

Annual Report 2022/23



**A national
college for people
with disabilities**

Empowering Abilities, Inspiring Lives

Annual Report 2022/23

Queen Alexandra College

Birmingham

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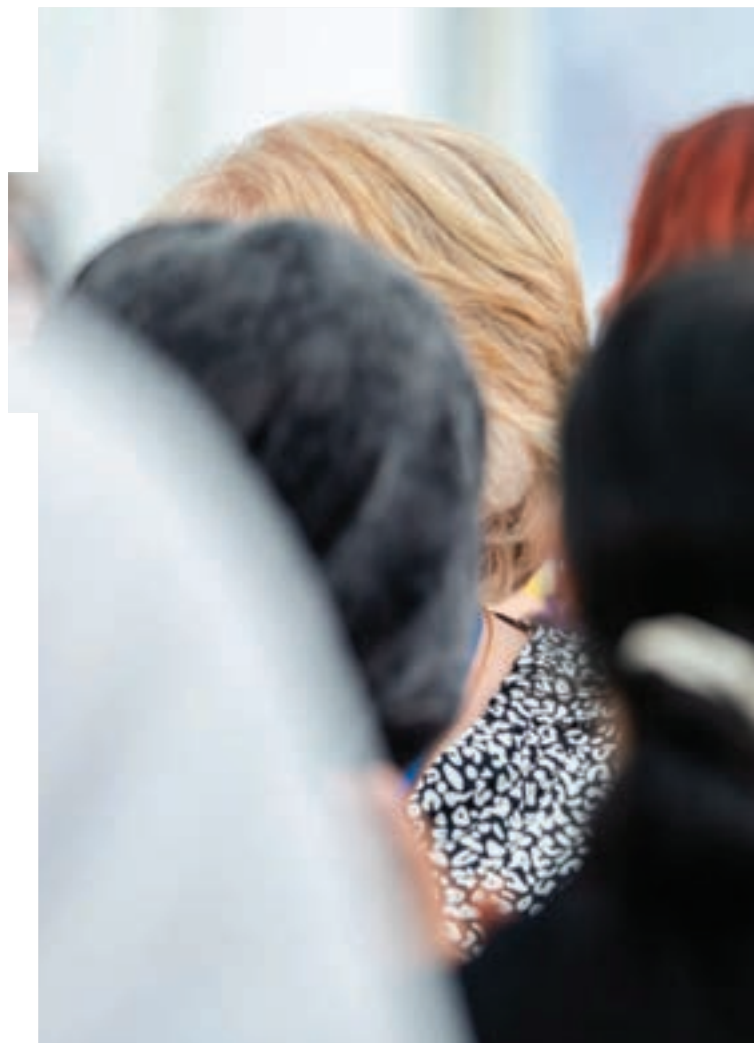
A national college
for people with
disabilities

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Queen Alexandra College (QAC) is a national specialist residential College and charity based in Birmingham that supports a diverse range of student abilities and needs.

We offer an innovative, holistic approach to learning and support, welcoming students who come to our College from all over the country – as well as many who are local to us.





Empowering abilities, inspiring lives

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Our curriculum is designed to maximise adult life opportunities, develop independence and work skills. Students may work at Pre-Entry, Entry Level or gain vocational qualifications to level 3 in a wide range of subject areas. English, maths, employment skills and PSHE are embedded across all areas of study.

The Residential Support Services at **QAC** offer a unique experience that enables the development of independent living and social skills.

For many young people it's the first time they have ever been away from their families and it provides an excellent opportunity to experience what it is like to transition into adulthood.

We also offer a specialist respite service and aim to develop and grow our capacity to increase the number of respite spaces.

88% of students achieved their main learning aim on accredited qualifications in 2022/23.

Numerous residential students at **QAC** go on to join Independence Plus – supported living options. This provision was developed because the College identified a need to sustain the independence that people were developing while at **QAC**.

Clients on this programme still need support and the aim is to deliver a service that provides an individual with the means to live independently/semi independently into the future. Many clients are in education, voluntary work or paid employment not linked to **QAC** directly. We provide support to transition into life-long living support options with other providers.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REPORT / "People are very proud to be a part of **QAC** and get a great sense of satisfaction from their roles and being able to support the needs of both students and those cared for."

Bev Jessop

Principal and
Chief Executive

QAC moves forward on its journey

to empower abilities
and inspire lives!

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A word from Bev...

PARENTAL SURVEY / "Staff are warm, friendly and accommodating – they have always met our child's needs."

To see our full Student Curriculum go to
www.qac.ac.uk

June 2023 saw QAC achieve a very positive Ofsted monitoring visit, which outlined how our rapid improvements were having a positive impact for every student who attends QAC.

We continue to strengthen these practices with a strong PSHE curriculum. All students undertaking work placements and work experiences have access to a comprehensive careers offer, with a whole College approach now established.

The entire College team pulled together with a determination and focus, demonstrating our values and commitment to making every student's experience of **QAC**, impactful and meaningful. We will continue to further improve the curriculum, therapy and support services for our young people enabling them to move into adulthood with a range of valuable life skills and a real ambition for what their futures can hold. We maintained our strong focus on staff wellbeing and their professional development, knowing that our staff are the bedrock of all that is great about **QAC**.

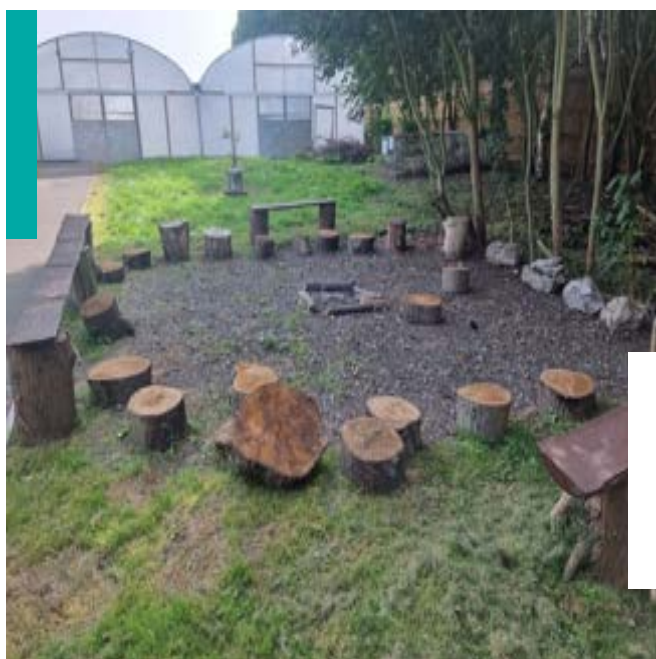
Our Umberslade estate was further enhanced and has become a unique, vibrant campus that provides a growing number of students' superb learning experiences in a rural haven, set amongst the Birmingham urban landscape. Likewise our Pinewood Campus continues to provide a real-work environment for our supported interns who use it

as a base before going out and about on their substantial real work placements. Both campuses offer the same quality **QAC** holistic experience, essential for our students to achieve at their very best.

The diversity of student recruitment remained strong for **QAC** with BAME at 46% and we are proud to continue to lead with regards to Diversity and Inclusion, whilst always learning ways to be even better. Our qualification achievement rates remained high at 88% and students and families continue to choose **QAC** and the opportunities it offers.

Community Services and Residential Services stay strong with high levels of client participation in community activities and events. Our respite service is in high demand and is an area, alongside our Supported Living (Independence Plus) that we will grow further in coming years. As with College, it is our strong team of staff who make all of these services amazing and fulfilling for our clients and their commitment to, and impact on our young people cannot be underestimated.

2022-2023 saw all staff, governors and students contributing to the new organisational strategy for 2023- 2027 and we look forward to sharing this with you in coming months. It is an exciting time for the **QAC** organisation and we look forward to the next journey of development and the life changing opportunities and experiences we can bring to our students, clients and staff team in the future.



Our values and intent

Improving life opportunities
for people with high needs.

Mission Statement

QAC empowers young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve their ambitions and to lead fulfilling lives.

Our core values and vision

QAC makes a positive difference to the lives and learning of people with disabilities and learning difficulties, having high expectations of staff and students and being responsive, innovative and collaborative.

We incorporate the following values into our daily College life and behaviour:

- ▶ Respect
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Excellence
- ▶ Inclusion
- ▶ Collaboration
- ▶ Enabling

QAC is also committed to the principles of **FREDIE** (Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement) and British Values.

Safeguarding & Prevent at QAC

We take seriously our responsibilities for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults in our care. We have designated safeguarding leads and robust practices in place to ensure student safety. We liaise with allied professionals to ensure delivery of support to students and families when the need arises.

We can send you a copy of our Safeguarding Policy on request.

Leaders in Diversity

In October 2021 **QAC** achieved the prestigious Leaders in Diversity Award. The award recognises organisations going above and beyond in their commitment to the FREDIE values.

This success follows on from the College receiving the Investors in Diversity Stage 2 Award in July 2017.

Realise your potential





PARENTAL SURVEY /
 "I'm really happy with my son's progress and the support he receives from the staff in his group."

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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®

We invest in people Silver

Investors in People

The College is proud to have achieved the 'We invest in people', silver accreditation – something only 20% of the organisations assessed achieve. It means that the right principles are in place but more than that, it means that **QAC** staff, managers and leaders are making proactive efforts to make sure that everyone in the organisation feels the positive effects.



A Mindful Employer

QAC is committed to promoting an inclusive environment for staff and stakeholders. **QAC** is positive about Mental Health and shows this commitment by being signed up to the MINDFUL EMPLOYER and AoC Mental Health and Wellbeing Charters.

EDI Charter

All members of staff, volunteers and students of **QAC** are entitled to equality of rights and opportunities and have the same responsibility to respect and treat people with dignity regardless of their differences.

STUDENT QUOTE /
 "Staff provide me with the support I need to complete tasks to the best of my ability and progress."
Charlie





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Maintaining the highest standards



Experiencing the wealth of talent our students possess

93% of students said they liked and enjoyed being at College.

97% of students said they received the support they need and staff are kind to them.

To see our full Student Curriculum go to www.qac.ac.uk

Celebrating success

It's QAC's achievements that will measure our success going forward as part of the College 4-year strategy (2023-2027).

Student Showcase

Our Annual Student Showcase celebrated the richness and diversity of our students' talents. Hosted at the **QAC** Community Services Hub, next door to the main College campus, the event was attended by various stakeholders, all of whom thoroughly enjoyed experiencing the wealth of talent our students possess. An audience member commented: "I thoroughly enjoyed it - you have some very talented students!"

Former student achieves First Class Honours

Current **QAC** Community Services Support Worker and former College student, **Hannah**, graduated with a First-Class Honours Degree in Special Educational Needs, Disability and Inclusion at the University of Wolverhampton. During her time at **QAC**, Hannah completed a BTEC Level 3 in Health and Social Care and represented the College as a Student Ambassador. **QAC** helped Hannah to make positive plans when the time came to leave College, based around her needs and aspirations.



Hannah

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Community Services clients perform at the 2023 IBSA World Games opening ceremony

Hamza and Maryam, two of our Community Services clients, alongside Step Change Studios, performed a Bollywood dance routine at the 2023 IBSA World Games opening ceremony. Both clients joined a programme delivered by Step Change Studios for blind and visually impaired people with a South Asian heritage, and began learning the dance just 12 weeks before performing in front of over 1000 people at the Symphony Hall in Birmingham.

The 2023 World Games is the largest high-level international event for athletes with visual impairment, with more than 1250 competitors from 70 nations.

Friends and Families Day

At the end of each academic year parents and families of students leaving **QAC** were invited to a special event that celebrated student successes and provided a fitting 'send-off' for our leavers.



STUDENT QUOTE / "I have made some very good friends at **QAC**. My programme has helped me decide what I want to do in the future and given me the skills to do it!" **Kian**

STUDENT QUOTE /

"It's important to have a Student Council because they can make sure that your voice is heard."

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A college for everyone

Student voice

Students are at the heart of everything we do.
Their voice matters.

Each year students are asked to consider joining the Student Council and to nominate themselves for election if they are interested.

To see our full Student Curriculum go to
www.qac.ac.uk

We had 36 candidates and 199 students voting for their Student Council representatives from across different areas of the College with 8 students elected into post for 2022/23.

The role of the Student Council and its members is to provide a voice for all students to put their ideas and thoughts forward, whether that is about events and activities or changes they would like to see in College.

QAC students support The Nuvoic Project

Some of our students participated in an assistive technology project called The Nuvoic Project. The aim was to develop speech recognition technology for people with impaired or non-standard speech, supporting their communication and independence. Students kindly donated speech recordings to help technology work better for people with atypical speech.

QAC students organise LGBTQ+ History Month Awareness Event

Members of our College 'SPARK' (LGBTQ+) student group marked LGBTQ+ History Month by setting up a stall and raffle, raising a fantastic £350 in total for future LGBTQ+ projects and events in and around College.



LGBTQ+ students value the 'SPARK' peer support group where they can meet and talk to staff and each other about their experiences.



OCS provide cooking sessions for QAC residential students

Some of our residential students enjoyed cooking sessions with the OCS team, taking over the Independent Living Skills kitchen on a weekly basis to help support the student experience. Dishes included how to make Spaghetti Bolognese from scratch, working as a team to prepare all the ingredients before cooking the dish and sitting down together to enjoy their dinner.

Developing speech recognition technology



A voice for all students



STUDENT QUOTE /

"I like attending QAC and learning new things. College is fun and it has helped me to make friends!" **Jasmin**



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Abdullah's story ...

On completion of his Health and Social Care qualification at **QAC**, former student Abdullah progressed onto the College's Supported Internship programme based at Pinewood Campus.

Supported by knowledgeable **QAC** Job Coaches, Abdullah enjoyed a variety of real-work opportunities whilst on the programme, and successfully secured a part-time 'meet and greet' role with HSBC Bank.

The College supported Abdullah to develop the skills that he needed to navigate the world of work and identify what he wanted to do after his time at **QAC**.

Abdullah commented: "I never thought I'd be able to work as I have two impairments. Thank you to everyone at **QAC** for making my dream come true!"

Preparing students for the next step

Whatever your destination after QAC we will help you to make sure that the time you have spent with us at **QAC** preparing for adulthood sets you up for further success.

EMPLOYER SURVEY /

"The placement went really well, we couldn't have asked for anything better!"

Employment progression

Employment skills
are embedded across all
areas of study.

Students have had the opportunity to work in a range of roles with employers including Bear Bookshop, Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park, Co-op, Fives Soccer Centre, Macdonald Burlington Hotel, Martineau Gardens, National SEA LIFE Centre Birmingham, New Life, St John's Harborne, Timpson's and West Bromwich Building Society.

QAC 'Next Steps' events & National Careers Week 2023

Preparing students for their next steps away from College is essential. During 2022/23 we held careers weeks and transition out events to enable all students to find out more about the range of opportunities available following their time at QAC. Providers in attendance included further and higher education, training, employment, independent living, and social care services.

Umberslade Campus

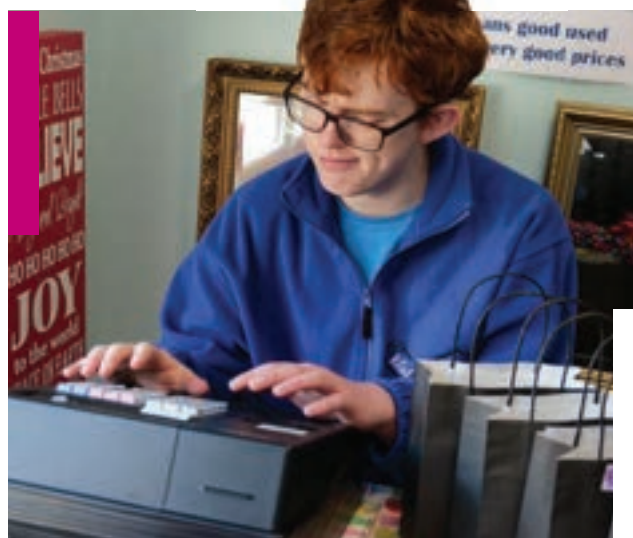
Located in Selly Oak, the newly refurbished Umberslade Campus is dedicated to horticulture and outdoor learning. QAC students can study in a high-quality, safe and accessible environment while benefiting from the excellent opportunities and experiences that the various horticulture facilities at Umberslade Campus can provide.



STUDENT QUOTE /

"I am so happy to be here at QAC and I really enjoy my programme!"

Cerys



Pinewood Campus

Pinewood Campus is located in nearby Woodgate Valley. It provides a high quality and exciting stepping stone into the world of work and is more business-like than educational in its feel. It was purposefully designed to not feel like 'being at College' as Pinewood Campus supports students to move away from being in education and helps them to become more confident with the working world. Dedicated to employment progression, Pinewood is where specific programmes such as Supported Internships are delivered.

QAC uses an external party
to offer truly impartial
information, advice
and guidance.

We hold careers weeks, transition out events and our dedicated transitions team work with our curriculum department and families to support students moving on make positive plans based around their needs and aspirations.

QAC enterprises

QAC Enterprises consists of a range of businesses that raise money for the College.

All Formats Transcription Services

All Formats is one of the UK's leading braille, large print and audio producers, providing commercial specialist accessible print services. A well-respected member of the transcription industry, All Formats is a proud member of UKAAF – UK Association for Accessible Formats.

Advantage Graphite Canes

QAC is the UK distributor of Revolution Carbon Fibre Canes – used and acclaimed worldwide. These canes are lighter in weight and more durable than traditional aluminium canes. We are also able to supply coloured canes upon request.

QAC Sight Village

QAC Sight Village exhibitions are premier UK events showcasing the latest technology, support and services available for people who are blind or visually impaired and those experiencing age related sight problems.

Facilities for Hire

QAC has a range of indoor and outdoor facilities available for hire both on the main campus in Harborne and at our newly refurbished Umberslade Campus.

Facilities are available throughout the year, however, there are restrictions on the times and dates that some of the facilities are available. Enquiries from individuals and organisations that can provide Risk Assessments, Public Liability Insurance and, if working with children or vulnerable adults, a copy of your Safeguarding Policy are welcome.

For more information regarding any of our enterprises please visit **www.qac.ac.uk/enterprises** or call 0121 803 5484.

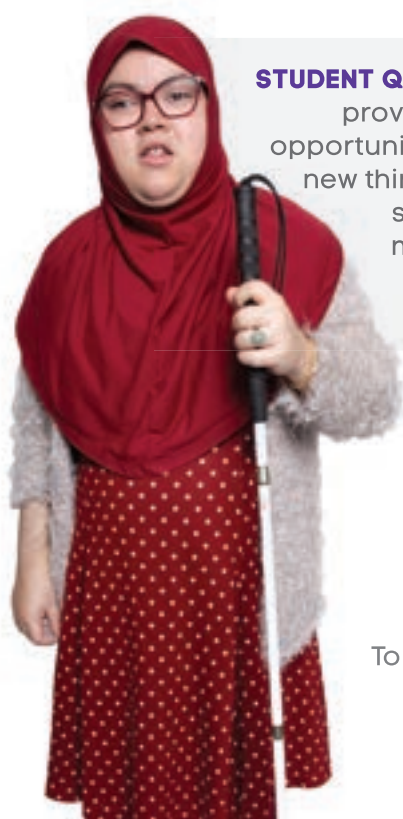


Premier UK events showcasing the latest technology

Outdoor facilities for hire
at our newly refurbished
Umberslade Campus

**QAC runs several
successful businesses**

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STUDENT QUOTE / "QAC has provided me with the opportunity to experience new things and develop skills that will help me to get a job in the future."

Hannah

To see our full Student Curriculum go to
www.qac.ac.uk



**ArtsFest
2023**

**Inspiring
individuals and
making a
difference**



Health, sport and wellbeing

QAC has a wide range of ongoing health, sport and wellbeing initiatives.

Wellbeing Hub

Students value the one-to-one sessions they can attend with mentors with regard to their mental health and wellbeing in the College's Wellbeing Hub. Located on the main site, the Hub allows students the opportunity to meet with mentors and counsellors in a confidential, comfortable and safe environment.

ArtsFest 2023

A variety of workshops were delivered across campus for students to try something new and develop skills during our ArtsFest event, celebrating everything creative **QAC** has to offer. Sessions included badge making, tote bag design, musical sessions, graffiti art, pottery painting and maypole dancing.

QAC student meets The Prince of Wales at St George's Park to mark its 10th anniversary

QAC Powerchair Football Academy student, Jonnie, met some famous faces including HRH The Prince of Wales and England manager Gareth Southgate at St George's Park in Burton upon Trent as part of the National Football Centre's 10th anniversary celebrations.

Jonnie plays for WBA Throstles, one of The Albion Foundation's Powerchair Football teams, and he participated in a face-paced exhibition match for His Royal Highness' visit against the England Powerchair development squad. The Prince showed a keen interest in the sport, chatted to players and was amazed at the skill levels needed to play.



Summer Games

QAC's annual summer games offered students and staff the opportunity to participate in a range of activities and events across three fun-filled days. The theme of the Games was regional towns in Birmingham and the Black Country, with each student group choosing an area that they'd like to research and represent.

STUDENT QUOTE /

"The College is really friendly and it makes me feel happy."

Uthman



Developing new skills





QAC has developed a new range of services for young people with disabilities in the community.



18 Community services

QAC Community Services was nominated for the 'Community Organisation Award for Disability' and 'Diverse Company Award' at the 2023 National Diversity Awards, highlighting the brilliant work and range of services for young people with disabilities in the community provided by the team.

QAC's Community Services are open to any young person, you do not have to have been a **QAC** student previously. Our PA/Support Worker Service provides students, former students and other young people in the community with a personalised package of support via direct payments or a personal budget.

The Hub runs weekly peer support and social groups for clients and students to access such as men's group, LGBTQ+ group, women's group and Games Club.

In addition, **QAC** Community Services also organises 'Come As You Are', an all-inclusive monthly club night hosted at The Night Owl, Birmingham. 'Come As You Are' is a welcoming and safe space for people aged 18+ on the autism spectrum and other support needs, as well as their friends, partners, family and carers to meet, dance and socialise.

All of these services operate within the **QAC** ethos of developing learning and independence.

Through person-centred leisure, work experience, recreational and cultural activities, we aim to support people to not just achieve greater independence but also to create friendship groups and support networks, find new opportunities and to participate as active members of the community.

For more information about **QAC** Community Services please call 0121 803 5475 or email communityservices@qac.ac.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REPORT /
"QAC has a significant positive impact on the communities in which it operates, providing support to a wide range of individuals, groups and good causes."

Fundraising

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported **QAC** in 2022/23.

QAC is a registered charity.

The funds we receive from the government do not fully cover the costs of providing excellent staff, buildings and resources for our students. For this, the College relies upon charitable support.

We rely on donations from Trusts and Foundations to make a lot of our work possible. We also receive gifts in kind and support from volunteers and are pleased to discuss ideas from supporters for fundraising events.

We are always planning fundraising activities and would welcome your support.

For more information

please **call**

0121 803 5487

or **email**

fundraising@qac.ac.uk

To see our full Student Curriculum go to
www.qac.ac.uk

PARENTAL SURVEY /

"**QAC** offers a wide range of activities that my daughter enjoys and she is encouraged to become more independent."



Fundraising is vital for supporting our projects

Contact Us

If you need this guide in an **alternative** format (Braille, large print or audio):
Please **call** 0121 803 5484 or **email** info@qac.ac.uk

www.qac.ac.uk

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