engagement.

4. Future Priorities and Next Steps

To further extend our WP approaches, the following priorities are being progressed:

1. Expanding digital and blended community outreach

This year the College has expanded our online learning network, increasing the range of self-access materials and we are already achieving significantly higher engagement rates and online course completion.

2. Strengthening progression from community learning into mainstream FE

We are working with community and employability partners to ensure clearer, more structured pathways from community-based tasters and short courses into our mainstream vocational qualifications.

3. Enhancing support for vulnerable and care-experienced learners

The College is working with Glasgow colleges and Action for Children to stabilise STAY funding and is exploring further trauma-informed and wrap-around support models.

4. Embedding wellbeing and resilience skills within curriculum design

The College Wellbeing Officer is working directly with curriculum areas to promote well-being approaches to students to build resilience and reduce the need for counselling support.

5. Strengthening ESOL progression pathways

We are working with community partners to strengthen progression from community-based learning and our main campus offer, including to our ESOL and vocational study routes.

5. Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report, although future expansion of support and outreach will depend on external funding and strategic investment.

6. Impact on Students

The College's approaches continue to demonstrate strong performance in widening access for learners from protected characteristic groups, including care-experienced, disabled and ESOL learners.

7. Equalities

There are no direct equality implications arising directly from this report.

8. Risk and Assurance

This report provides assurance that the College is supporting access to education for a wide range of potential learners.

There are risks to funding for specialist support such as the STAY programme.

9. Data Protection

There are no data protection implications arising directly from this report.

10. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- i. note the College's continued strengths in widening participation and the future priorities to enhance access outlined in this report.

11. Further Information

Members can obtain additional information on the contents of this report from Robin Ashton, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Enhancement.

Glasgow Kelvin College

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