



# **DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION AND BELONGING REVIEW 2022-23**

**SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE  
AND STROUD COLLEGE**

**SUPPORTER: WECA EMPLOYER CHARTER**

**POSITIVE ABOUT DISABILITY ACCREDITATION**

## OUR VISION AND MISSION

'To be outstanding by standing out'

We positively change peoples' lives and add value to the social and economic wellbeing of our communities. We do this by providing high quality, innovative, accessible education and training in a friendly culture of mutual respect and support.

## BEING YOU @ SGS

It is our focus to help you find your place in the world and we stay true to that vision by celebrating the things that make us all different.

The world is a better place when we can accept our differences, include everyone, value, trust and be kind to one another. We hope that you share our values and we want to know more about you and your values, traditions and culture— We only develop our full potential when we bring our true selves to work and study @ SGS.

## OUR VALUES

We provide an essential service for our communities and will act with honesty, respect, responsibility and care.'

### HONESTY & RESPECT

- We recognise and uphold the traditions and cultures of our learners and staff
- We treat each individual with integrity and dignity
- We listen to the voices of our learners and staff
- We will be a trusted member of all our alliances
- We will be a source of pride to our local community

### RESPONSIBILITY

- We promote inclusivity for all, with no barriers to enrolment or achievement
- We celebrate success
- We provide effective leadership
- We develop a well-informed and empowered workforce
- We are a learning organisation

### CARE

- We place the learner at the centre of everything we do
- We ensure a safe environment
- We provide good health for all
- We understand and exceed our learners' expectations
- We support and encourage each learner to succeed, progress and achieve their ambitions.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. To be recognised as an outstanding college by enhancing the quality of experience we provide for all learners.
2. To ensure we invest and develop our staff to support our plan.
3. To be visionary and innovative in providing education opportunities by anticipating and meeting demand through our responsive partnerships with stakeholders.

4. To provide a sustainable educational training environment which is equipped for the delivery of high-quality learning.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING 2023**

**Digitisation, decarbonisation, along with equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging, are ‘golden threads’ throughout all of the strategies and plans at SGS and this is demonstrated further within our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy. We are proud of the diversity of our student and staff communities and we continue to ensure that this commitment is embedded with in all of our plans and strategies.**

**Below are some examples of the outstanding work which has been undertaken this year to advance equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College.**

- Further development of our Inclusion Committee, to which all staff and students have been invited to join. The Committee includes 40% of our Executive Leadership Team, student representatives and representation of staff from all parts and levels of the College. Our Inclusion Committee reports to our Senior Leadership Team and makes recommendations to advance equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging at the College and is supported by various sub-committees including our LGBTQIA+ Forum and our REACH forum (Racial Equality and Cultural Heritage), and other groups such as our Allies and Menopause support groups.
- Roll out of the universal right for individuals to be accurately identified according to their gender, orientation or cultural heritage, along with the right to have their chosen names and pronouns respected.
- Roll out of additional resources and mentoring to support those individuals who may be gender neutral, fluid or transitioning within the College’s Community.
- Investment in bespoke training initiatives to cascade best practice in dealing effectively with unconscious bias in teaching, learning and assessment; fully integrating and embedding British values as well as handling controversial discussions and difficult conversation with confidence.
- Further strides in decolonising our curriculum, with the support of our REACH forum, recognising that historical hierarchical narratives can adversely affect the experience of our students and the knowledge base of our programmes. We are addressing this imbalance with positive action relating to library resourcing, curriculum design and through student consultation.
- Refinements to our regular and ongoing reporting on key groups who are not making as much progress as their peers, with clear recommendations to the curriculum, regarding those groups we are concerned about; with regular feedback from them regarding how their outcomes are going to improve.
- Re-affirming our commitment to be recognised as a ‘Totally Inclusive College’ by 2025, through commissioning an audit of our inclusivity by external consultants, providing actions and a road map to support the achievement of this aim.
- Re-investment in the Together-all system to support the mental wellbeing of our community by providing a safe space where individuals can support each other anonymously to improve mental health and well-being.

- Reviewing our curriculum with the support of local and regional employers and other stakeholders to develop a curriculum offer that enables all students and apprentices, irrespective of their personal circumstances and starting points, to achieve and make progress towards their chosen career.
- The development and implementation of a new Behaviour Policy to better foster a culture where everyone is valued, safe, respectful and prepared to demonstrate the College's core values.
- Reaffirming our commitment to zero-tolerance to bullying and harassment through our learner charters.
- Exceeding 4 of our 6 Access and Participation targets. Including completely eliminated continuation gaps between mature and young students and the continuation gap between disabled students and those with no known disability. Eliminating these gaps 2 years earlier than our stated aim is an excellent reflection of the determination and effort the team has put in to meet these ambitious targets.
- Development and implementation of a new policy and toolkit to support the integration and support for learners who have additional educational needs and for those who are neurodivergent. SGS College is proud to have retained our Communications Access accreditation.
- The SGS Higher Education Website is now complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at the AA level. Meaning that it is now fully accessible for individuals with: Vision impairment, ADHD, Cognitive disability and Motor difficulties. It is also user friendly for individuals prone to seizure.
- Currently the main College website is partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard and we are working towards achieving AA status and will be publishing our 'Road Map' shortly.
- All of the College's websites are compatible with Screen, Screen magnifiers, Speech recognition software and third-party content support and all benefit from the following functionality:
  - Alternative Text: We provide alternative text for images, enabling screen readers and text-to-speech software to describe visual content to users.
  - Keyboard Navigation: You can navigate our website using just a keyboard, making it easier for users who cannot use a mouse.
  - Colour Contrast: We have partially ensured adequate colour contrast to improve readability for users with visual impairments. See 'Road Map' for further details.
  - Text Resizing: You can adjust the text size on our website to suit your preferences.

## A WHOLE COLLEGE APPROACH

**South Gloucestershire and Stroud College has deployed a range of cross-college approaches, systems and reports to ensure that we continue to meet and exceed the aims within our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy.**

- College students account for 5% of the total membership of the College's Inclusion committee, helping to shape our ambition and support improvement in equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

- Our Further and Higher Education Student Involvement Strategy provides students and apprentices with the opportunity for their voices to be heard and responded to. Additionally, the College remains committed to providing our students with channels to make their views known including through internal and external surveys and our 'Talk to Us' address.
- The College's staff and parents' forum provides opportunities for individual and groups to engage with us so that we may better understand, and thereby by improve, their experience of education at SGS.
- We engage with Community and Employer Stakeholders to understand how industry is changing and the knowledge, skills and behaviours that our future graduates, will need to succeed in the workplace. We update and adapt our policies and our curriculum regularly to ensure that all our learners and apprentices are gaining the skills they will need for the future, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.
- In addition to providing representation, the Students' Union provides students with a variety of opportunities to belong, by taking-part in a variety of clubs, trips and societies.
- Our new student Behaviour Policy, along with our staff policies, communicate clearly our expectations for behaviour and conduct. These expectations include a focus on restorative practice, recognition and reward.
- Our Higher Education Access and Participation Plan along with our Students and Partners policy provides a specific focus on improving equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in, and progress from our higher education courses.

## A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

**At South Gloucestershire and Stroud College we are proud to welcome all those who wish to join us to further their education and improve their life chances. There is a place for everyone at SGS.**

- Additionally, there are dedicated quiet rooms available for prayer and reflection. These are available to both staff and students to use and anyone wishing to access them, they can do so by contacting a campus reception.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

**Our Inclusion Committee provides the focus for our whole College approach to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. The Committee meets each half-term and members include governors, senior leaders, staff, students and external stakeholders (where appropriate). Representation at the Committee covers all functional areas of the College and all provision types.**

**Our Inclusion Committee seeks to recruit and maintain representation which reflects the community that it serves by regularly reviewing its makeup and membership. Whilst 40% of the College's Executive Management Team are full members of the Committee, the Committee is structured to reflect the collegiate nature of a mature education provider and therefore the Chairpersonship rotates regularly.**

- Our Inclusion Committee provides expertise, through lived experience, and oversight of equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging across the College.

- Supports the setting, review and monitoring of the College's equality objectives.
- Works collegiately to ensure policy, procedures and strategies are impact assessed and reviewed to ensure they do not discriminate or disadvantage any individuals or groups with protected characteristics.
- Ensures that the College regularly collects and analyses staff and student data in relation to recruitment, retention, achievement, progress and progression.
- Ensures that application, admission, enrolment and assessment regulations, policies and procedures do not disadvantage or discriminate and recommend reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Supports the College's Estates Directorate to ensure that resources and equipment are accessible and, where appropriate, that reasonable adjustments have been made to enable parity of experience for different groups of individuals.
- Contributes to and reviews the Annual Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Review prior to submission to Governors.
- Supports and provides feedback on how curriculum teams are decolonising their learning resources and developing learning strategies and resources which celebrate and promote equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging.
- Ensures that every member of the College community has a range of opportunities to raise issues, ask questions or voice concerns relating to equality, diversity and inclusion; and therefore, they can be confident of an appropriate response from the College.

## OUR COMMUNITY

**At South Gloucestershire and Stroud College we are interested in our people and the communities that we serve. Understanding our local and regional community and context helps us to identify the barriers and challenges, and to prioritise our focus. Some of the key headline information about our region includes:**

- According to the 2020 indices of multiple deprivation, there are 46 lower layer super output areas (LSOAs), within the region served by South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, that feature within the 20% most deprived areas nationally in at least one domain; and this is an increasing trend. In 2015, 39 LSOAs featured within the 20% most deprived areas nationally whilst the figure was 26 in 2007 and 21 in 2004.
- During the 2021-22 academic year it was estimated that 4,411 (8.3%) of children under the age of 16 in South Gloucestershire were living in low-income households, many of whom struggled through the pandemic year to access education online or remotely, compounding gaps in foundation knowledge and skills. Nearly half of all households in South Gloucestershire (47% or 54,400), were deprived in at least one dimension or measure of household deprivation and it is estimated that more than 20% of children within our region are living in poverty. (From the latest verifiable data, rates are highest in Patchway and Kings Chase where one in five children are living in poverty).

- The law requires that all young people continue in education or training until at least their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. During the 2021-22 academic year 1.9% of 16-17-year olds, within our region, were not in education, employment or training, which compares favourably to the national (England) average of 2.9%.
- By the end of the 2021-22 academic year, the official unemployment rate in our region was 2.2% of the economically active population (this rate is lower than the national average of 3.9% but the same as the West of England average (2.2%)). However, the median annual earnings for individuals within our region is lower than the national average whilst median house prices are considerably higher.
- Professional occupations continue to be the largest employment type within South Gloucestershire with 27.3% of all employed people within the region. Process, plant and machine occupations have the lowest proportion of works within the region at 4.1%. Across the region that we serve, women are highly represented in administrative occupations (19.3% in comparison to 4.7% of men). Whilst 14.6% of men are engaged in skilled trades, compared to 2.3% of women.
- Despite this, only 79.8% of individuals, living within our region, achieved a level 2 qualification by the age of 19, compared with 81.3% nationally and 81.6% in the South West of England. Similarly, only 52.1% of individuals achieved a level 3 qualification (by the age of 19), compared with 57.4% nationally and 56.1% in the West of England.
- 45.5% of working aged people, with our region, (individuals aged between 16 and 64 years) have achieved a qualification equivalent to NVQ 4 or above (Degree or Higher Degree qualifications), which is higher than the national average (43.1%). However, within our region only 65.5% of working age people are educated to NVQ 3 (having 2 or more A Levels or equivalent), which is lower than the West of England average (69.1%) and only 65.5% of our community possess a qualification at NVQ 2 (5 or more GCSEs at grades A-C or equivalent); this is higher than the national average (61.3%) but lower than the West of England (69.1%), Bristol (72.2%) and Bath and North East Somerset (71.4%).
- Within our region, the population size has increased by 10.5%, between 2011 and 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%); 14.2% of people living within our region have no qualifications.

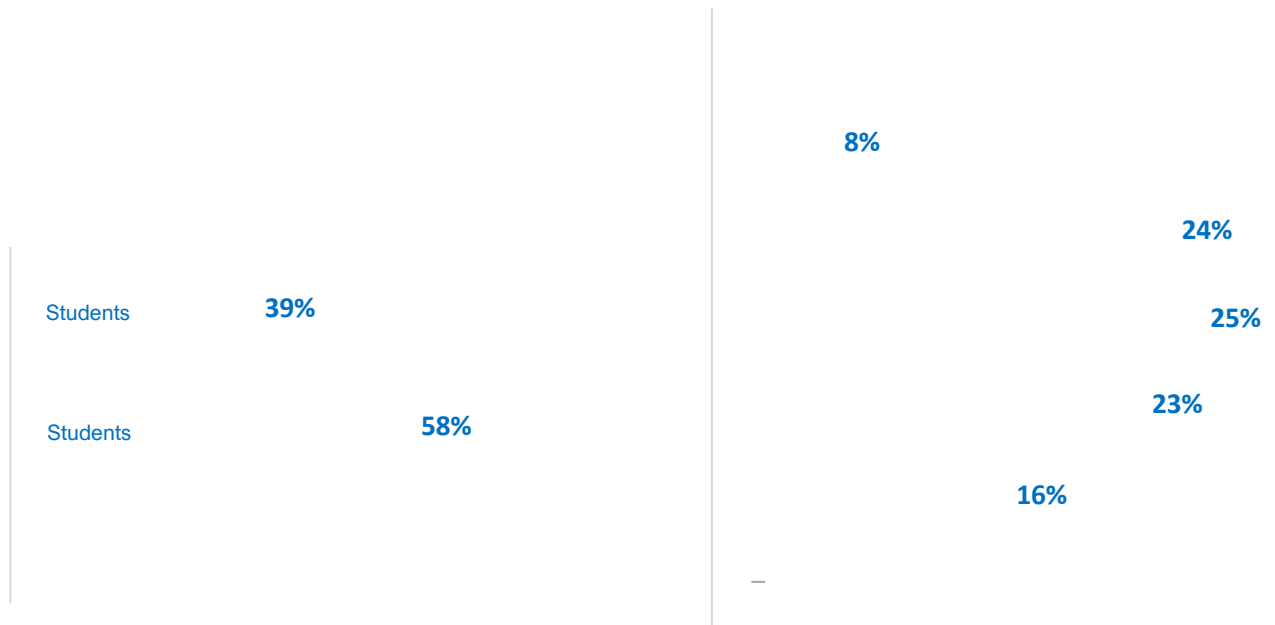
## OUR COLLEGE

**According to the 2021 census, 66.7% of people within our region are aged 16-64 years old. 50.5% identify as female (49.5% identify as male). 5.7% identify as being of Asian heritage, 4.2% identify as being of Black, Caribbean or African heritage, 3.7% from mixed or multiple heritage and 1.5% from any other ethnic group. 0.6% identify with a gender, different from the one they were assigned at birth and 12.23% identify as gay, bisexual or other LGBT+ and 0.20% identify as a trans man or woman. 46.1% of residents, within our region have no religion, of those individuals who do: 44.1% are Christian, 1.6% are Muslim, 0.4% Buddhist, 1% Hindu, 0.1% Jewish, and 0.3% adhere to Sikhism.**



- SGS employee data shows that the current median average gender pay gap, in hourly pay, reduced again by 0.25% to 6%. This means that median average gender pay gap has been halved over the preceding 5-years and it remains well below the sector average of 23.9% and compares very well to the UK national average of 14.3% for all employees.
- Consistently, there are no gaps in achievement between different groups of learners.
- All students and staff at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College have the inalienable right to be known and recognised by their correct gender. The College is aware of draft non-statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education in December 2023, regarding the questioning of gender in schools and Colleges. The College has committed to engaging with the Association of College's and the DfE consultation to share our view which is that Colleges prepare students for life as well as employment in diverse workplaces; in both they will encounter people with a range of identities. Therefore, it benefits all students to learn in an environment in which the full diversity of staff and students is respected and celebrated.
- A key focus of our work on gender equality for students has been the prevention of harassment and gender-based violence. This has included promoting a positive consent culture and raising awareness of support both within and outside the College, through our SGS+ Tutorials.
- We estimate that between 0.39% and 0.83% of our community identify with a gender different to the one they were assigned at birth. Significant work has been undertaken in recent years to ensure SGS is an inclusive environment for trans and non-binary students and this work is ongoing, including providing support for name changes on College systems. The Inclusion Committee and LGBTQ+ forum continue to work with students and staff to continue to promote and support LGBTQ+ led events and activities across the College and our community.
- 60% of our teaching staff are female and 41% are male. 61% of our leaders and managers are female and 39% are male.





- The majority of SGS students are aged between 16 and 24. The overall age profile of students has been consistent for several years and there are no significant variations between campuses. The median age of individuals living in our community is 37.
- Older learners achieve at a higher rate than younger learners. Studies have shown that the gap between older and younger students is consistent across socioeconomic groups and even within high-income families. Consequently, the College provides additional Study Skills sessions to support individuals with their academic development.
- In our SGS Create provision we educate 86 14-16 year olds, living within the Stroud Valleys, who are no longer engaged with main stream education and therefore at risk of marginalisation.
- We do not currently ask individuals to identify their sexual orientation. However, considering 2021 Census data we estimate that between 3.1% and 6.1% of are community identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other LGB+. We continue to support our LGBTQ+ community through our Inclusion Committee and as a core sponsor of Bristol Pride. SGS College has a zero-tolerance to homophobia in all its forms.
- Carers UK estimates that 1 in 5 people over the age of 16 are caregivers and that the majority of these are female. As a College we are seeking to support those providing care through our flexible working policies and Wellbeing Teams.

## ETHNICITY

80%

86%

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- In 2022-23, 20% of our students declared an ethnicity other than 'white' which is broadly in line with our community. During the same period, we doubled the proportion of our staff who have an ethnicity other than 'white', to 14%, which is considerably higher than the 5.4% average within the South West of England. 14.4% of our teaching staff, 16% of those supporting teaching and 7% of our leadership team identify with an ethnicity other than white. However, and despite this, we recognise that we have more to do to further reduce the 6.5% gap in ethnicity representation, between our workforce and our student body.
  - As part of our commitment to becoming an anti-racist institution the College has reviewed the way it presents data on the ethnicity of our students to seek to reduce the erasure of identity in our reporting. As a result, we have moved to two levels of reporting and no longer refer to, or report on, 'BAME' nor do we group all ethnic minorities together. Instead we follow guidance issued by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities and report against the specific ethnic classifications defined within the national Census.

Note: The term 'BAME' emphasises certain ethnic minority groups (Asian and Black) and excludes others, such as 'mixed', Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and 'other white' ethnic minority groups that also face negative disparities. 'BAME' is also often used as a proxy for "non-white", which can be unintentionally divisive.

- Going forward, we have committed to ensuring clarity in our use of language around ethnicity, we are also committed to encouraging people to pinpoint in greater detail where negative disparities lie, why they have arisen, and who they are affecting the most. In doing so we aim to close any gaps that exist in a meaningful and sustainable way.
- There are no statistically significant gaps in the achievement of different groups of learners. Similarly, a person's ethnicity had no bearing on their progression or acceptance to university through UCAS.

## DISABILITY



- South Gloucestershire and Stroud College defines ‘disability’ as an outcome of any physical, environmental or attitudinal barriers that hinders activity or participation of all people on an equal basis.
- In 2021-22, 32% of our students declared a difficulty or disability, which is a 2% increase on last year and higher than our community, where 20% of individuals declare a difficulty or disability. During the same period, 8% of our staff declared a difficulty or disability (1% higher than last year); however, none of these individuals are members of our governance, leadership or management team.
- Rapid changes in teaching and assessment practice, in response to the pandemic, simultaneously accelerated progress in respect of inclusive practice and created new barriers for disabled students. As a consequence, the College has invested significantly in a number of new accessibility tools, such as reader pens, and we remain committed to improving the digital literacy of all students and staff.
- SGS has worked hard to anticipate and respond to disabled students’ needs in a number of ways including issuing a SEND toolkit and new guidance on inclusive teaching and assessment practice.
- In the UK, at least one in four people with a difficulty or disability will experience a mental health problem at some point in their life; at any one time, one in ten children aged five to sixteen and one in six adults have a mental health problem. Therefore, the College continues to invest in counselling, mental health first-aiders and mental health support of staff and students.
- The proportion of disabled people (15.1%) aged 16 years and over, in England, who reported feeling lonely “often or always”, was over four times that of non-disabled people (3.6%)
- The disability employment gap in the UK is 29%. Consequently, the College is committed to Supported Internships and has launched the HOPE (Helping Others Progress in Employment) Agency. HOPE is a supported employment agency for clients with learning difficulties or disabilities or mental health issues, who need help to find and retain stable, long-term employment with inclusive companies and roles that match their skill set.
- At the end of the 2021-22 academic year, there was a 5% gap in the achievement of learners with difficulties and disabilities, for this reason we have re-doubled our efforts to support teaching staff to make appropriate reasonable adjustments for learners with difficulties and disabilities.

## STANDING AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Following the publication of Ofsted’s Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (2021), SGS has been working to enhance our culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and should we identify concerns we intervene early to better protect children and young people.**

We have developed a campaign to eradicate any downplaying or dismissing of sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” “girls being girls” or “boys being boys” and added definitions of unacceptable behaviour to our Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging Policy to reiterate that which already exists with our Safeguarding Policy.

Throughout our community we:

- Seek to clearly communicate, and embed across our organisation, our approach to preventing and responding to all forms of harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students.
- Through regular monitoring, reporting and review we continually assess and improve our approach to harassment and sexual misconduct. This includes ensuring that risks relating to these issues are identified and effectively mitigated.
- We engage appropriately with our entire student body to develop and evaluate systems, policies and processes to address harassment and sexual misconduct.
- We maintain adequate and effective policies and processes for all students to report and disclose incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct
- We have a fair, clear and accessible approach to taking action in response to reports and disclosures.
- We ensure that students involved in any investigatory process have access to appropriate and effective support.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

**Diversifying our talent, by continuing to enhance our community by attracting and recruiting a diverse range of students and staff— those that have the relevant skills and experience and are also reflective of the diverse community that we serve.**

**We will continue to encourage engagement and contribution to the leadership of the College; through our incredible Inclusion Networks; and, work tirelessly to continue to illuminate and eliminate unconscious bias.**

- This the inception of this equality objective in 2022, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College has made exceptionally good progress in diversifying our talent and ensuring that the profile of our staff and leaders better reflects the demographic make up of both our learner population and the communities that we serve.

- During the 2022-23 academic year, the proportion of staff identifying with an ethnicity other than White doubled to 14% which is inline with the average proportion of individuals working in FE Colleges in England and 8% higher than the proportion of individuals, identifying with an ethnicity other than White, working in FE Colleges in the South West of England.
- Through our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy and People Strategy 2022-24, we have committed to attracting and recruiting the best staff locally and sub-regionally with a specific focus on ensuring that our staff are representative of the diversity of our college community.
- Our HR Department has introduced some new initiatives in recruitment in order to be more competitive in the marketplace. These include the updating of the recruitment webpages on the college website to focus on the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits of working at SGS College, a staff video with employees talking about why they work at SGS, using social media to support advertising, introducing the use of TES and E-Teach and launching the ACTs (Aspiring College Teacher Scheme) supported by a successful funding bid.
- Our Professional Development theme of 'Inclusion', in all its forms. Many of the opportunities and events for staff to access were guided by the Inclusion Committee, which aligned with the many brilliant events and initiatives that the student body engaged with. The flagship Staff Conference followed the same theme, and this was a fantastic celebration of all our differences, with many great learning opportunities.
- During 2023 the College engaged with an external organisation with a vision to create a world where people feel empowered to realise their ambitions. The organisation works specifically with employers committed to building more diverse and inclusive workplaces and we have commenced a review of our recruitment processes to ensure that we continue to attract and recruit from all sections of our community and particularity from under-represented groups. To date we have anonymised our applications process, added mandatory inclusion questions and registered our interest in signing up to the Race at Work Charter.
- The College became a supporter of the West of England Employer Charter.
- Analysis of our staff profile in 2022-23 has identified that we need to do more to increase the representation of individuals identifying as disabled under the (Equality Act). Following analysis of our educational outcomes, we have determined that learners who identify as being dyslexic (that is, without a diagnosis or funded support); achieve their qualifications at a rate much lower than their peers. Mindful of this, and during 2023-24, we have committed to targeting more help and support to these learners with a view to providing more opportunity for them to increase their success. In the first instance we have committed to purchasing software to help neurodivergent learners to achieve more with reading and writing, in addition to the considerable work that we have already done to increase the availability and use of the assessability tools, such as immersive reader, already available through Microsoft.

**Accelerating change, by building on the good work already done, will enable us to continue to promote a culture where everyone has the confidence and space to be themselves at SGS, by building inclusive leadership behaviours.**

**We will achieve this by eradicating the fear of making mistakes and support all of our people, to fearlessly hear, and act upon the voices of others.**

- To counteract scepticism that Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging is a true priority for the College, particularly given the paucity of diversity 'at the top'; the College has entrusted and enabled a large and active Inclusion Committee to advise the College's Leadership Team on the direction of EDIB. The College's

Leadership Team is fully committed to listening to its community of staff and students to understand their lived experience and to empower their desire for change.

- Our Inclusion Committee, staffed by committed individuals from across all levels of the College, continues to provide focus on the importance of promoting a culture where everyone can be themselves and belong. The Inclusion Committee is a powerful voice, supporting the inclusion of all individuals.
- We are proud to continue to be a core supporter of Bristol Pride. Community is the beating heart of Bristol Pride and as a Community Partner, the College supports access to Pride for all, and provides a home for amazing LGBT+ charities, support groups, social groups and service providers.
- SGS is equally proud to support St. Pauls Carnival and their work to promote and celebrate African Caribbean culture and traditions, and to run an accessible and inclusive world-class Carnival and supporting events. As well as using Carnival to inform, engage and inspire people socially and artistically, the St Pauls Carnival Community Interest Company works with local people to increase economic benefits to the community.
- Through our own SGS+ initiative we are working hard to ensure that all of our students are prepared. Prepared for the digital world, to be creative, professional, socially aware and independent; and to stay safe and healthy.
- We are working towards ensuring that all our web applications are compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at the AA level.
- We remain committed to improving digital accessibility and inclusion and particularly so for young people and women (following publication of the Bristol Women's Tech Hub reflections on digital accessibility and inclusion).
- The College has embraced the accelerated availability of Artificial Intelligence, and established the AI working group. This group has now started to consider the possibilities and benefits of AI to improve literacy training and inclusion, online safety and pedagogical applications such as in curriculum planning, teaching, learning and assessment.

**Embracing neurodiversity, by supporting our staff and students to understand how neurodivergent individuals may think and learn in a different way to others. We will create a more inclusive and neurodivergent friendly College and improve the experiences of neurodivergent people.**

- During the academic year we invested additional resources to improve access to virtual tours of our campuses, to reduce anxiety and support the transition into College of neurodivergent individuals. We also increased resources within our Transitions and Wellbeing Teams.

- We commissioned an Inclusivity Audit to help refine our ongoing action plan for improving the experience of all, including neurodivergent individuals.
- We consulted on and implemented a new SEND Policy to support staff with a toolkit for adjusting for neurodivergent individuals and learners with additional needs. The roll-out of this policy is being supported by expert staff and bite-sized training.
- Through membership of the National Association for Special Educational Needs we are providing support to and championing those working with, and for, children and young people with SEND, learning differences and neurodiversity. Staff can now access additional resources and targeted programmes and projects, to deliver widespread improvements, through a structured programme of professional development.
- We retained our accreditation with Communication Access UK, recognising our work towards becoming communication accessible.
- We are working towards ensuring that all our web applications are compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at the AA level. Our Higher Education website is now 95% accessible and full accessible for individuals with: Vision impairment, Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, Cognitive disability and Motor difficulties. It is also now user friendly for individuals prone to seizure.
- 96% of all new students, joining SGS, stated that within the first two months of their study, they were confident that through initial diagnostic assessment and one-to-one tutor meetings, their tutors understood how best to support individuals to achieve their goals.
- Recruitment has started for SGS Create, which will provide an alternative learning environment for 14-16-year olds in Gloucestershire. The new purpose-built centre, based at the SGS Stroud campus will provide individually tailored curriculum for young people who would benefit from an inclusive, nurturing environment with a focus on learner wellbeing.
- The College's entire Quality Team and Examinations Teams have completed externally provided training on better understanding Autism.
- The HOPE (Helping Others Progress in Employment) Agency continues to support clients with learning difficulties or disabilities or mental health issues; who need help to find and retain stable, long-term employment with inclusive companies and roles that match their skill set.
- We have been awarded the AoC Beacon Standard in Widening Participation for our innovative In2Sport programme, which has been designed to support ex-offenders to reintegrate into their community and play an active role within society.