

Peter Symonds College



Equality Objectives 2020-24

Published March 2020 in accordance with the Equality Act 2010,
the Public Sector Equality Duty and our specific duties

Section A: Introduction

These are the third set of Equality Objectives published by the College. It is our aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations for those students and staff within the college that can be identified by the nine “protected characteristics” set out in the Act. We recognise that inequalities may be inter-related, so staff and student experiences may not be limited to any one of the equalities dimensions.

The college motto is “Counting in Ones” and illustrates our commitment to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity for all staff and students, as reflected within the college’s Strategic Plan. The most recent Strategic Plan 2019-2022 states as a strategic objective:

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

Each year the College publishes an Equality Analysis for the previous academic year. From our most recent analysis, the following objectives have been drawn.

Section B: 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

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

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

Section D: Equality Objective for all College staff

1. To enhance opportunities for flexible working

Section B:

Equality Objectives for the sixth form college (students)

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

Context: In A level examinations, students at College with an identified learning difficulty or disability (LLDD) performed fractionally less well than their peers at the college, but exactly in line with LLDD students nationally. Students with social and emotional difficulties perform broadly in line with other students, but students with an identified mental health difficulty (173 starts) complete only two-thirds of their courses, and perform around four tenths of a grade per entry below other students in final examinations. This group tends to perform poorly nationally.

Actions	Measurable outcomes/ success criteria	Timescale and milestones	Action by	Monitoring Evaluating Reporting	Resource and other implications	Link to protected groups & other comments
To improve communication to relevant staff about support required for, and expectations of, students with MH issues	Records of intervention on student record. Online documents accessible to relevant staff	Ongoing – to be reviewed July 2021	Deputy Principal (W&P), Head of Student Welfare, Head of Study Support, Heads of Faculty	Through HoF's guidance meetings and safeguarding team meetings.	Relies on the development of an online confidential records system sitting alongside the student record	Students with disabilities including mental health
To review the Fitness to Study policy including return to study protocol for students after a critical incident and implement this consistently across faculties	Updated fitness to study policy and protocol. Records of implementation of policy on student record and on safeguarding records.	Policy and protocol to be reviewed and launched by July 2021. Implementation to be reviewed on ongoing basis.	Deputy Principal (W&P), Head of Study Support	Through HoF's guidance meetings and safeguarding team meetings.	None	Students with disabilities including mental health
To explore the use of group sessions in the hub to encourage student peer support	Level of student attendance and positive feedback from students	July 2021. Strategy to be reviewed on an ongoing basis	Wellbeing Coordinators, Head of Student Welfare	Hub annual report	None	Students with disabilities including mental health

To adapt the therapies on offer at the Hub to meet students' specific needs.	Record of student interventions and positive student feedback	January 2024	Wellbeing Co-ordinators, Head of Student Welfare	Hub annual report	None	Students with disabilities including mental health
To establish a 'regulation corner' in the Hub to encourage students to self-regulate and self-soothe	Level of student use and positive student feedback	July 2022	Wellbeing Coordinators, Head of Student Welfare	Hub annual report	Some minor outlay on resourcing the corner	Students with disabilities including mental health
To develop links with external agencies to broaden the offer of support available to students on College site, for example with the newly commissioned Education Mental Health Practitioner and Social prescribers	Meetings completed and reports of outcomes. Records of student appointments with external agencies on site	Ongoing	Deputy Principal (W&P), Head of Student Welfare, Head of Study Support, Heads of Faculty	Annual safeguarding report. Meetings – guidance, safeguarding and student services	None	Students with disabilities including mental health
To find MHFA trainers with a view to offering this to all front line safeguarding staff as well as Lead Tutors and Resident House Parents	All frontline staff completed MHFA training	Training providers to be investigated by July 2020 with a view to all staff being trained by January 2024	Deputy Principal (W&P)	Annual safeguarding report. Staff training records	This will require funding either from staff development budget or other existing budgets	Students with disabilities including mental health
To provide information on relevant AHED courses available to frontline MH staff	Successful completion of course/s by frontline staff	July 2020 in the first instance and ongoing thereafter.	Deputy Principal (W&P)	Annual safeguarding report. Staff training records	Courses can be provided FOC for staff or at reduced cost. To be assessed on a case by case basis.	Students with disabilities including mental health
To develop closer links between Study Support, Heads of Faculty and Lead Tutors including joint meetings to agree student support	Evidence of practice being embedded.	July 2021 in the first instance and ongoing thereafter.	Head of Study Support, Heads of Faculty	Records of joint meetings on student records.	Staff time	Students with disabilities including mental health

To explore the possibility of offering drop in provision at Study Support	Level of student attendance. Positive student feedback	July 2021 in the first instance with a view to this being embedded by January 2024	Head of Study Support	Records of student attendance	None	Students with disabilities including mental health
To work with the Anna Freud centre to measure and analyse the impact of interventions in the Hub	Template for impact analysis created	January 2024	Deputy Principal (W&P), Wellbeing Coordinators	Hub annual report	None	Students with disabilities including mental health

2. To improve the attainment of students in receipt of Free College Meals

Context: In all, there were 54 A level entries in 2019 from students in receipt of free college meals (FCM). They performed round a quarter of a grade per entry below other students (-0.23). FCM students are significantly less likely to complete their courses than other students, with 30% of the 75 enrolments not completed.

Action	Measurable outcomes/ success criteria	Timescale and milestones	Action by	Monitoring Evaluating Reporting	Resource and other implications	Link to protected groups & other comments
To conduct individual interviews with FCM students to identify any barriers to learning and possible additional support needed	Improved retention of FCM students	July 2021	Head of Student Welfare	Records of meetings and barriers identified.	Staff time in conducting interviews	
To identify whether there are issues for FCM students in accessing the curriculum including resources, printing etc.	Improved retention of FCM students	July 2021	Head of Student Welfare	Records of meetings and barriers identified	None	
To provide resources for FCM students to address issues identified above e.g. tablets/ laptops or increased printer credit	Positive student feedback. Increased attainment of FCM students	January 2024	Deputy Principal (W&P), Head of Student Welfare	Records of equipment provided as required	Financial implication in providing IT equipment	
To ensure all FCM students have at least one interview with a Level 6 careers advisor during their time at College	Improved retention of FCM students	July 2021 and Ongoing thereafter	Head of Student Welfare, Head of Careers	Records of student careers interviews.	Staff time in conducting interviews	
To invite FCM students To SUN events	Improved retention of FCM students	July 2021 and Ongoing thereafter	Head of Careers, SUN coordinator, SUN progression mentor	Careers reports and SAR	None	

To identify students who receive FCM on the student record and ensure teachers can access this data	Improved retention and attainment of FCM students	July 2021	Deputy Principal (W&P)	Evidence of FCM on student record	None	
---	---	-----------	------------------------	-----------------------------------	------	--

3. To encourage aspiration in female students

Context: The College's male students make better progress from their GCSE starting points than female students. The gap is 0.20, suggesting one in five entries from a male student secures a grade higher than a similarly qualified female student. In part this reflects a national pattern where male students capture some of the ground they lost at GCSE. Our gender gap is a little wider than the typical national gap which is around 0.10 – a tenth of a grade per entry. Note that the gap indicates that our male students are over-performing, rather than our female students underperforming. Male students are slightly more likely to complete their courses.

In terms of university progression, female students and male students are equally likely to progress to university, but male students are 2% more likely to secure a place at the Russell Group than similarly qualified female students.

Action	Measurable outcomes/ success criteria	Timescale and milestones	Action by	Monitoring Evaluating Reporting	Resource and other implications	Link to protected groups & other comments
To support the Business Department in their objective to improve outcomes for female students, identifying possible speakers for College visits.	Record of speakers having visited the College. Improved outcomes for female BS students.	July 2024	Head of Careers along with the Business Department	BS department SAR's. Careers reports and SAR	None	Female students
To communicate information about relevant events and opportunities to targeted groups of female students and to staff. To encourage female students to attend events about careers in which women are under-represented.	Increased number of female students progressing to Russell group universities. Reduced gender achievement gap.	Ongoing. To be reviewed July 2022	Head of Careers	Student achievement and progression data.	None	Female students
Create a notice board of destinations of high achieving female alumni	Increased number of female students progressing to Russell group universities.	July 2022	Head of Careers with the Marketing Department	Student achievement and progression data.	Staff time	Female students

	Reduced gender achievement gap.					
Include talks in whole Cohort careers events promoting women in aspirational fields and / or those in which women are under-represented.	Increased number of female students progressing to Russell group universities. Reduced gender achievement gap.	Ongoing. To be reviewed July 2022	Head of Careers	Careers reports. Student achievement and progression data.	None	Female students
To increase the number of female speakers visiting the College to deliver talks on aspirational progression paths	Increased number of female students progressing to Russell group universities. Reduced gender achievement gap.	Ongoing. To be reviewed July 2022	Head of Careers	Careers reports. Student achievement and progression data.	none	Female students

Section C:

Equality Objective for AHED (Adult and Higher Education Division):

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

Context: Data suggests that 1 in 10 young people suffer from mental health difficulties. While the incidence and severity of mental health issues have increased, the resource for external support through the NHS has decreased significantly. We know that our mental health services do not meet student demand and although some students at AHED can access support at the main college site (16-19 and Access students), the location remains a barrier for them. A focus on developing and improving support for these students therefore remains an area of focus for AHED.

**This does not include the students who needed low level support and reassurance for anxiety, stress or the like which does not currently get recorded.*

Actions	Measurable outcomes/ success criteria	Timescale and milestones	Action by	Monitoring Evaluating Reporting	Resource and other implications	Link to protected groups & other comments
To utilise students on counselling courses to provide peer support for students	Level of student use and positive student feedback	Ongoing. To be reviewed July 2022	Director of Adult Education, Head of Learning Support (AHED)	AHED reports and SAR - records of students recruited, trained and peer support provided.	Staff time	Students with disabilities including mental health
To offer workshops for students on mental health issues including anxiety	Level of student use and positive student feedback	Ongoing. To be reviewed July 2022	Director of Adult Education, Head of Learning Support (AHED)	AHED reports and SAR - records of workshops offered and attendance	Staff time	Students with disabilities including mental health

Section D:

Equality Objective for College staff

2. Enhance opportunities for flexible working

Context: flexible working takes a number of forms but most commonly a staff member asks to reduce their hours of work due to their own illness/disability or because of caring responsibilities for others who often have a disability. The College has granted many such requests and the trend has accelerated over recent years due to the ageing of our workforce and increased life expectancy of elderly relatives of our staff.

Employees have the right to request flexible working subject to certain conditions. A recent Bill which would have compelled employers to advertise jobs as open to flexible working (subject to conditions) failed to make it through Parliament. However, we will review our employment policies to change the emphasis in favour of flexible working and to reflect the fact that we are open to consider different ways of working.

Actions	Measurable outcomes/ success criteria	Timescale and milestones	Action by	Monitoring Evaluating Reporting	Resource and other implications	Link to protected groups & other comments
Review College policies as they come up for renewal to change emphasis in favour of flexible working	Policies amended (where necessary) by due dates. Increased numbers of flexible working arrangements.	January 2022 (many policies are reviewed on a two-year cycle)	Director of Personnel & Corporate Services/SMT		Staff time. Additional administration in relation to job shares etc.	Staff with disabilities. Staff with caring responsibilities (potential for associative discrimination).