

Peter Symonds College
Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty
Equality Analysis
February 2021



“Prejudice Sucks” is a mural which hangs in the Paul Woodhouse Centre.

The mural was designed and painted by Peter Symonds’ students:

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Section 1: Introduction

The college motto is “Counting in Ones” and illustrates our commitment to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity for all staff and students, as expressed within the college’s Strategic Plan, which states that, “Peter Symonds College is a diverse, inclusive and ambitious community in which each person is valued and encouraged to achieve... Whatever their future aspirations, we nurture our students’ potential and challenge them to develop personally, academically and creatively, and develop a sense of responsibility towards the communities of which they are a part”.

The Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022, includes as a strategic objective:

“To ensure equality of opportunity for staff and students, challenging discrimination and fostering good relations.” (Strategic Objective 6.6)

Over the past fourteen years, the college has analysed the student and staff experience as part of our Equality Action Plan. Initially, this involved impact assessment over a three-year cycle with outcomes reported to the Senior Management Team and Governing Body.

In September 2016 a more focused approach was adopted, identifying key aspects for analysis and specific areas of the student journey that have been identified as an area for further development (e.g.: through complaints, student feedback, the self-assessment process, etc), where there have been new developments (e.g.: an on-line application process in the sixth form college) or where the current climate dictates a refocusing of attention (e.g.: The National Covid-19 lockdown and the Black Lives Matter movements of 2020).

Similarly, regarding staff matters, analysis focuses on specific areas of interest or concern rather than a college-wide review.

The college is committed to consulting with and involving both staff and students in analysing equality and diversity, along with other stakeholders where and if appropriate.

Throughout the year there are surveys of learner views that are analysed by gender, ethnicity and learning difficulty and disability. Focus groups are arranged as and when appropriate in order to examine the student or staff journey or when new initiatives are introduced, as follows:

1. Student Focus Groups (organised by the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator).
2. AHED Focus Groups and online surveys during lockdown (organised by Director of AHED and the Head of Adult Study Support).

Section 2: Equality Information

Profile of the College

Peter Symonds College provides Advanced level and vocational opportunities at levels 2 and 3 in the sixth form college. In 2019-20, there were 4,188 full-time 16-18 year-old students, including 65 boarders.

The Adult and Higher Education Division (AHED) caters mainly for post-19 and a mixture of vocational and non-vocational education and, in 2019-20, had 404 SFA/24+ loans funded adult students, 237 students on higher education programmes and 1,591 enrolments on leisure courses.

As at 31 July 2020, the sixth form site had 254 teachers and 183 support staff. AHED had 71 teachers and 26 support staff. All figures exclude casual and hourly paid staff.

Our staff and student profile in relation to disadvantaged groups:

Students

In 2019-20, a total of 4,829 students were on roll at the college, over both the sixth form college and the adult and higher education sites.

Sixth Form College (SFC)

In 2019-20, 4,188 students were aged 16-18. The gender split was 55% female and 45% male. 15% of learners were from minority ethnic groups. 21% of learners had a learning difficulty or disability.

Adult and Higher Education (AHED)

In 2019-20, of the 432 SFA/24+ loans funded adult learners, 86% were female and 14% male.

The college has an emerging programme of higher education courses. In 2019-20, there were 235 enrolments on HE courses, 77% were female and 23% male.

At AHED, 10% of learners were from minority ethnic groups. 23% of learners had a learning difficulty or disability.

Staff

The majority of our employees are female and this percentage continues to increase as the majority of those appointed are female. Having said that, we appointed a few more men in the past year than we have for a while. Our priority is always to appoint the best candidates, regardless of gender. Less than 2% of our staff declare themselves to have a disability, although a much greater percentage have medical conditions which in fact constitute disabilities under the 2010 Equality Act. We continue to encourage staff to disclose disabilities in the Professional Review process and are rolling out a new DSE assessment tool to help identify and provide support to those whose disabilities may impact their use of IT. Our percentage of staff who come from an ethnic minority remains around 5%.

Our workforce continues to age, with slightly under half being aged 50 or over. We continue to recruit staff across all age groups.

In the last year, we have had a particular focus on the promotion of flexible working arrangements and there has been an increase in job share and similar arrangements. We had already planned for this before the Covid pandemic and the changes have happened independent of the public health situation. However, some staff have been working from home for a more extended period than the rest of the College staff during the pandemic because they are categorised as 'extremely vulnerable' and where their roles allow. It remains to be seen whether this results in a longer-term change to working practices when Covid is behind us.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

The college is committed to gathering as much information as is possible and necessary about the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 to enable us to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. For both students and staff, the college will continue to raise awareness and encourage disclosure of a protected characteristic, promoting an environment where staff and students feel comfortable and have multiple opportunities to disclose.

SFC

Guidance for tutors has been developed in the sixth form college on how to deal with a disclosure of a protected characteristic by a student. A rolling programme of 'one to one' tutorial sessions for all students allow regular opportunities for tutors to discuss individual matters with students and afford greater opportunity for students to disclose.

Equality and diversity is one of the key topics covered in the tutorial programme. Students are introduced to the core values of the College at the very start of the Lower 6 year in a welcome presentation delivered by the Senior Management Team and again in a tutorial session linking the College's ethos to fundamental British values.

More students are now disclosing personal information through their application form and interview process, in particular transgender students.

AHED

There is guidance for AHED tutors on how to deal with a disclosure of a protected characteristic by a student, and how to use the disclosure form. Students have opportunities to disclose personal information through their application forms, the interview process and learning agreements.

Staff

All staff can access, check and update personal information (including protected characteristics) held by the Personnel department via the 'self-service' personnel system via the staff intranet. Also, in the professional review process, there is a prompt on the self-appraisal form to disclose an acquired disability for those who wish to do so. Information on the protected characteristics of applicants for jobs is analysed to identify any trends or points of concern.

The return to work interview procedure enables a focus on those with significant health issues which may be related to a disability. Staff are encouraged to talk to Personnel staff or to their line manager about any adjustments that are required.

Section 3: Equality Analysis - Students

It is our aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations for all, and in particular for those students within the college that can be identified by the nine “protected characteristics” set out in the Equality Act.

In pursuance of these aims, the college looks at the student experience in relation to equal opportunities via student focus group meetings where we consider the student journey.

SFC

For the period 2016-2020, the College set an Equality Objective ‘to improve the outcomes for sixth form students with a mental health difficulty’. A number of actions were taken in respect of this objective including the creation of a HUB staffed by professional mental health advisers in order to provide support for those students with ‘low level’ mental health issues and to provide a triage service for those with more complex needs, referring on to existing college support services provided by Counselling and Study Support if necessary.

A review of this 2016-20 objective showed that it had been successfully achieved:

1: An increased student retention rate: Our objective was to achieve a 10% increase in the target group remaining on course from start of first year to end of second year. For the 2013-15 cohort, 68% of students in this group reached the end of their A level studies. The target for the 2018-20 cohort was a retention rate of 78% for students with an identified mental health difficulty. In 2016-18, the last year for which full data is available, 83.7% of the 43 students with an identified mental health condition completed the full two years of their programmes of study.

2: An increased qualification retention rate: There is no comparative data available for this measure, as since the target was generated the college has moved from one year to two-year courses.

During the 2019-20 academic year, the College set new Equality Objectives for the period 2020-24. Mental Health issues continue to rise amongst the 16-19 age group and there has been an increasing demand for the mental health and wellbeing services that the College provide. It was deemed appropriate therefore to maintain a focus on this area of our provision and to include a new Equality Objective which is ‘to continue to develop and improve support for students with mental health issues’.

A student focus group in December 2019 gave the following feedback:

Advertising of wellbeing and mental health services:

FEEDBACK	ACTIONS
Students knew about, Counselling, Study Support and the HUB. They felt that other students may not be aware of the extent and range of support in College especially re. counselling	More advertising to reach out to all students on the services offered

Accessibility of the wellbeing and mental health services in terms of booking appointments, drop in times and location in the college

FEEDBACK	ACTIONS
a. Students generally are not well informed on how to make appointments especially re. Counselling	More guidance on how to utilise various services
b. There are times when the HUB is closed and Counselling full so that students could not access support in a 'crisis' moment.	Increase drop in times to HUB and have staff available throughout the day to signpost students on to further support, even if not a counsellor.
c. Students knew the location of different services and felt counselling was located in a private area so more confidential and discreet	

Student awareness on where and how to get support:

FEEDBACK	ACTIONS
Students generally know that Student Services would provide information on where and how to get support	None

Accessibility of wellbeing and mental health services for particular groups depending on gender, race, disability, cultural background or sexual orientation

FEEDBACK	ACTIONS
Students were aware that some groups may have more reluctance because of their cultural background and that male students might be reluctant to seek support for fear of 'stigma'.	Gather feedback from a wider sample of students especially BAME & promote importance of mental health for boys

Support and help offered by the various services:

FEEDBACK	ACTIONS
Students felt very well supported and reported that friends had been helped.	None

From the number of students who would benefit from support, how many access the mental health and wellbeing services available in College

FEEDBACK	ACTIONS
Many students did not access support until they hit a crisis point because they did not realise they needed support.	Awareness raising about good mental health

Factors that prevent students from accessing wellbeing support:

FEEDBACK	ACTIONS
Students identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stigma /fear – arising from peer pressure • students not realising they need help • students not wanting to be defined as having a mental health problem 	Promote wellbeing provision is for all. Make students aware that support in college would not go onto their medical records outside of college

Use of Therapy Dogs:

FEEDBACK	ACTIONS
Very beneficial: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good excuse to go to the HUB • Encouraged all students to go along • Particular benefit to boarders who missed their dogs 	None

Review of Actions Identified:

More advertising to reach out to all students on the services offered.

More guidance on how to utilise various services

- Tutorial sessions introduced for all students on the services available and how to access them
- Information shared regularly with students by email and on the intranet during lockdown about College and external services available, how to access them and support offered. This included new services coming on line as a result of lockdown for example support for victims of Domestic Abuse and the NHS 111 24/7 helpline
- New video created for Sept 2020 student induction sessions on the wellbeing services in College

Increase drop in times to HUB and have staff available throughout the day.

- The Hub staffing changed at the start of the 2019-20 academic year and the demand in the Hub was significant with 550 visits in the Autumn term 2019 compared with 412 visits in the same period in 2017 and 396 visits in 2018.
- The drop-in facility was retained but it was not possible to increase this and meet the demand for student 1-2-1 appointments.
- If Hub is only staffed by one member of staff at any time so if they are unavailable students are directed to the Student Services team. They are not mental health professionals so can offer support but not triage and refer on as Hub staff might do.

Gather feedback from a wider sample of students especially BAME & promote importance of mental health for boys

- As a result of lockdown no further student focus groups could be convened during the year but a focus group in December 2020 included several BAME students and a male student.

Awareness raising about good mental health

- Tutorial sessions introduced for both year groups about managing stress and maintaining good mental health

Support during lockdown:

As a result of the National lockdown due to Covid-19, the closure of the College site between March and June 2020 and the move to online platforms for all College activities during this period, many of the normal routines and practices of the College were significantly disrupted.

However, the College's support for vulnerable students continued during this time with some students receiving significantly increased support according to need. Many students saw their mental health deteriorate as the lockdown went on. This support included:

- Online 1-2-1 counselling sessions
- Online 1-2-1 'drop-in' via email to the Hub
- Online 1-2-1 Hub support sessions
- Regular check-ins with pastoral and study support staff for vulnerable students. For some this was once a week, for a minority with significant need this was twice a day
- Online meetings and phone calls with members of the pastoral team (Lead Tutors and Heads of Faculty) for vulnerable students.
- Involvement in online child protection and child in need meetings and liaison with social care and CAMHS

Staff also received additional safeguarding training during this time to alert them to the rise in mental ill-health amongst young people and increase in cases of domestic abuse as a result of the lockdown.

The Black Lives Matter Movement

In support of the Black Lives Matter movement, the College took the following actions:

- A recommended reading list of fiction and non-fiction books and podcasts was sent to students to educate about and combat inequality and racism
- Many of the recommended books were subsequently sourced and purchased by the LRC
- A display celebrating Black History Month was set up in the Learning Resource Centre
- A Google site was created by the Resources department highlighting resources available in the LRC related to racism, and promoting BAME authors, directors and artists
- An online talk by Don John on the Black History of Southampton and racism in the UK today was organised during Black History Month. (Don John is a Race and Diversity consultant who worked for many years as a youth and education officer for the Southampton Council for Race Equality).
- The Staff Equality and Diversity leaflet was updated to include specific reference to BLM
- A Student Equality Forum was established to maximise student involvement in the promotion of EO and D in the college - proposals for student led projects include contributions to the tutorial programme on combating extremism and anti-Semitism.

Student Surveys

Lower 6 Settling in Survey 2019

In the cross-college survey of Lower 6 students undertaken in December 2019 students expressed a high level of satisfaction:

- “I feel safe and secure at College” – 97% of students agreed or strongly agreed
- “The College promotes a culture of acceptance and equality” – 97% of students agreed or strongly agreed

Cross-college survey April 2019, sixth form students:

Because of the extended closure of the College due to the Coronavirus pandemic, a cross-college survey of Upper 6 students in the summer term was not undertaken.

AHED

During 2020, the focus was very much on ensuring accessibility to taught lessons and materials during the first lock down. Feedback from students on Leisure and HE courses was gathered via Survey Monkey. In addition, the number of students with mental health issues continued to be tracked and monitored.

High levels of satisfaction with delivery during lockdown

Leisure and language students were particularly appreciative of delivery of courses online during lockdown with 83% of students agreeing that their online experience was suitable for good teaching and learning.

Student Feedback included:

“It was impressive how quickly this was set up so didn’t feel had missed too much learning, we are working hard and always have homework”

“Our teacher has done a fantastic job. Have looked forward to the class each week and learned loads.”

“The online course worked really well and was an excellent substitute for the face to face course. I would be happy to continue online in the autumn and until life really does go back to normal.”

“On line was OK once we all got used to it! I was really pleased that the course kept going, but I still prefer face to face.”

A similar level of HE students (83%) agreed that the delivery of lectures by Zoom supported their learning during lockdown. The number of HE students accessing study support during the lockdown period increased by 36% compared to the same time period in the previous year.

Examples of adaptable and flexible delivery to meet student needs:

- Recording of ZOOM lectures and voice overs for power points to enable key workers or students with children at home to access at a time convenient to them
- Additional one to one tutorials for underperforming students or students suffering from mental health issues as a result of lock down. This resulted in at least 4 HE students completing the year when they were likely to drop out.
- Increased accessibility to 1:1 student support tutorials for students as a result of everyone having to embrace online platforms and increasing familiarity with using them.

Student Comments in response to “What has worked well during lock down?” included:

“The tutors have been very motivated and always available for support”.

“The 15 minutes check in’s in the final term I felt we’re a massive benefit. One of these combined with a formative would be perfect”.

“Zoom lectures have worked well as for theory-based lessons do not necessarily need to be in College”.

“Supportive and understanding environment. Questions always answered. We have been able to cover material, maintain contact and continue with the course”.

“Zoom sessions as a lesson using breakout rooms and going through the PowerPoint together has been massively helpful, I feel using zoom next year for if there is someone who cannot make the session for a proper reason could be helpful”.

“Continuing with the time slot that we were meant to be at uni. Consistency. Having power points as well as the sessions have been a real help”.

“I have enjoyed learning like this although it is a challenge to stay motivated at times. I Have preferred having the pre-recorded power points as opposed to Zoom sessions as I feel like I can concentrate more and access it at any given point in the week. I feel the Zoom Q&A sessions with the pre-recorded power points are great as it allows more time to study but also get that support if there are any questions”.

“The early upload of videos and resources has made learning a little bit more flexible and easier to fit around any other commitments and challenge”.

Mental Health:

Feedback from students is that not all are aware that counselling can be accessed at AHED and further research revealed not all staff were fully aware. This information has now been included in the tutor briefing slides for all students. Student felt that teachers and tutors were very sympathetic and made adaptations as result of any mental health issues.

Monitoring the attendance of students with a mental health issue (including low level anxiety and emotional difficulties) This was achieved through study support creation of a list of students in this category. In addition, registry notify study support that a student has declared mental health difficulties on the enrolment form, they are added to our basic Excel Active Students spreadsheet and they are sent a Medical Declaration Form. Once that is

returned and the severity of the issue assessed, if necessary the Student is added to the Students of Concern list on the G drive. Centre Staff, HoC's and Duty managers are able to access this password-protected list.

Some students do not declare their mental health difficulties at enrolment, but later via the Confidential Study Support & Health Declaration form or verbally to a Tutor. When that happens the same process as described above is carried out.

Of the students on the concern list regarding mental health over this period (12 students) 9 completed all their qualifications, 1 suspended their Access to HE programme and has returned in 20-21. One student failed maths, another left their foundation degree programme and further student who was supported extensively by staff during lockdown also left their foundation degree programme.

Support for students with mental health issues Distressed students receive some immediate Mental Health First Aid Support from the Head of Study Support or from other members of the management team/Duty Manger. The Head of Study support holds a Mental Health First Aid qualification.

Students can be referred for Counselling at AHED via Karen Hough Head of Curriculum for Counselling.

Section 4: Equality Analysis - Staff

The Director of Personnel & Corporate Services provides an annual monitoring report to Governors that analyses staff data by certain protected characteristics. Because of the extended closure of the College due to the Coronavirus pandemic this was not completed for the year 2018-19. We publish an annual Gender Pay Gap Report which includes plans to help us address any issues. The GPGR is a legal requirement and there is currently discussion at national level as to whether there will also be a requirement for an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report.

Section 5: Data Analysis

Each year for the Self-Assessment process the Deputy Principal (Quality) provides data on recruitment, retention and success rates by gender at individual course level and has provided a facility to explore module results (as well as end of year results) by gender, income quartile, disability and ethnicity in both raw and value-added terms. College performance is routinely examined by gender, ethnicity, and disability and learning difficulty and reported to the senior management team and Governors.

SFC

The analysis presented here looks at two key questions about student performance:

- Of those students who start A level or BTEC courses with us, how many last the full two years of the programme of study
- Of those students who start studying A levels or BTEC courses with us, what proportion go on to successfully achieve three or more A level or BTEC qualifications

The analysis is based on identifying an expected level of performance which is adjusted according to the prior attainment of the students and then examining actual performance for that group of students.

Figure One: Retention over two years, by equality and diversity category 2018-20

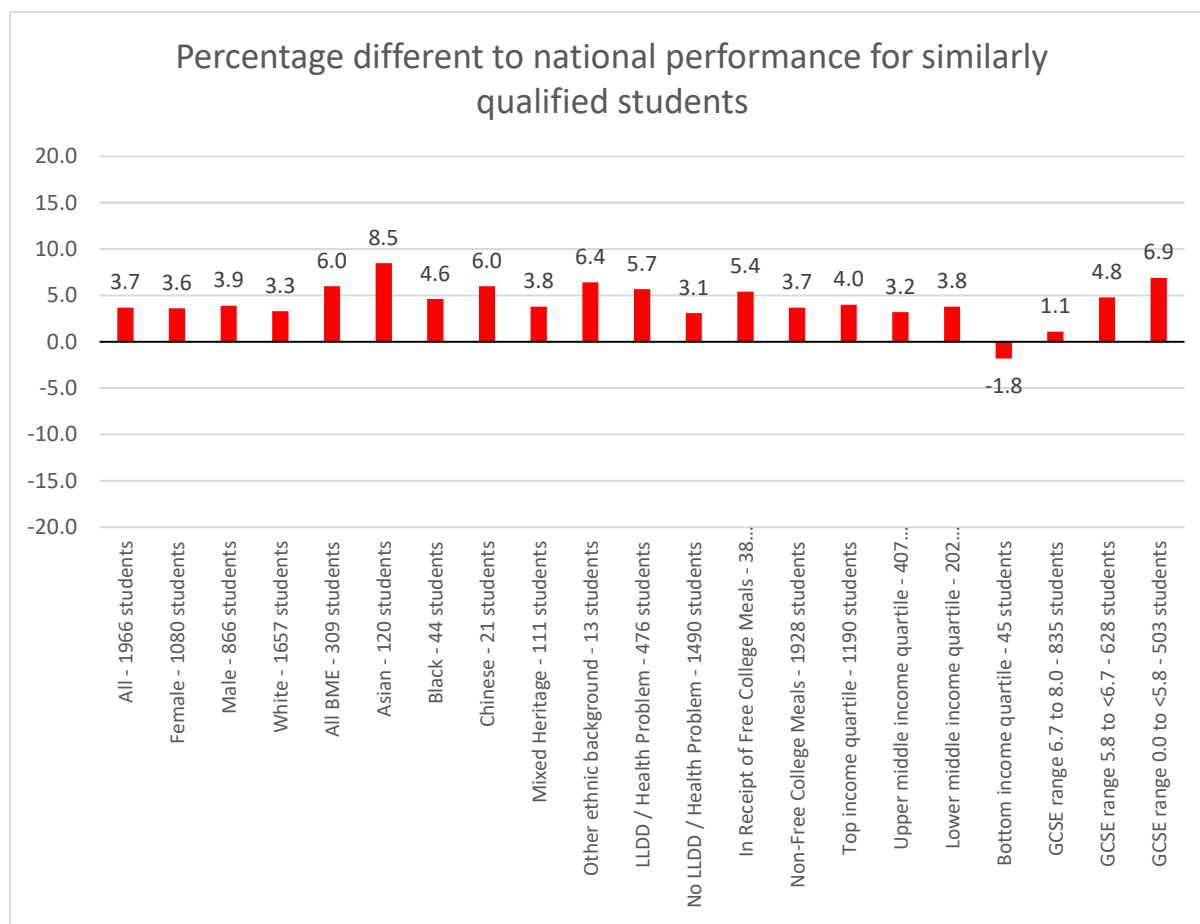
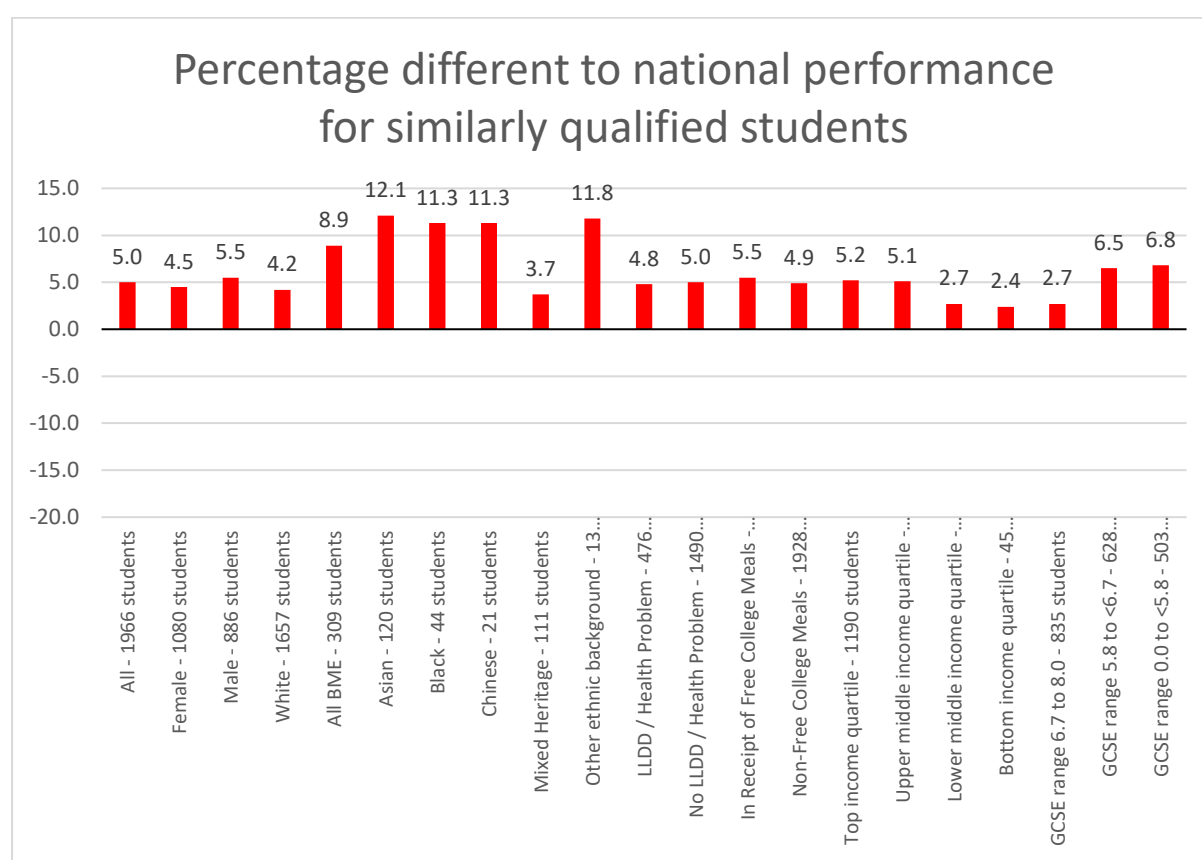


Figure One shows that for almost every category the College does remarkably well. Overall, 3.7% more students get to the end of a two-year programme of study than would be expected nationally – an extra 72 students across the college. Overall, this means that 92.5% of students who start a level 3 programme at the College successfully complete their programme of study.

Retention provides a very powerful measure of performance, as it reflects the quality of recruitment, admissions and induction, the quality of support and the quality of teaching.

For the sole group that performs less well than is typical we have to be cautious in over-interpretation. Students in the bottom income quartile number 45, so each student represents 2%. If one more student had been retained from this group the figure would have been positive.

Figure Two: Proportion of students achieving three A levels or equivalent, by equality and diversity category 2018-20



The analysis of the proportion of students achieving three A levels or equivalent in **Figure Two** echoes that of retention in **Figure One**. Overall, 5% more students achieve three or more A levels or equivalent than would be expected of similarly qualified students nationally. Performance is above national standards for every category.

AHED

The analysis of performance in the adult education division of the college is less reliable than that for 16-18 students, largely because the numbers in each category are so small. The one feature that is worthy of note is that of participation: in common with the adult education sector as a whole, female students are over-represented.

Section 6: EO Audits

Equal Opportunities Audits are embedded within the College's self-assessment processes in both the sixth form college and the adult & higher education division. These identify areas of good practice as well as areas for development.

SFC

The following are taken from SAR reports completed in June 2020 as examples that reflect the further development of best practice in the SFC with regard to equality and diversity.

Art & Design

- Re-evaluate all art assignments to ensure they reflect a broad cross section of society/artist role models.

Business A level

- The BLM movement has highlighted the need to further emphasise successful businesses and leaders who are from BME groups. This means we will go through our resources and ensure that there is a focus on BME businesses and people where possible.

Careers

- Continues to support students identified by Study Support as having Education, Health & Care Plans through 1-1 appointments and by attending all annual reviews in the summer term.
- Provide targeted support to identified students via email and 1-1 appointments (NCOP, Free School Meals, Vulnerable, in receipt of college bursary, widening participation with Oxbridge support)

Enrichment Department

- Work with the specific enrichment activities to promote the Black Lives Matter movement e.g. Afro Caribbean Society, Christian Union, Voices for Change, Film and TV Documentaries and Debating Society.

Examinations Department

- Work closely with Study Support to address exam and other assessment related issues in respect of students with particular needs.

Law

- Explore the issues raised by the BLM movement and raise the profile of institutional racism in relation to the criminal justice system
- Raise students' awareness and understanding of discrimination in relation to all protected characteristics.
- Highlight the need for diversity in the legal profession.

Pastoral & Tutorial Support

- To continue to provide excellent support for those students with mental health difficulties but improve on early identification of students in need so that early intervention can be put in place.
- To develop the promotion of Equality and Diversity topics and events in the College, as well significant calendar dates. To raise awareness of issues around racism and racial inequality as highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement.

Politics

- Look at ways at raising confidence of girls in politics; be more proactive in getting women speakers in as role models

Student Services

- To continue to promote Free College Meals and the Support Fund to ensure that no student is unable to succeed at College due to their financial background. This may be particularly important this year with the financial pressures caused by job losses due to the pandemic.
- To be more visible in our support for E&D activities. More obvious support for the Black Lives Matter agenda as described above.

Study Support

- To develop the expertise of LSA team in relation to students with ADHD

AHED

Within the AHED curriculum SAR process in 2020, feedback was gathered on the equality and diversity priorities for 2020-21 These include:

Access to HE

- Ensure that the units of work in each subject specification take Equality & Diversity into account. Issues relating to Black Lives Matter lend themselves particular to subjects delivered on the Humanities diploma, but tutors of all subjects should be aware of the importance of these issues
- Compile documentation listing all students with Equality & Diversity needs to be accessible for tutors from the start of the course, to be updated throughout the course
- Appreciate not all students can work as effectively at home so invite them into the college on specific days during holidays to enable them to have a quiet space in which to work

Counselling

Issues of equality and diversity permeate the field of Counselling and forms part of the curriculum at all levels. Priorities are:

- To ensure we are up to date with regard to legal requirements regarding this issue e.g. knowledge of the most important acts;
- To remain au fait with changes in the BACP Ethical Framework regarding the protected characteristics;
- To actively promote these issues and to ensure that the needs of individual students are met liaising with the Head of Student Support as appropriate.

Education & Child care

- Tailor classes and placements to meet individual needs across all the qualifications we offer.
- Continue to work around employer constrictions so that all students have equality of opportunity to access teaching, support and guidance.
- Adopt a flexible approach to delivery regarding meeting individual needs in respect of maths and English functional skills.

GCSE

- Ensure all students are able to access the full curriculum. Building on the previous years' experience further develop students support inside and outside lessons.
- Consider if students who only have a mobile phone can be supplied with a college Chrome book.

Hair and Beauty

- Increase opportunities to relate Equality and Diversity issues to best salon practice e.g. where an exemplar video is used ensure focussed is on more than one skin and hair type is included.
- Continue to develop Under 19s Google Classroom site have to cover British values including tolerance, faiths and beliefs and mutual respect.

Higher Education

- Continued development of online provision to ensure a balance between face to face and online taught sessions, which meets student needs and concerns as a result of the pandemic and current/future lockdown constraints.

Study Support

- Supporting students on a one to one basis using SKYPE or Zoom. Feedback from students is that this is effective and resulting in improved standard of work submitted by students.

Section 7: Equality Objectives 2020-2024

Last year the College reviewed its Equality Objectives and set the following new objectives for the period April 2020-24. An action plan in relation to these objectives will be available on the college website: <https://www.psc.ac.uk/content/eo>

Equality Objectives for the Sixth Form College (Students)

1. To continue to develop and improve support for students with mental health issues
2. To improve the attainment of students in receipt of Free College Meals
3. To encourage aspiration in female students

Equality Objective for the Adult and Higher Education Division (Students)

1. To continue to develop and improve support for students with mental health issues

Equality Objective for all College staff

1. To enhance opportunities for flexible working