

Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (BEDI) Impact Report

2022-23



RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC

Contents

Executive Summary

Overview from the chair, including reflections on 2022/2023, which was the first year of the new approach, using a strategic approach to the monitoring and reporting of progress in Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (BEDI) at the RNCM, including the BEDI Project Funding pilot.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the RNCM.
- 1.2 Strategically Led Approach to BEDI – Summary of Progress in accordance with the 3 Supporting Strategies, HR and Development/ Fundraising:
 - 1.2.1 Education Supporting Strategy
 - 1.2.2 Artistic Supporting Strategy
 - 1.2.3 Research Supporting Strategy
 - 1.2.4 HR
 - 1.2.5 Development/ Fundraising

2. Embedding Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the RNCM Community

- 2.1 Legislative framework
- 2.2 Gender Pay Gap

3. Staff

- 3.1 Access to Work Scheme (ATW) and Care First (EAP)
- 3.2 Health and Wellbeing
- 3.3 Disability Confident Employer
- 3.4 Reward and Recognition monitoring

4. Students

- 4.1 Supporting Student Success
- 4.2 Wellbeing Hub
- 4.3 Support for students with disabilities and specific learning needs.

5. Reporting for 2023/24

Appendix 1

Workforce equality statistics

Current staff analysis: 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/ 2023

Appendix 2

Student equality statistics

Applicant analysis: 2018-2022 entry

Executive Summary

Welcome to the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) annual Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (BEDI) Impact Report.

This document is slightly different to last year's as we have moved towards embedding a more strategic approach to overseeing the implementation of our BEDI Objectives, which are outlined in our BEDI Policy. The report still includes equality-related data we have gathered over the last year and demonstrates our compliance with the requirement to publish relevant equality information, but we have also pulled together highlights from the year under the headings of our three Supporting Strategies (Artistic, Education and Research), as well as progressing staff objectives, which is led by Human Resources. This report also includes a summary of our Equity Fundraising activities as well.

It is hoped that this will provide a holistic overview of our progress in meeting our goals and consider what further steps are necessary. This year the BEDI Forum has successfully overseen:

- Implementation of the new BEDI Policy, embedding the use of Belonging and emphasising the importance of this to support Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Remained committed to removing barriers from people with 'Protected Characteristics', as defined by the Equality Act, through a range of events and workshops, examples of which include Neurodiversity training for Managers, Pride events in June 2023 and a focus on Consent and Wellbeing, with campaigns run in partnership with the Students Union.
- Seen improvements in our Access and Progression Plan (APP) data, relating to the awarding and progression gap regarding students with disabilities. The gap was eradicated this year, but is susceptible to fluctuation due to the smaller numbers.
- Progress has been made on developing an infrastructure to educate staff and students on consent and support those who report sexual misconduct. We have drafted a 'Statement' outlining our approach and underlying policy and procedure, in anticipation of the OFS making this a condition of registration and developed a training programme for staff and students for 2023/24.

From September 2022, the BEDI Forum has implemented the new approach, which is strategically led, consistent and in partnership with students, via representation on key committees. These efforts have enabled the RNCM to focus on impactful action and reduce duplication of effort in order to maximise progress. This has also led to a re-imagining of the Underrepresented Forum and the development of 'Underrepresented' Student Ambassadors, which will be piloted this year.

The BEDI Project Funding Pilot was also a success this year with approximately £3000.00 being made available to staff and student collaborators to run impactful projects to support institutional learning and to empower students to lead in this area. This also gave students valuable experience of project management, event management and research skills. Funded projects included an 'Underrepresented Competition' where students performed repertoire from Underrepresented artists, an 'Empower' event, celebrating women in music, as well as a research project looking at the audience experience of people who are Neurodiverse and another, which piloted Intimacy Training for vocal students.

The development of the Student Wellbeing Hub services has also flourished this year, as it completed its first full year of operation. This has been a successful year, embedding a holistic approach in education and research, enabling the RNCM to empower students to learn about the importance of their wellbeing, pre-empt challenges and support students more effectively. The development of a Student Support Framework has resulted in a range of compassionate procedures, which allow us to maximise student success, underpinned by proactive support structures. The close working relationship between the Wellbeing Hub support services and the Academic Services and Programmes Team enables us to follow up on 'academic issues', such as non-submissions of coursework or module failures with offers of support, in case this is symptomatic of a more serious health issue. This has also led to the development of tutoring of students with resits over the summer and student meetings, attended by both Wellbeing Advisers and Programmes team, to discuss problems related to non-progression.

The Report also contains a reminder of the College's legal obligations as part of its Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of internal policies and the delivery of services, and for progress to be monitored. The new strategically led, monitoring model, ensures a more joined-up and strategically led approach.

As a reminder this report will not show progress against an action plan. Instead it will summarise the review and challenge of the leaders in each strategic area, against their own objectives, as set out in their supporting strategies, overseen by the BEDI Forum. Overall, I am pleased to report that we continue to make positive

progress around Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as we enter the 2023/2024 academic year.

Focus for 23/24

Students as Partners

2023/ 2024 will see the BEDIF oversee two pilot initiatives, the first being Underrepresented Ambassadors. The plan is to work with the Students Union to pay a small pilot of Ambassadors to support the continuation of Underrepresented activity in a revised format, the nature of which has yet to be decided but will probably involve panel, educational and music events across the year.

The second pilot to increase student and college staff collaboration on BEDI topics will be the launch of a Belonging Student Mentor Scheme, in partnership with the Students Union and Student Health and Wellbeing Services. This will initially involve a small, trained group of Belonging Mentors, working with groups of mentees to enhance belonging and provide peer led support to new students as they transition into Higher Education.

Sexual Misconduct Education Programme for Staff and Students

Building on the successful internal audit, which found our approach to be in line with sector good practice and in accordance with OfS guidance, we are now focussing on prevention and education in 2023/24. This will include a training programme for staff and students, commencing from October 2023, in partnership with the Student Union (SU). Training will include 'Responding to Reports of Sexual Misconduct' and a Consent Workshop and Wellbeing Presentation for students, commencing with a Welcome Week talk for all new students.

Neurodiversity

The Neurodiversity training provided in 22/23 proved to be very popular with staff, which has led to a repeat of that session and a focus on Neurodiversity in the new academic year. This has included signing up for the 'Umbrella Project' which enables access to training and support, as well as providing us with an installation of umbrellas, to hang from the ceiling to raise awareness of Neurodiversity at RNCM during March 2024. Student Wellbeing Services also now have a stock of 'Hidden Disability' or 'Neurodiverse' badges which students can choose to wear. These have been popular with students as we have already had to restock our initial supply of 50 badges, after Welcome Week 2023.

BEDI Project Funding 23

2023/24 will see a continuation of the fund to support staff and student led projects to enhance Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the RNCM. Project proposals will be considered/approved by the BEDI Forum, with a maximum of £2,000.00 available for any one activity/project. The pilot led to staff student collaboration on a range of BEDI Projects, which will have an ongoing impact in our community. For example, the 'Underrepresented Competition', showcasing music from Underrepresented artists and the 'Empower, Women in Music Event', demonstrating a highly visible impact on our community, as did the pronoun badges and free period products in previous years.



Emma Hilton Wood

Academic Registrar and Chair of the Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Forum

1. Introduction

1.1 Strategic Led Approach to Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the RNCM

The Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Forum (BEDIF) is the College's principal vehicle for driving innovation and consulting on equity and diversity matters, including responsibility for developing equitable and diversity-related policies, procedures and guidance. The monitoring by BEDIF is strategically led and will ensure that the College continues to meet the legislative requirements and fosters a tolerant, inclusive working and learning environment.

The Executive Summary to this report sets out the strategic approach which has been taken for the oversight of the three supporting strategies and HR progress against their BEDI objectives. The following sections provide an overview of the strategic activity in 22/23, provided by the Deputy Principal (Performance and Programmes) for the Artistic Supporting Strategy, Director of Programmes for the Education Supporting Strategy, Director of Research for the Research Supporting Strategy and Head of Human Resources outlining progress on the HR Objectives.

1.2 Strategically Led Approach to BEDI

1.2.1 Artistic Supporting Strategy

There was excellent progress in relation to the BEDI aspects of the Artistic Strategy in 2022/ 2023. The programme included a range of events which offered a broad range of musicians and artists, including students, presenting a diverse repertoire. Notable events in 2022/2023 included the 'Session Orchestra: Tribute to Black British Artists' in October 2022, which was curated in partnership with our Student's Union Diversity Officer. February 2023 saw the 'Lucy Hale Day of Music, Disability and Technology', which was inspired by Lucy Hale, an RNCM student.

In addition, there was a range of collaborative Community Engagement activities which welcomed the local and diverse community, of all ages into the RNCM, via RNCM Engage. These events are delivered in partnership with staff and students from across the RNCM. RNCM Engage provides music education, via our Junior, Young and Pathways programmes, as well as the opportunity for local primary schools to work with us and our students to produce a children's Opera, recognising the huge benefit music can have on people's lives.

The five priorities the Artistic Supporting Strategy have been designed to embed diversity and inclusivity, using a collaborative approach to bring together a breadth of voices and experiences to our performance and programming, encouraging creativity and a laboratory culture where risks are taken.

The 5 Priorities within the strategy are:

- Student voice – creating a programme which embeds a diverse range of student voices, with student training and development at the centre.
- Collaboration – Seeking out and engaging with a diverse range of artists and organisations.
- Lab Culture – creating innovative spaces where colleagues and collaborators can explore different genres and new approaches, encouraging risk taking and exploration.
- Engagement – reaching out to diverse audiences, partners, students and staff to creatively engage with us and the communities we are in, to increase diversity and inclusion in our offer.
- Professionalism – embed professionalism within our ethos and approach, with our work with students and community, including highlighting the importance of BEDI in the profession, influencing beyond RNCM.

The balance between male and female guest artists is more equal due to the concerted efforts made by the Programming and Performance teams and artist diversification remains a priority for them. Steps are being taken to improve data capture on guest artists, guest tutors, orchestral musicians and repertoire in order to focus the development of diversity and inclusion in these areas and enhanced reporting and monitoring.



Performance as part of the Lucy Hale Day of Music, Disability and Technology

Guest artists for 2022/ 23

- Male: 47.9%
- Female: 51.4%
- Non-binary: 0.7%
- White: 87.9%
- Global Majority: 12.1%

1.2.2 Education Supporting Strategy

In 22/23 the RNCM conducted a 'short term impact' exercise in relation to our progress on the Access and Participating Plan (APP), as required by the OfS. The Plan set targets for enhancing diversity and inclusion across our undergraduate provision. However, our approach is to share good practice across all our student population, particularly with Health and Wellbeing Services, which are universal. Progress on the APP has been very strong in 22/23 in relation to students with disabilities, indicating that both the awarding and progression gap has closed, indicating no difference in attainment and progression between students with or without a reported disability. There is still progress to make in increasing the participation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and POLAR 1-2 students. Data from participation in our Junior programmes is being carefully monitored to help us understand the demographic of our pathways into study, supporting the development of long terms strategies for diversifying cohorts accessing music in Higher Education.

2022/2023 was also the year in which our undergraduate provision was considered in line with the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) criteria. The RNCM was very proud to be awarded TEF Gold for both Student Experience and Student Outcomes. The summary statement from the TEF Panel referenced many good practice examples to inclusion and diversity activity embedded within the curriculum, including co and extra curricula activity and praise for our pastoral and academic support mechanisms for Health and Wellbeing. The outcome statement noted that 20% of our students come from access routes and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) make up 13.5% of our total population. The re-validation of our PGT Programmes in 2023/2024 will build on the good practice in inclusive curriculum design, recognised via the TEF in 2023.

The TEF panel found evidence that the outstanding and high quality features of our education apply to all students, including those from underrepresented groups. It was noted how the individualised undergraduate

curriculum had been designed to allow students to explore areas of interest and specialism that have societal and cultural impact, for example the spotlight concert on International Women's Day. The outcome statement also highlighted the externally funded projects, with our valued external partners with a focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. There was evidence of our supportive and holistic approach to the health and wellbeing of students, which is supported by our Health and Wellbeing Services and the embedded curriculum, delivered in the programmes of study. The TEF Panel also highlighted our reasonable adjustment in recital practice, which was recently introduced and is an exemplar in the Conservatoire sector. The partnerships with the NHS and British Association (BAPAM) were positively noted as providing critical support referral mechanisms for our students.

The TEF Panel noted evidence that the RNCM ensures a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs, which was considered to be of outstanding quality. In reference to learning resources, evidence of physical and learning resources was noted, stating they are tailored and used to support effective and outstanding Learning and Teaching. The TEF Panel judged this feature to be outstanding and it was noted that the library is focussing on widening its collection, using an example of recently acquired African-American art song collection. Further evidence of our library responding to inclusion issues can be evidenced by the recent decision to cease from applying book loans fines, in the current 'cost of living' crisis which is applicable to all students.

Student Engagement and Improvement was an area where the TEF Panel saw evidence of effective engagement with students leading to improvements in experiences and outcomes for all students. Specifically mentioning the student and staff partnership on Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion projects, which was a contributing factor to a finding of 'very high quality' and is accessible to all staff and students.

Finally, student outcomes were judged to be of very high quality, across all students, including underrepresented groups. Our completion and continuation statistics were considered to be very high quality and outstanding, respectively. The TEF Panel noted that the factors that contribute to this are our individualised approach to learning and the pre-emptive approach we are taking to monitoring student engagement, which is universal to all taught students. The panel saw evidence that the RNCM deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring all students succeed in and progress beyond their studies. The panel judged this feature to be of outstanding quality.



RNCM Young Artists

1.2.4 Research Supporting Strategy

After the appointment of a new Director of Research in 2022/2023, the Supporting Research Strategy is currently under review, via the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. BEDI will remain a key concern, both in how we support researchers and in the research topics that we harness.

Through mentorship schemes and through team supervision, we are working on widening participation in PGR supervision, empowering researchers and practitioners with a variety of experience levels, to view their expertise through the research lens and contribute to a diverse research environment. This will be enhanced through open invitations to a number of topic-related discussion groups that will bolster research opportunities for all by providing peer support. Through our research leave policy, we have routes for individuals to have the opportunity to engage in prolonged periods of research regardless of their contract type.

Research topics include the music and musical activities of under-represented composers and performers. Several historical projects ask key questions of agency to expose past barriers to musical acknowledgement and uncover hidden boundaries around access to music. Forkert's research on female composers in the UK is about to be published, while Thormählen's research on female agency in arts patronage has recently been shared with the public in two exhibitions. An example of the RNCM's integrated approach to BEDI in research, teaching and performance is vocal professor Michael Harper's focus on the work of Julia Perry, a Black African American female composer, born in 1920's, whose work is being explored as part of a small AHRC-funded research project, embedded in teaching and student performance as well as our programming. This approach is enhancing staff, student and audience engagement with this important area. It also engages the broadest range of our community in discussion of BEDI topics, in this case exploring underrepresented music and repertoire.

In order to support the exploration of Underrepresented music, the Underrepresented Moodle page was set up to help students and staff with their own journey of discovery. The page includes key dates; repertoire lists and publications for often overlooked composers, musicians and artists; important reading or web resources relating to diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias; a list of organisations that are actively seeking to redress the imbalance underrepresented musicians face. It is hoped the page will grow and adapt to reflect the world we live in and that students and staff to feed in their own discoveries.

Research in music psychology addresses questions in music and wellbeing. This includes studies of ageing in musicians (currently developing into a grant proposal); the role music can play in the life of Parkinsons patients and their carers (in collaboration with Parkinsons UK); the potential use of AI in enabling musicians with disability to flourish artistically; the implications of dance research with practitioners with lived experience of disability; access to music education and neurodiversity; and research comparing audience engagement with live versus streamed music which takes into account the increased access to music provision that streamed concerts can offer to those with disabilities, caring responsibilities, social phobias etc.

Music Education research underpins our RNCM Young Programmes including Engage Cumbria. This research, led by the Director of Programmes, is directly benefitting stakeholders of a variety of often disadvantaged communities. Finally, performance and composition research engages with questions of disability; migration and displacement; and gender. This work is undertaken across the PGR and staff body with excellent work from PGR students leading the way for instance into new routes of making opera accessible to community ensembles, and into rethinking identity and disability through creative practice. Public platforms for this work are guaranteed through the annual PGR conference; through our integrated approach to research, teaching and performance which allows for themed weeks; and through RNCM, ring-fenced funding opportunities for PGR students and staff to present their work to the wider academic and general community beyond the RNCM.

External grant applications supported through the Research Leadership and Management Team are asked to review the BEDI remit of the project (current projects awaiting outcome include those on AI and disability as well as a project around access to a wider repertoire for the tuba, an instrument traditionally associated with brass bands and therefore relevant within the social context of former mining communities). As such, social impact is key to the formulation of research topics supported in the process of applying for external funding.

Finally, the RNCM has made excellent progress in its Library and collection acquisitions, in recognition of an increased demand for diverse works, driven by staff, students and curriculum changes.

1.2.4 Human Resources BEDI Objectives (including Staff Survey overview)

During 2022/23 the College reviewed and increased its access to a variety of equality themed online training courses and now offer the following to staff: Equality and Diversity Briefing, Dignity at Work, Unconscious Bias, Implementing Reasonable Adjustments and Supporting Mental Health at Work. The roll out of this training will continue throughout 2023/24 and will be made available to new staff as part of induction processes. The BEDIF will continue to be a key source of feedback and advice in monitoring training needs across college. With this in mind a new suite of online training resources was purchased during summer term 2022/23 and will be rolled out to staff during 2023/24

Regarding the diversity of our staff population, specifically tutors, the balance is still weighted towards male tutors (61.7% M to 38.3% F). There is an imbalance in the School of Wind, Brass and Percussion and Conducting, which is representative of the industry in those areas. This is particularly difficult in Conducting (93% M, 7% F), which is also representative of the sector where female conductors are few in number and very much in demand, which makes it difficult to book them as guests. However, the RNCM is pleased to report an increase in applications for female Conductors, which is a positive trend for the future of the Conducting profession more generally. Ethnic diversity is also low (White 95%, Global Majority 5%). The College continues to encourage diversification of recruitment but there remain challenges of the pool of tutors being small, especially in certain instruments and our ability to recruit is also impacted by the location of the applicants in relation to the travel time to college.

The RNCM has continued to prioritised the diversification of staffing and following input from Heads and Deputy Heads of Schools a direct mailing list has been created which is now used to circulate all advertised academic vacancies, via a variety of networks. In addition, all vacancies now carry an agreed BEDI statement: *RNCM recognises that music is in every culture. We are committed to building a diverse community of staff and students.*

Interview panel members receive guidance on equality matters during recruitment and unconscious bias online training is made available. Further work will be carried out during 2023/24 to complement already available resources. In addition, providing questions prior to the interview was trialled during 2022/23 for selected vacancies. Feedback that was obtained from recruitment panels and applicants was very positive and this will continue in 2023/24 and will be monitored by the HR team.

Progress has been made with the implementation of MyView to record, monitor and report on staff diversity. There is still some development to undertake in 2023/2024 but there are interim reporting measures in place for Heads of School. Encouraging diversity of staffing and broadening recruitment channels continues to be a priority for the HR Partner, working with Schools, next year.

Generally, the RNCM continues to have a holistic approach to creating a safe working environment, through robust procedures and programmes of education, as well as mechanisms to report and support staff who experience all inappropriate or discriminatory behaviours. The College held an awareness raising week, promoting the College's Dignity at Work Policy. The aim was to help staff understand what this policy meant and to emphasise the role staff can play in creating a safe and inclusive working environment, eradicating bullying and harassment. It provided an opportunity for all staff to familiarise themselves with their own responsibilities and help them understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is in the workplace. Staff were reminded of the College's online reporting tool [RNCM Raise It](#). However, the 2023 staff survey highlighted a lack of awareness amongst staff on reporting procedures and further work will be done on this in 23/24.

A 2023 Staff Engagement Survey conducted by People Insight on behalf of the College was available to staff between 21st February and 14th March 2023. One of the themes was 'Belonging, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and the staff response was a positive and favourable one identifying RNCM as being above the benchmark scores for the HEI sector. Line managers are in the process of analysing results and follow up discussions with their teams will be taking place in the autumn term 2023 with a view to create action plans where appropriate.

The College continues to make use of the support staff can obtain from Access to Work (ATW). During 2022/23 several staff were supported through the purchase of specialised equipment and the provision of support workers, all introduced as part of agreed reasonable adjustments to their working environment.

2023/24 staff action plan

The RNCM is prioritising the following areas of focus in 2023/2024:

- Raising Awareness regarding Disability and Mental Health, including the development of a 'Staff Personal Working Plan' documenting reasonable adjustments.
- Roll out of online equality training.
- Development and introduction of School/Departmental equality reports for Heads of School.
- Use of **Positive Action** during recruitment campaigns supported by equality data. This will be the deliberate introduction of measures to eliminate or reduce discrimination or its 'effects'. Its aim will be to encourage people from particular, demonstrably under-represented, groups to apply for RNCM jobs.
- Undertake research into 'diversity in recruitment' and consider findings and introduce changes where appropriate.
- Raise awareness of potential staff support through Access to Work
- Awareness raising campaign of the College's online reporting tool, 'RNCM Raise It'.

1.2.5 Development and Equity Fundraising Activity

The RNCM's focus on Equity has progressed this year, with a variety of awards, events, prizes and projects being funded, some by donors and others via successful bids for external funding. This year a new £5,000 named award donor has provided funding for a vocal student from Trinidad and Tobago. We also received a new £100,000 endowed award from the Hale family named after Lucy Hale, which will offer £5,000 a year in perpetuity to support students who are disabled and neurodiverse. We were successful in British Council GREAT Scholarships for two students from India, totalling £10,000 this year.

2022/2023 saw the second Williams-Howard Prize, which celebrates and encourages the study and performance of art songs of composers of African heritage. Six RNCM students won monetary prizes and the first prize winners additionally received mentoring and coaching, plus the opportunity to perform at the RNCM and Buxton International Festival, championing underrepresented repertoire and sharing it with new audiences.

The RNCM Ukrainian Musicians Fund, which was founded in 2022 in response to the invasion of Ukraine, continues to grow and be fundraised against. In 2022/2023 we were able to support the education of 7 students displaced by the war in Ukraine to enable them to continue their studies with us on our Undergraduate, Junior RNCM and Young Programmes. Funds raised cover fees, wellbeing and language support for the duration of their studies. This will continue in 2023/2024 as we currently have four displaced students holding undergraduate offers with us and one student ready to join Juniors. An additional £11,500 has been raised in 2023 to top up the fund.

RNCM Young Artists launched in 2022 as a programme of training and support for young pop musicians aged 11-18 from the Northwest. It provides young people with life-changing opportunities to explore music making at a world-renowned institution with music experts supporting them to achieve their potential. 53 young people were recruited to the programme, funded by Sony Music's UK Social Justice Fund and the River Reeves Foundation. From September 2023 Sony Music's UK Social Justice Fund will continue to fund the programme for the next two years, ensuring that young people from under-served communities take part and benefit from the creative, inspiring, and nurturing environment that RNCM Young Artists offers. This will be achieved through the Social Justice Fund's target for subsidised places by year 3 of the programme to be 70%, combined ethnicity (other than white). The programme has not only provided young people with transformational music training and experiences but has increased their confidence and opened up pathways for music education and development that would otherwise be out of reach.

The RNCM Library were also successful this year in receiving £206,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to Digitise our 'at risk' audio archive as well as providing public access to the archive and enhancing public engagement with local community groups, to increase skills and wellbeing. The project is having impactful engagement with the local community with tours, events and open days focussing on the archive. The local community engagement has included working with 'TLC St Lukes', a Longsight group supporting individuals with mental health needs, 'Back on Track' supporting individuals with multiple disadvantages and 'Brunswick Women's Footprints', which is inter-generational and multi-ethnic community group, as well as 'Levenshulme Inspire', a community group supporting residents' wellbeing.

2022/2023 was the year in which the RNCM secured a transformational gift of £1.3 million from the Benny Walker Charitable Trust to roll out our RNCM Engage work to Cumbria, to remove barriers to music education, focussing in the areas of Allerdale and Copeland. The intention is to take forward RNCM Engage Cumbria,

enabling under 18's access to explore, experience and enjoy music education, unhindered and irrespective of their background or personal circumstances. The Benny Walker Charitable Trust is also funding three student awards for applicants to the RNCM from Cumbria.

2. Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework

2.1 The Legislative Framework

The Equality Act 2010 introduced legislation which seeks to end discrimination. The College complies with the specific duties of the Equality Act, which are:

- Publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty. This must include information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are its employees or people affected by its policies and practices.
- Prepare and publish one or more objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve to further any of the aims of the general equality duty.
- The objectives must be specific and measurable.

The College is fully committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act, which will be monitored by the BEDI Forum, whilst also identifying good practice and championing innovation, via the Belonging Project Funding.

2.2 Gender Pay Gap

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, employers with 250 or more employees must publish gender pay gap information every year. Gender Pay Gap calculations are based on RNCM payroll data from a specific date each year, known as the 'snapshot date'. Data is published every year within 12 months of the snapshot date.

The following information is Gender Pay Gap data based on a snapshot date of 31st March 2022. The workforce at the 'snapshot date' of 31 March 2022 was 479 full-pay relevant employees, which is made up by 254 (53%) men and 225 (47%) women.

- The RNCM's median (0%) gender pay gap has remained the same. This compares extremely favourably with the national average gender pay gap figure for 2022 (the latest data available) for full and part time employees which was 14.9% (down from 15.1% in 2021).
- The RNCM's mean (8.5%) gender pay gap has reduced since 2021 (10.1%).
- In the UK, among full-time employees the gender pay gap in April 2022 was 8.3%; this was 7.7% in April 2021 and 9.0% in April 2019 ('Gender Pay Gap in the UK - ONS Statistics 2022')
- The RNCM workforce is predominantly male (53%)
- The proportion of women in the Upper Middle Quartile has increased by 6.53% from 2021

The RNCM's gender pay gap data, which is significantly lower than the national average, is the result of the long-term effort that the College has invested to ensure fair pay for all staff, including:

- Promoting and supporting flexible working policies for all employees, irrespective of gender, including job share, part time working and term time working. This also includes the new Blended Working Framework which is focused on giving our staff the flexibility to choose, where practicable, where they do their work, whether that's in the office or working remotely.
- Having an objective job evaluation scheme to ensure pay fairness.
- Formal policy and process for any changes in pay, including accelerated increments, market supplements and starting pay.
- Ensures transparent promotion, pay and reward processes providing equality data to Belonging, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (BEDI) Forum.
- Enhanced Shared Parental Pay to mirror contractual Maternity Pay.
- Since 2022 making a commitment to meet the Real Living Wage for all staff.

4. Staff

4.1 Access to Work Scheme (ATW) and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Throughout 2022/2023 academic year the College has continued to support staff through funding available via Access to Work, a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work. It aims to provide practical and financial support for employees if they have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition. The College contributes towards the total cost of approved support with ATW making up the difference. Over the past twelve-month period the College has received £13,936 contribution from ATW to support staff.

The financial support received has contributed towards the following support;

- £4,470 towards support workers for vocal staff
- £1,388 for specialised IT equipment – academic staff
- £8,078 for 40 hours of training and the purchase of specialised IT equipment.

The support available for staff through ATW continues to be signposted to all staff.

Care First were the College's 'Employee Assistance' provider of choice during 2022/23 delivering personal support available to all staff, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Employees have access to Care First counselling and information professionals. All are fully trained and permanently employed by Care First to ensure provision of a consistent, high-quality service.

Services available to staff included:

- Telephone Helplines (Counselling, Information & Advice)
- Face to Face Counselling
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Information and Advice
- Management Support and Referral
- Health & Wellbeing
- Mediation
- Critical/Traumatic Incident Response
- Stress Management Programmes

During 2022/23 a review of our EAP provider was carried out and a new provider, Health Assured, has been engaged and will be available for the start of the 2023/2024 academic year.

4.2 Staff Health and Staff Wellbeing Hub

A Staff Wellbeing Hub was introduced during 2021/2022 with its main aim to ensure that all staff feel a sense of belonging and wellbeing at the RNCM. A Wellbeing Working Group is now established, working on a strategy and action plan. One of the key themes developing in the strategy is that relationships between staff are critical to staff wellbeing and engagement. This is also key to a sense of belonging and inclusion.

A Staff Wellbeing Funding Scheme was launched in 2022/23 and resulted in 3 employee-led initiatives being funded – these were a staff football group, a lecture on breathing techniques, and a bike mechanic on-site for the day. This initiative will be promoted to staff on an annual basis.

The 'RNCM Gardening Group' was introduced, with volunteers from across the College taking part. A generous pledge was received as part of the College 50th Anniversary celebrations, specifically to improve the upper roof garden and work will begin in 2023/24.

The RNCM continues to promote the disability confident scheme including where candidates meet minimum requirements, they are guaranteed an interview. This has resulted in increased opportunities for individuals with a disability and ensures we provide an inclusive and accessible recruitment process.

The Staff Wellbeing Group and the Student Wellbeing Hub have begun to work more closely together to identify where resources can be shared, this includes focussing on the same theme days/weeks (such as University Mental Health Day) and promoting access to services that are available to both College employees and students.

Sadly, our partnership with St Peters House, the Chaplaincy has ended this year due to the facility closing down. SPH had provided wellbeing support to staff (and students) from the RNCM and other Manchester Universities and we benefited from many services for a membership fee. The multi faith Chaplaincy will be replaced but it is likely that the Wellbeing provision will not. Once we understand how it will be replaced we can consider what we should replicate in house.

During 2022/2023 the College reviewed its Long Service awards policy with awards now being made and staff recognised for 25, 30 and 40 years' service.

3.3 Reward and Recognition Monitoring

Professional services staff

2022/23 analysis of Reward and recognition awards: Of the 6 awards made to Professional Services staff there was an even gender split, four reported that they were white with one reporting a mixed ethnic background and one staff member preferring not to report their ethnicity. None of the staff receiving Reward and Recognition Awards had reported having a disability.

Academic staff

2022/23 analysis of Teaching and Research staff – Approved Promotions:

Of the nine Academic Staff whose promotion was approved in 23/23, five were female and four were male. Seven were in the age range of 36 to 50, whilst two were 51 to 65. Eight out of the nine staff who were promoted were white.

5. Students

5.1 Supporting Student Success

2021/2022 was notable due to the success of the first full year of the Student Health and Wellbeing Hub providing a holistic approach to Wellbeing Services and embedding Wellbeing education in the curriculum, particularly in the context of an increased number of withdrawals and interruptions, which was representative of the wider sector but largely due to health concerns, exacerbated by the Pandemic.

A particular strength of the model is the collaboration with Academic Services and the Programmes and Schools, enabling a proactive approach to monitoring student engagement and identifying students at risk of dis-engagement. This has been a team effort, requiring staff from across the College to collaborate on providing information, support and interventions to ensure students success. There was also a push this year to support students financially with a commitment to increasing support for Access to Learning Funds, which has been utilised to support students when they are experiencing financial hardship. In the context of a cost of living crisis, it was also decided to pilot the removal of library fines for students in 2023/24.

2022/2023 saw the development of the Student Support Framework, which brings together a number of new and existing procedures and policy to provide clarity on our approach to supporting student success and includes work on our approach to Fitness to Study, Supporting Return to Study, Suicide Safety and a quick reference guide for emergency referral for supporting students in crisis. This work has also led to improvements in our engagement monitoring processes, including a monitoring dashboard that will be implemented in 2023/2024.

5.2 Student Health and Wellbeing Hub

During 2022/ 2023, the Student Health and Wellbeing Hub worked with a full case load of students, supporting wellbeing interventions, reasonable adjustments and providing support for study skills and students applying for DSA funding. The areas of focus for the next academic year will be to strengthen wider staff awareness (e.g. of neurodivergence, specific learning disabilities, signs of mental illness etc.) and confidence in giving support.

The Hub team has continued to develop during 2022/ 2023. The Head of Student Disability and Wellbeing has had a transformative impact on the work of the Hub and has helped with strategic direction as well as the day-to-day running of frontline student support. A new Student Wellbeing Advisor and a replacement Counsellor were appointed, bringing the Wellbeing Support and Counselling Service back to full strength. The team has also grown to include a new English Language Tutor (0.2FTE, starting autumn 2023). The Hub has also secured more resource for the Counselling Service for 2023-24 (the total is now 1.2FTE for 40 weeks of the year).

Regarding Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs), we have implemented a new database which includes a

secure space where PLPs will be stored. As this connects with other systems within the College, it makes the plans more reliable, accessible and their presentation is clearer for staff. The new system was launched during the Staff Conference (September 2023).

We continue to face a persistent and growing issue when students fail to disclose severe mental health and complex conditions during the application process or prior to enrolling in their course. These undisclosed conditions ultimately hinder the student's ability to fully participate in their studies. Although our Disability and Wellbeing Service can provide assistance, the high level of support required, the necessity for long-term specialist care, and the prolonged waiting times for external medical professionals place strain on the service.

The Wellbeing pathway embedded within the BMus programme has ensured all students are learning about musicians' wellbeing and are reflecting on their own health in a practical way, underpinned with current research. Across UG and PG, 385 students received wellbeing-related sessions, including the entire Artist Development cohort and BMus2 through the ensembles workshops, the wellbeing modules (BMus3&4) and individual projects such as the Pathway Elective and PGT dissertations. For the EQUIP sessions (on themes such as time management and music performance anxiety), a total of 73 students attended across the academic year. There are opportunities to develop this work for PGT and PGR students.

The Wellbeing modules continue to be popular with students. They are flexible and responsive to emerging well-being themes, for example hearing health (Artist Development 1). We have also successfully provided Alexander Technique (AT) provision for students on a one-to-one basis and gave an additional 35 hours of group lessons that is widening access to provision and now a permanent part of the AT offer. A presentation to the Heads of School resulted in invitations to work with students in SKS, SVSO, SPOP and Conducting.

We continued our partnership with the Greater Manchester University Student Mental Health Service (GMUSMHS) and are in a two-year cycle regarding our financial contribution. RNCM students with more severe mental health problems undoubtedly benefit from this service and per capita we refer a high number of students compared to our sister institutions (note: it is considered that this is largely due to other HEIs having in-house access to clinical services, which we do not). However, students referred to the GMUSMHS are waiting 7+ weeks for an assessment and then a further wait for the therapy to start. The RNCM Counselling Service is not designed as a crisis service and cannot provide support for the most serious cases in the interim. Last year, there was a 4-6-week waiting time for the RNCM Counselling Service itself, which impacted on students waiting to access support. The counsellors prioritised the more urgent cases, but are now trialling a first-come-first-served approach. However, anecdotally, we hear that GPs are recommending students to appeal directly to their HEI for support, rather than referring them to NHS services. This, combined with the GMUSMHS waiting list adds strain on our resource as a small, specialist institution.

The Hub is still building awareness of the Whole-Institution approach to student and staff wellbeing. As part of this, we have worked with Human Resources, finalising a Hub Induction Pack for new starters, a set of questions on wellbeing for interview panels, and we secured HR's agreement to include wording about student wellbeing on job descriptions for academic staff. The Hub also organised publicity campaigns for University Mental Health Day and Men's Health Week, and we re-publicised 'togetherall' to staff and students, including a visit from a 'togetherall' representative. For the first time, the Hub and HR worked in tandem on some of these campaigns, sharing resources. Regarding a cross-College approach, the Hub has also set up a process to improve communication between the Hub and Schools (Schools now feed into termly online reporting of wellbeing activity) and the Hub is planning a news digest of recent developments, reminders and advice to send to the Schools.

5.3 Support for students with disabilities and specific learning needs

Profile of students using the Learning Support Service: Any student who has declared a disability/condition that may affect their studies is offered the opportunity to set up a Personal Learning Plan (PLP). A PLP details their condition and the effect it has across all areas of their learning, both performance and academic. It also incorporates any reasonable adjustments that the College is required to make in order to support them, such as extra time in examinations.

Academic Year	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Total PLP's issued	113	137	105	112	121

The breakdown according to sector-standard disability categories was as follows:

Disability Type	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Specific learning difficulty	52	66	67	74	90
Mental health condition	42	80	68	49	59
Longstanding illness/health condition	18	26	27	21	22
Sensory impairment	5	4	3	5	5
Autistic spectrum	8	12	8	15	21
Physical and/or mobility impairment	5	3	8	6	2

The number of students reporting mental health issues has increased slightly but is still lower than peak pandemic levels. However, students are still arriving with complex needs, which may not have been met prior to their arrival or they have been unable to access support due to long waiting lists for NHS services. Whilst most areas continue to maintain a steady state of reported numbers, it is noted that there has been a large increase in reported 'Specific Learning Difficulties' and those students reporting Autistic Spectrum conditions. This can be equated to continuing increases in ADHD diagnosis, which is reflective of the sector and society as a whole.

6. Reporting Progress in 2023/2024

The College is committed to ensure we make progress against the objectives set out in our BEDI Policy and each of the Supporting Strategies for Research, Education and our Artistic Strategy, particularly the targets set out in the Access and Participation Plan (APP). We will also continue to report on progression of the HR Objectives and Development and Fundraising activity.

Next year's report will focus on the targeted activity around Neurodiversity and our continued commitment to working in partnership with students, via our pilot engagement projects and the BEDIF Funded Projects.



RNCM staff and students at Manchester Pride

Appendix 1 - Workforce equality analysis

The following statistical analysis of staff is based on a Full Person Equivalent (FPE) of all RNCM staff. The data is an analysis of the 2021/22 HESA Staff Return for all available conservatoires and local institutions for comparison and presented using the HEIDI Plus report tool. Please note: the HEIDI Plus reports are always one year behind, but provide useful comparison with our neighbours and CUK peers.

The Full Person Equivalent for 2021/22: 470 staff

Staff equality statistics: 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22

Staff Disability: (Page 2)

4.9% (from 5.6%) of RNCM staff are known to have a disability. Last year RNCM had the second highest declared amongst Conservatoires behind RSA at 5.9%. This year we have dropped to lower down the list of listed institutions, with only three of the eight institutions listed having a lower percentage of staff who have declared a disability (RAM/ RCM 1.7% and Trinity Laben 1.4%). However, we 4.9% declared disability we are still nearer the top of the range and our staffing numbers are lower in comparison to some of the larger institutions and more susceptible to annual fluctuations. The College continues to engage with staff to give them the confidence to report disabilities so that we can work with them to identify and provide support where necessary.

Staff Age: (Page 3)

The majority of the College's workforce at 41.5% are aged between 36 and 50 years. The percentage of staff aged 35 years and younger has increased to 18.2% (from 17.9%), although this still compares well across the Conservatoire sector. Staff aged 66 and over has increased for the fifth year running and now stands at 9.4% (from 9.3%).

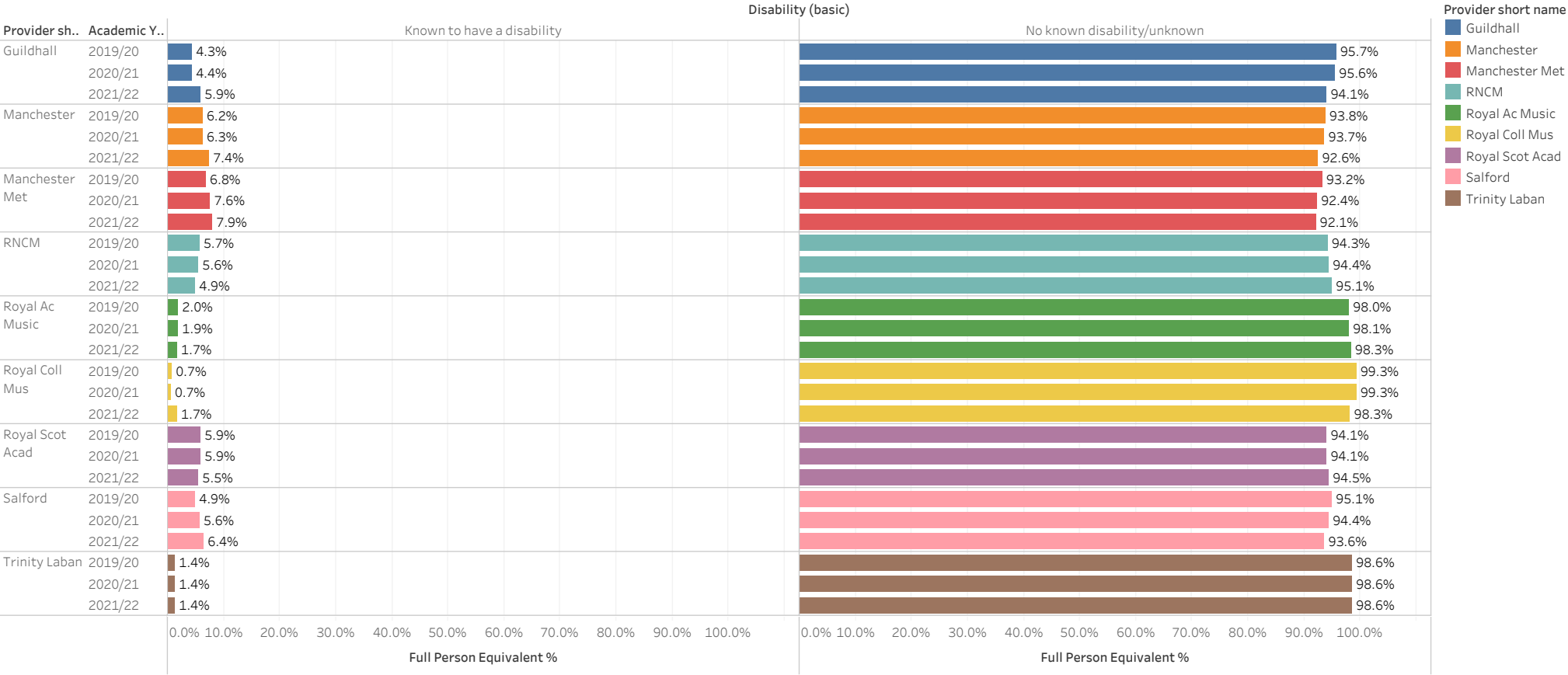
Staff Ethnicity: (Page 4)

In common with all other CUK and Manchester Institutions the majority of the College's workforce describe themselves as 'White', 87.4%, which is a decrease from last year (88.5%). Recruitment initiatives aimed at reaching a more diverse audience to impact on the diversity of the College workforce continue to be prioritised.

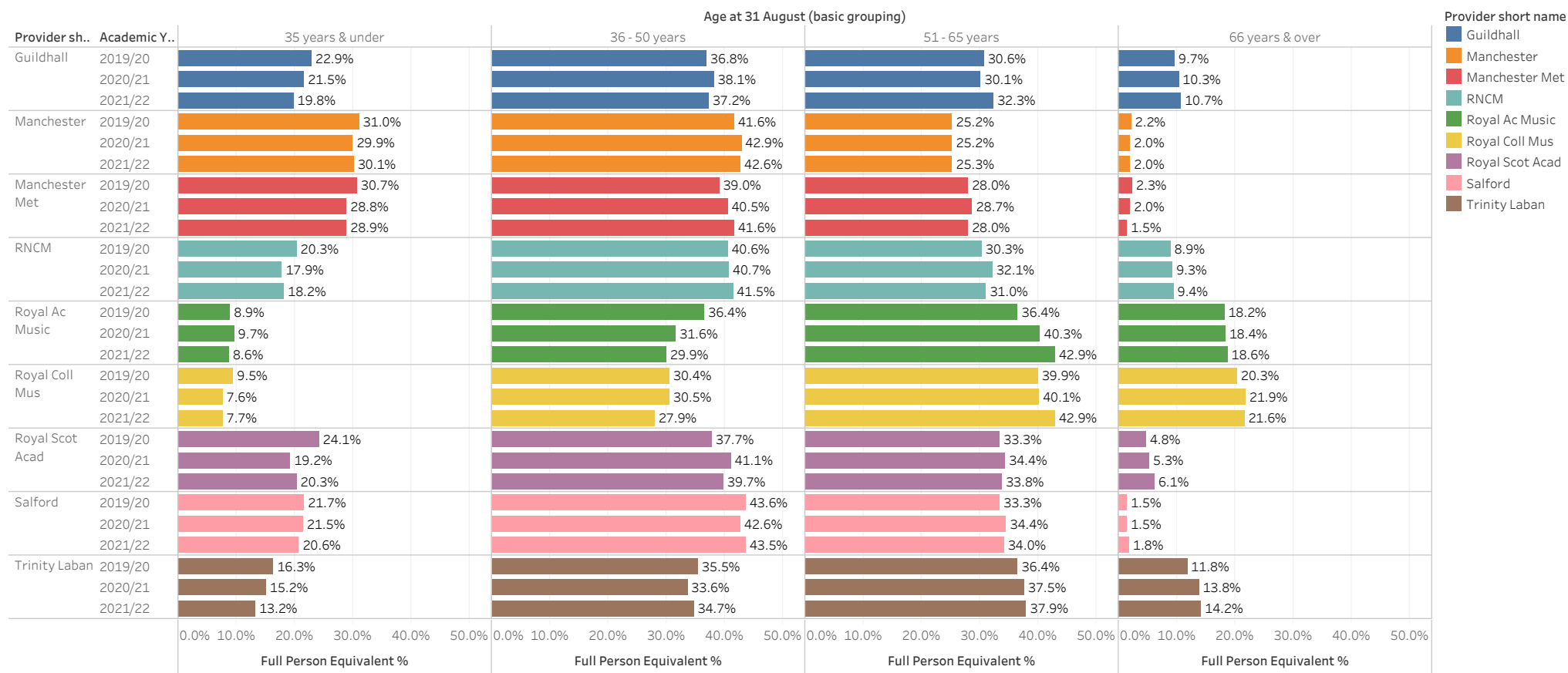
Staff Sex: (Page 5)

54.7% (from 54.2%) of staff are male and 45.3% (from 45.8%) female, a ratio that has remained relatively stable over the past three years which is comparable with the other institutions listed. Four of the other five CUK comparators also have a majority of male staff with the highest percentages being the Royal College of Music at 64.1% and the Royal Academy of Music at 66.4%. The exception is the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with 52.1% of staff being female.

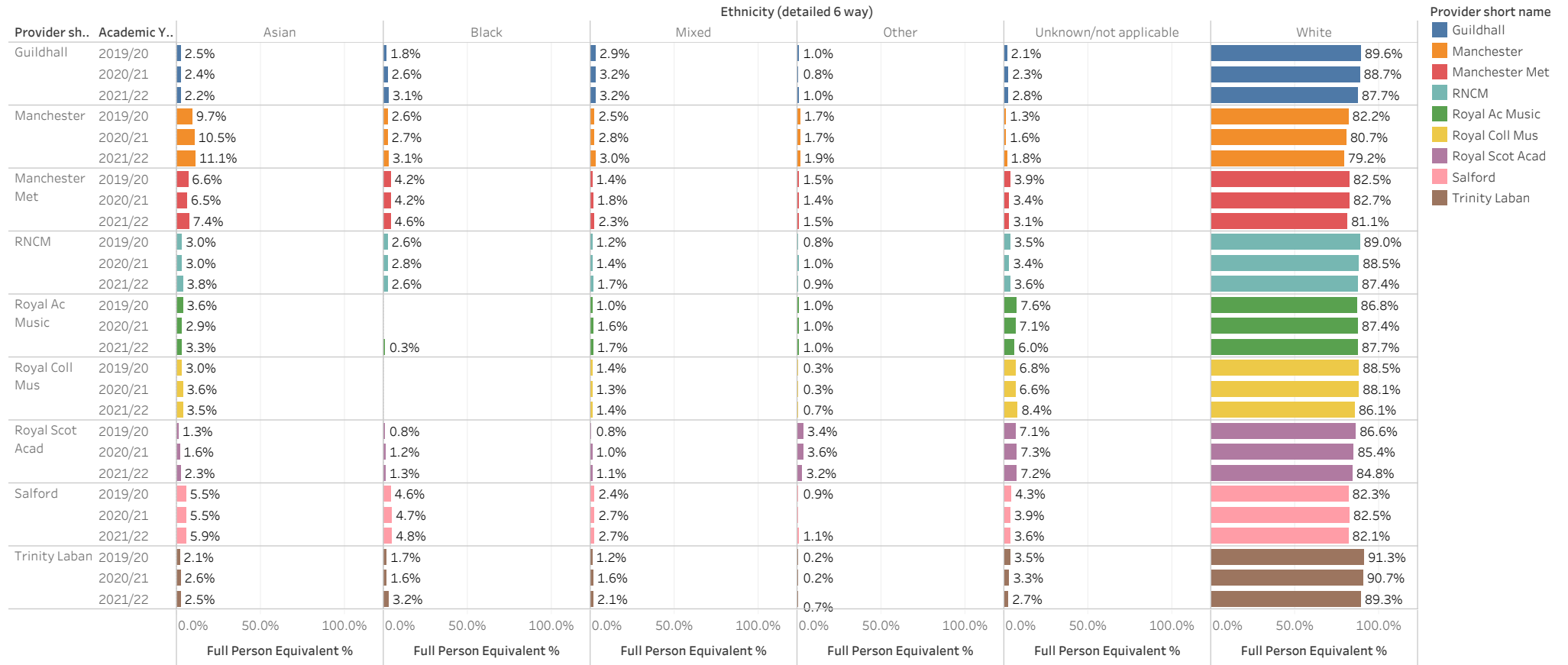
Staff by Disability: CUK and Manchester Institutions 3 yrs



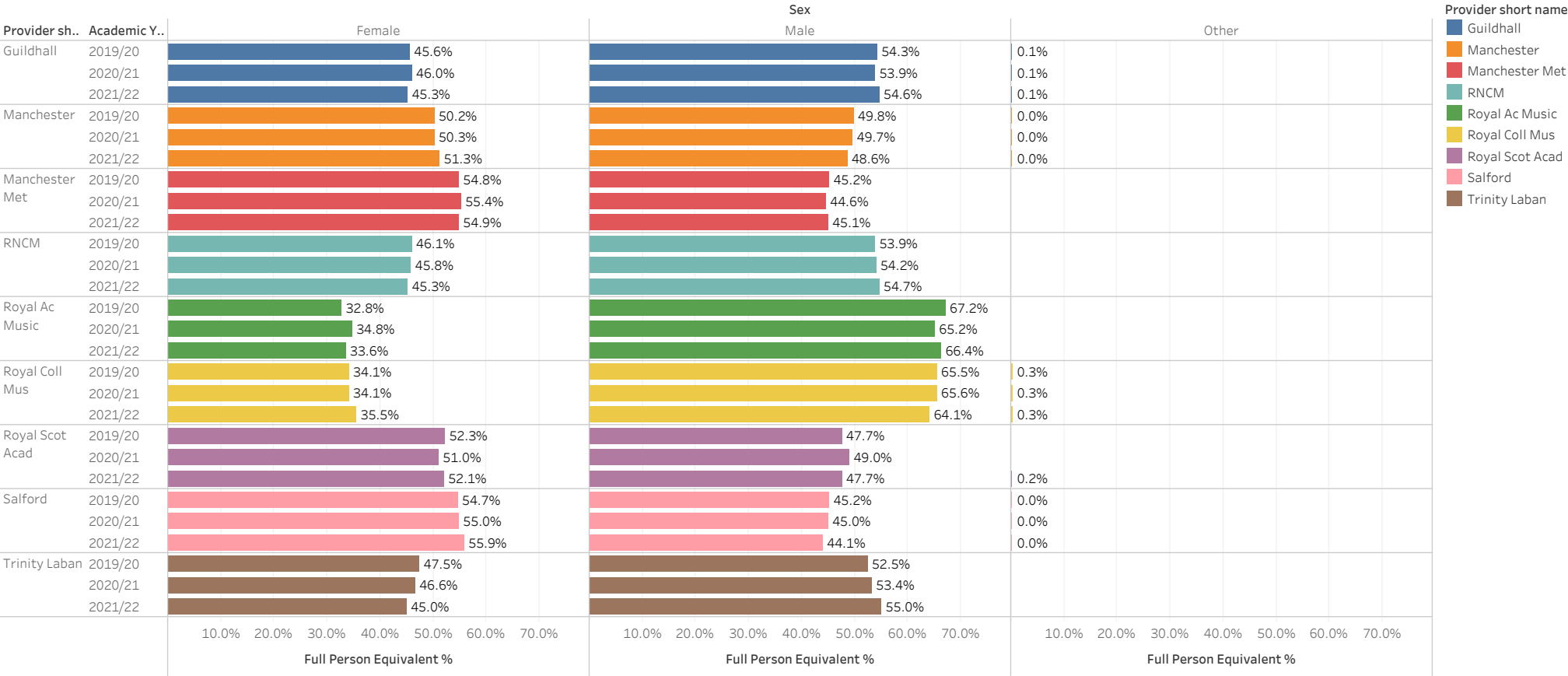
Staff by Age: CUK and Manchester Institutions 3 yrs



Staff by Ethnicity: CUK and Manchester Institutions 3 yrs



Staff by Sex: CUK and Manchester Institutions 3 yrs



Appendix 2 – Student equality analysis

Student analysis is based on a Full Person Equivalent (FPE) of all students, rounded to the nearest 5. The student data is from 2019/20 to 2021/22, from the HESA Student Returns for all available conservatoires and local institutions for comparison and presented using the HEIDI Plus reporting tool. Please note: the HEIDI Plus reports are always one year behind, but provide useful comparison with our neighbours and CUK peers.

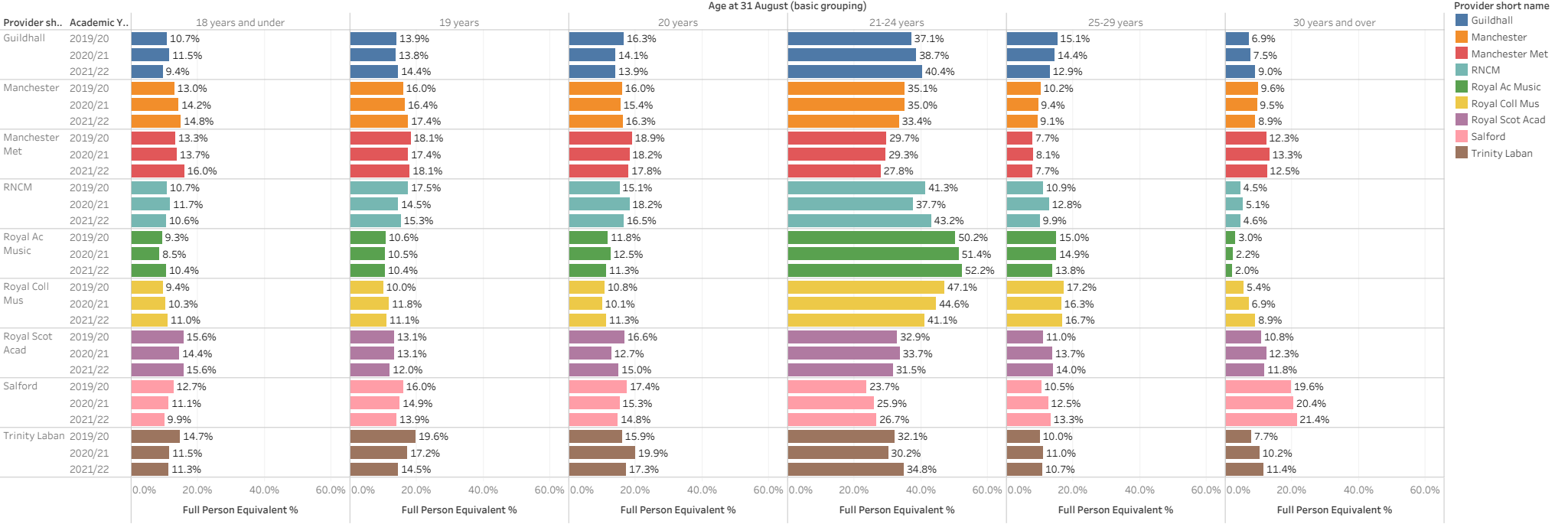
Student Age: (Page 7) As you would perhaps expect, the majority, 85.6% of all RNCM students are aged 24 or below, 14.5% being aged 25 and above (15.4% in 2019/20 and 17.9% in 2020/21). Across other institutions, the RNCM has one of the highest proportion of students aged 24 or below, and subsequently the lowest proportion aged 25 or over.

Student Disability: (Page 8) During 2021/22 19.1% (from 18.4%) of RNCM students declared a disability, the highest in recent years and climbing (2018/19 15.5%, 17.6% in 2019/20 and 18.4% in 2020/21). The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland once again had the highest percentage of students declaring a disability at 25.4% and the Royal College of Music the least at 12.5%. The overall trend in declared disabilities is upward amongst the majority of comparators, with Trinity Laben recording a leap from 19.2% in 2020/21 to 24.4% in 2021/22.

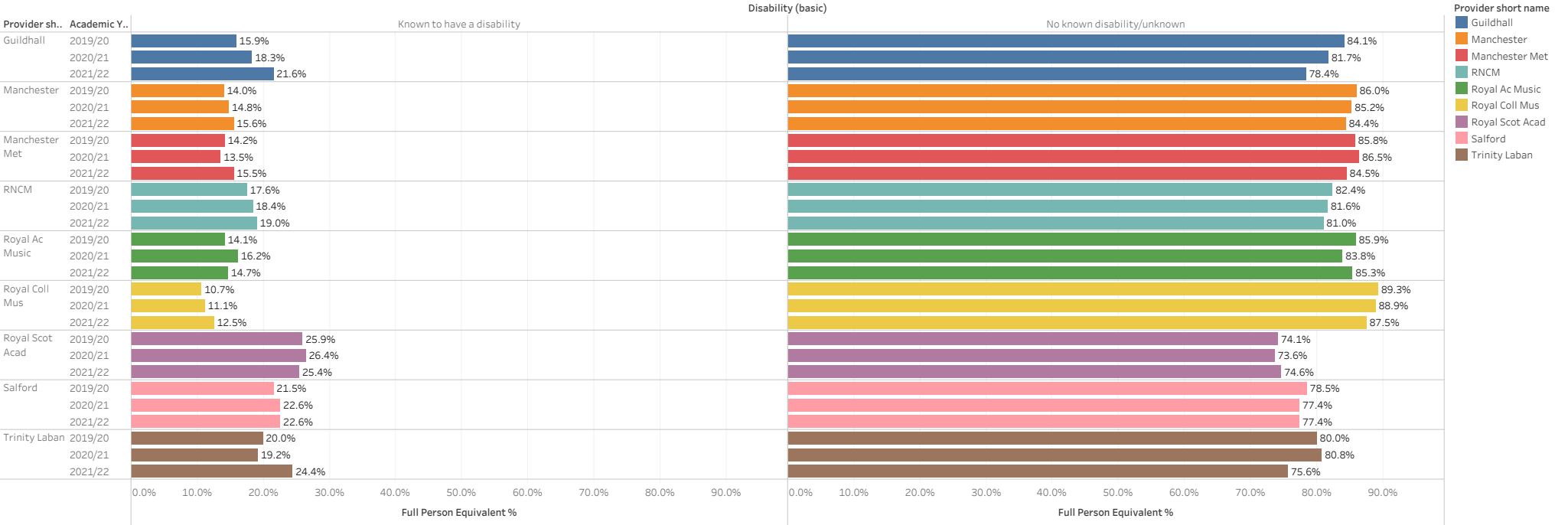
Student Ethnicity: (Page 9) 60.8% of the College's student population identify as 'white' and we are third behind The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and MMU, who have the highest percentages in this category. Unknown ethnicity category is relatively high at 31.9% but is seen across the other examples listed, which suggests there is a reluctance for students across the sample to provide ethnicity data. MMU and Salford have the lowest percentage of unknown data and it would be helpful to understand how they have achieved this. The new Student Records System provides a new opportunity for collecting more accurate ethnicity data in the future and these data fields will become compulsory (although they will be able to choose 'prefer not to say'). The challenge of increasing the diversity of home students continues to be a priority for the RNCM.

Student Sex: (Page 10) In 2021/22 53.1% (from 50.7%) of the RNCM student population were male and 46.4 (from 49.1%) female (0.5% 'other', increased from 0.2%). In the UK in 2021 the percentage of female population is 50.57% compared to 49.43% male population. (Office for National Statistics, 2021). There is a degree of consistency with some fluctuation across the examples listed, except for Trinity Laben with 62.2% female, 33.8% male and 0% other.

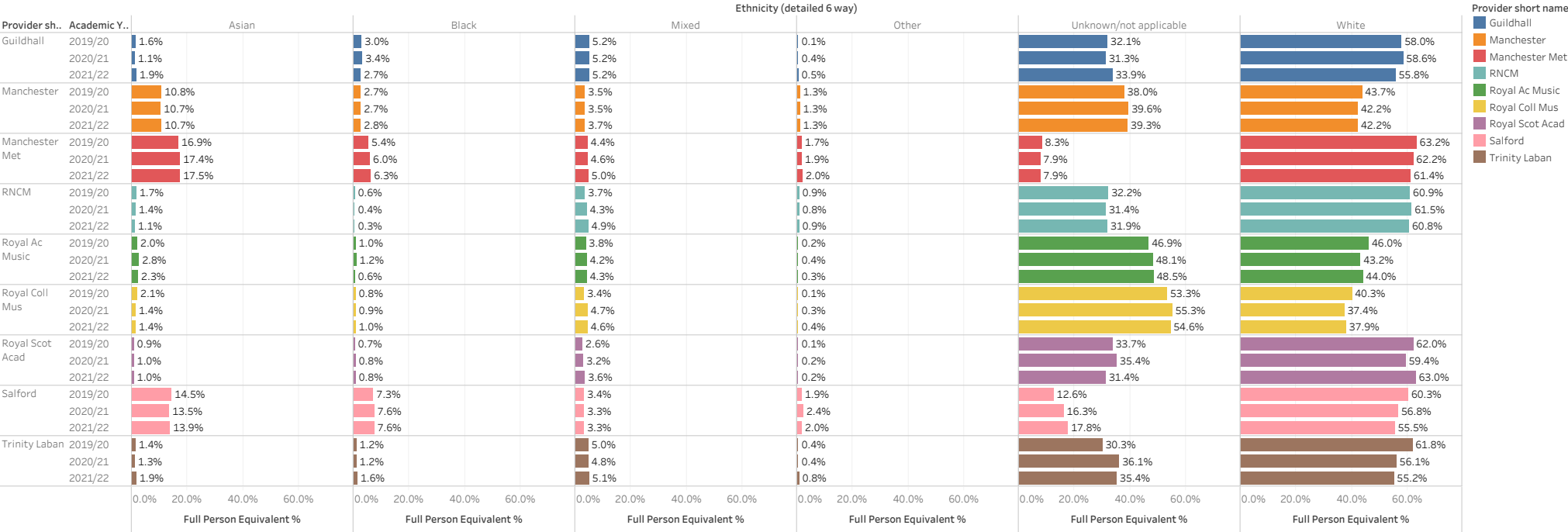
Student by Age: CUK and Manchester Institutions 3 yrs



Student by Disability: CUK and Manchester Institutions 3 yrs



Student by Ethnicity: CUK and Manchester Institutions 3 yrs



Student by Sex: CUK and Manchester Institutions 3 yrs

