

BELFAST METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

Results of Castlereagh Campus Consultation



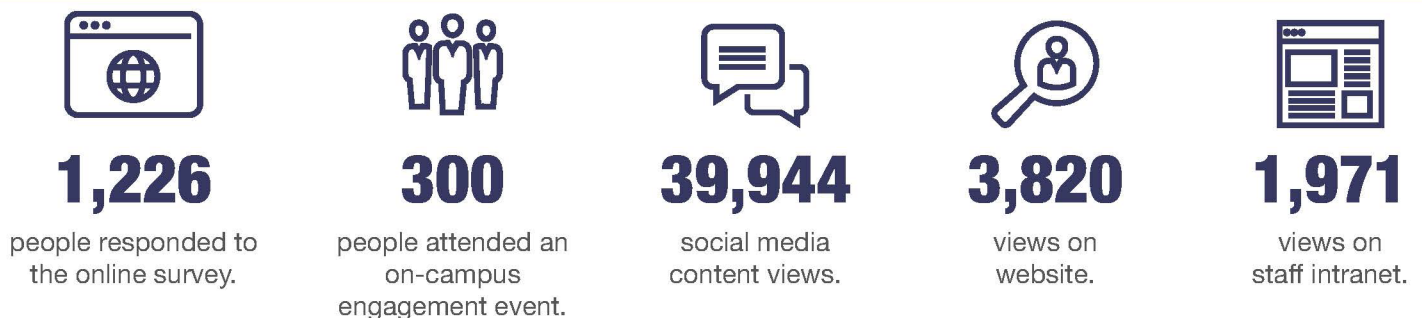
In December 2022, the College's Governing Body approved a draft Strategic Outline Case that addressed the long-term sustainability of Belfast Met's Castlereagh Campus and identified the options available to address the long-term economic and environmental challenges facing the College.

The College facilitated an extensive 14-week public consultation relating to the proposed closure of the Castlereagh Campus which commenced on Monday the 13th of November 2023 and concluded on Friday the 16th of February 2024.

HOW DID WE ENGAGE WITH STAKEHOLDERS?

- Written correspondence to over 200 individuals and businesses.
- Created a dedicated public consultation section on the College website & staff intranet to house all supporting materials.
- Regular posting on all college social media channels.
- Conducted an online consultation survey.
- Hosted face-to-face engagement events for the public, staff, students, politicians, trade union representatives, local businesses and schools.

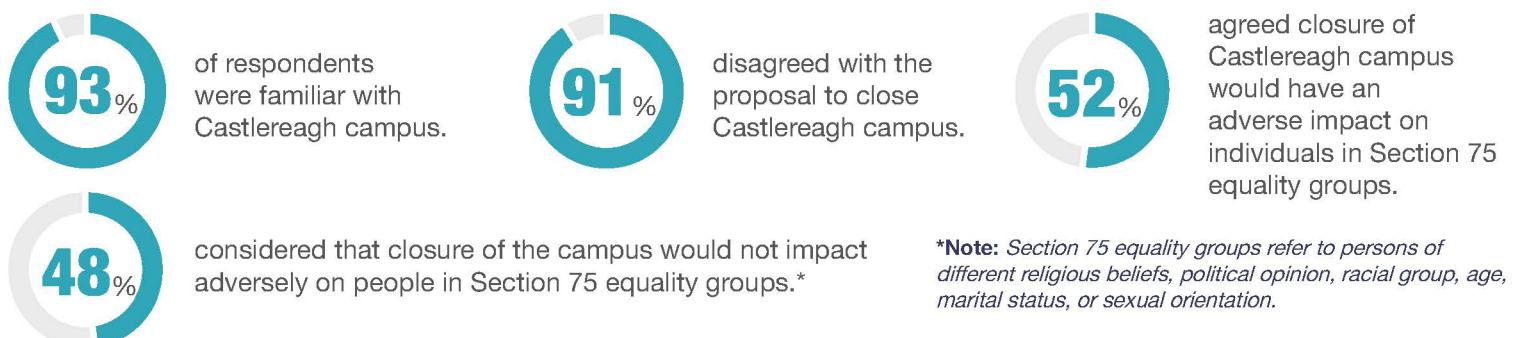
OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT



ENGAGEMENT CHANNELS



SURVEY RESULTS - of those that responded:



***Note:** Section 75 equality groups refer to persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

Following conclusion of the formal public consultation, the College has carefully reviewed and analysed all feedback received via the online survey and our engagement events. The key themes emerging from stakeholders regarding the impact of the potential closure of Castlereagh campus includes:

- **Reducing Access to Education:**
By reducing course offerings at Castlereagh, it would limit educational opportunities in East Belfast and negatively impact Belfast Met's quality of provision by potentially causing overcrowding at other campuses.
- **Increased Travel:**
Closure may result in increased travel time and financial burden for students and staff having to commute to other campuses.
- **Impact on the Community:**
Castlereagh campus is regarded as playing a pivotal role as a hub for the local community and its closure is viewed as threatening the social fabric of East Belfast.
- **Reduction in Course Choice / Training Opportunities:**
Closure may reduce opportunities to undertake specialised courses important for skill development, negatively affecting both job seekers and local industries.
- **Impact on Staff:**
Concerns were raised about how a potential closure may adversely impact staff working at the College, with widespread concerns regarding the potential for job losses amongst teachers and support staff.
- **Impact on Students with Disabilities or Learning Difficulties:**
Castlereagh campus is viewed as providing essential support services for students with disabilities or learning difficulties; closure may limit accessibility to education for these students.
- **Educational Disadvantage:**
Closure may potentially worsen educational underachievement and disadvantage in East Belfast, which in turn may undermine efforts to improve educational outcomes and social mobility.
- **Emotional Attachment & Impact on Wellbeing:**
Stakeholders have an emotional connection to Castlereagh, and closure may adversely impact the local community's identity and mental well-being.
- **Potential Disruptions / Logistical Challenges:**
Relocating courses and staff to other campuses may create logistical difficulties, disrupting the learning environment and potentially diminishing teaching quality.
- **Impact on Local Businesses:**
There were concerns that closure of Castlereagh campus may result in reduced footfall and a loss of revenue for nearby shops, restaurants, and services.

NEXT STEPS



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any further requests for engagement or would like additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us at: executiveadmin@belfastmet.ac.uk