



# Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging Annual Report 2026



## Our Culture

At South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, we pride ourselves on being an inclusive learning organisation that values ideas and proactively pursue opportunities to make our community better. We are accountable for our experience, development and performance and seek to build effective relationships with colleagues and stakeholders. Together we carry out our strategy, share our successes, and are connected to each other and our organisation.

During the 2024-25 academic year, our Strategic Priorities were:

- ✓ To be recognised as an outstanding college by enhancing the quality of experience we provide for all students and apprentices.
- ✓ To ensure we invest and develop our staff to support our plan.
- ✓ To be visionary and innovative in providing education opportunities by anticipating and meeting demand through our responsive partnerships with stakeholders.
- ✓ To provide a sustainable educational training environment which is equipped for the delivery of high-quality learning.

Through our Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging Policy we seek to demonstrate the College's commitment to ensuring that:

- ✓ We exceed our legal and statutory duties, by building a culture that champions Inclusion and Belonging.
- ✓ That all staff, students, apprentices and visitors demonstrate inclusive and welcoming behaviours, curiosity and respect for others.
- ✓ That we provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment where Equality is a lived experience and Diversity is celebrated.

We commit to a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment.

We believe in the importance of curiosity and the infinite possibilities that education can unlock. Our strategic Priorities commit us to challenge under-representation at all levels throughout the College and to eradicate discrimination of all kinds, implicit, explicit and systemic. SGS will achieve this by providing focused developmental opportunities to support the progression of knowledge, skills and experience.

This is the heart of inclusion— encouragement, support and a sense of belonging for all of those who study or work with us in any capacity.

At South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, we pride ourselves on being an inclusive organisation and are enthusiastic signatories to both the Bristol Equality Charter and the Association of College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter. In addition, we are long-standing and active partners with Bristol Pride and St. Paul's Carnival, and run several internal initiatives. For example, in 2025 we saw continued expansion of our 'Thrive' programme which commits us to supporting the emotional, physical and financial wellbeing of our people.

We do not take this for granted though. The world around us is changing and so are the expectations of our learners, stakeholders and our people. At South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, we need to understand these changes, and adapt, to continue to be successful.

The Charters we are currently working towards are Menopause Friendly, Menstruation Friendly, the Good Employment Charter, Women in Business and FREDIE: Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement.

## Our Community

At South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, we are curious meaning we are interested in our people and the communities that we serve. Understanding our local and regional community and its context helps us to identify barriers and challenges to inclusion, and to prioritise our focus.

Within the community that we serve:

Data from the Indices of Deprivation and our Local Authorities shows there are significant and, in some cases, widening inequalities between people living in the most and least deprived areas of our region, as well as among vulnerable groups and between those sharing protected characteristics.

Over the last 12 months, in terms of wellbeing, we know that there has been a decline in young people's mental health across the school population (e.g. confidence, self-esteem, resilience and anxiety have all lowered, as measured by the Warwick-Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale). The data also clearly shows that young people from ethnicity groups combined and LGBTQ+ young people (especially lesbian and bisexual girls, young women and transpeople) have a disproportionately lower level of positive indicators of good mental health and wellbeing.

According to a What Works in SEND case study, benchmarked data shows improvements in identification and outcomes for children and young people with SEND within our region. However, a joint Ofsted/CQC area inspection in 2025 concluded that South Gloucestershire's SEND arrangements lead to "inconsistent experiences and outcomes" for children and young people with SEND. Regrettably, children and young people and those in receipt of SEND

Support consistently achieve significantly less well than their peers without SEND.

Across our region, around one in five children, approximately 20% have experienced poverty. The proportion young people within our region who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) has doubled over the last 5 years and over half of all Children in Need are eligible for FSM. Significantly, young people with disabilities or special educational needs, those from certain ethnic groups, and speakers of English as a second language are overrepresented within this category.

Young people eligible for FSM, including those from many ethnic groups (such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils) are also disproportionately impacted in terms of attainment, and these pupils have higher rates of persistent absence and are often subject to higher rates of fixed-term or permanent exclusions from school.

Our region continues to reflect the national picture where the largest disadvantaged group remains low-income White boys, who are failing at secondary school and are the people least likely to go to university. In fact, across a range of outcomes, White working-class children trail behind their peers, from almost all ethnic groups, although the extent of these disparities does vary.

There are 30,921 16–17-year-olds across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and Gloucestershire. Of these, 5.7% are NEET (not in education, employment or training) this is slightly higher than the England average (5.6%) but lower than the South West (6.1%). 90% of SGS learners reside within these regions (35.5% South Gloucestershire, 27.5% Gloucestershire, 27% Bristol). The NEET rate is rising in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire but falling slightly in Bristol.

Care Experienced Learners (any young person provided with accommodation, subject to a care or placement order, or has previously been in the care of their local authority) continue to achieve less well than their peers. Nationally, the achievement gap for care experienced learners is about 48% at Level 2 and 34% at Level 3 by the age of 19.

Care experienced learners or those on a child protection plan are about four times less likely to enter higher education by age 22 compared to the general population. Around 39% of care leavers aged 19–21 are also NEET, compared to 13% of all young people.

Recent Indices of Multiple Deprivation analysis shows that our Stroud Campus is situated within decile 3 (moderately deprived), Filton Campus in decile 6 (mid-range deprived), and our WISE Campus in decile 5 (where the community experiences slightly below average levels of deprivation). However, our total catchment area includes 18 of the region's most deprived postcodes. 46% of Stroud residents and 53% around Filton and WISE are deprived in at least one dimension.

Except for WISE Campus (in the Bristol North Fringe), none of our campuses are classed as 'rural' by the ONS. However, and despite having multiple transport options, public transport to and from our campuses is generally poor.

Differences in educational attainment by ethnicity continue into the post-16 further education phase. Nationally, learners of Asian origin (e.g., Chinese and Indian learners) outperform the White British peers, while Black Caribbean and mixed heritage learners often have lower achievement. The national gap is estimated at between 18 and 22%. At South Gloucestershire and Stroud College there is no headline ethnicity achievement gaps, but the number of students in these

groups is small, so results should be interpreted with caution. At our Stroud Campus 7.8% of learners from Black, Asian, Mixed, or other ethnic backgrounds, at Filton Campus these learners constitute 18.2% of the population, 12.1% at our WISE Campus. The 2021 Census showed that South Gloucestershire is 91.3% White, 3.8% Asian, 1.6% Black, 2.5% Mixed, and 0.9% Other ethnic groups, this remains below the England average of 19%.

Department for Work & Pensions data reports that the proportion of young people identified as disabled has nearly doubled to 12% in 2024.

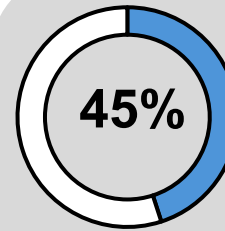
Nationally, the disability achievement gap at age 19 in FE colleges is significant: 18% at Level 2 and 23% at Level 3, and within the South West, the gap is similar. For GCSE English and maths, the gap is about 25% and it remains widest for those with complex needs and EHCPs. At South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, the historical gap is much smaller, at around 7% for all qualifications and just 2% for GCSE English and maths.

The disability employment gap also remains large at 28.5%. However, going to university almost halves the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people.

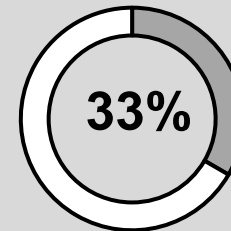


## Our College

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College contributes to the **Government's mission: breaking down barriers to opportunity** serving 7,577 learners from the Greater Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire Local Authority areas. This includes 4,261 young people, 831 apprentices and 2,495 adults. Within our region 2.7% of young people are known not to be in education, employment or training, compared with 5.6% nationally



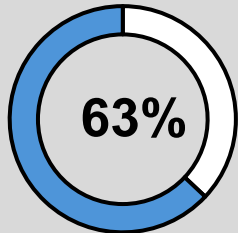
45% of 16 to 17-year-olds **study in further education and sixth form colleges** within our region, nationally the figure is 33%



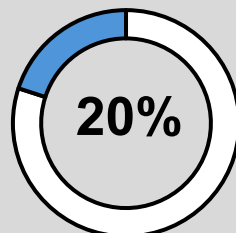
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**People are employed at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College**

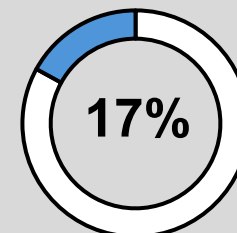
Colleges are some of the **biggest employers** in their regions employing 133,000 nationally, 20,000 of whom are based in the South West



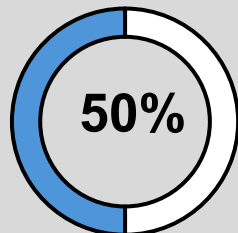
63% of College staff are employed as **teachers or in roles supporting teaching**



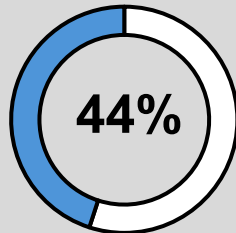
20% of College staff are employed in **administrative and business support roles**



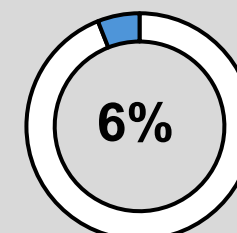
17% of College staff are employed in **leadership and management roles**, this is comparable to the national average 16%



50% of College students study a funded **education programme for young people**



44% of College students study an **apprenticeship, an adult learning programme or a Higher Education programme**



6% of College students study a **programme specifically designed of learners with SEND or High Needs**



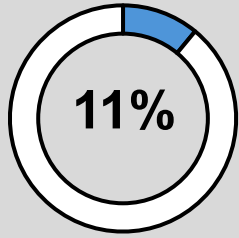
54% of students at SGS College are female, 46% are male and 4% of young people studying at SGS College joined us at 14.



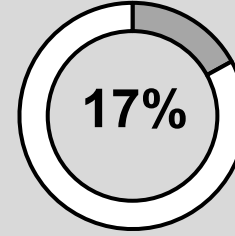
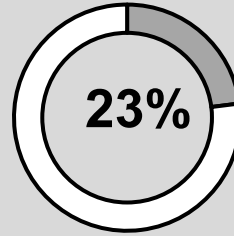
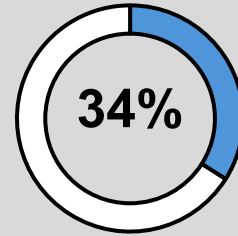
63% of staff at SGS College are female and 34% are male.



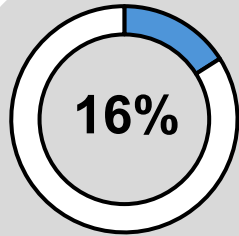
For reasons of privacy and relevance, SGS College does not routinely collect data about the gender or sexual orientation of learners. The College promotes dignity and ensures recognition and respect by defending the right of every individual stakeholder to self-identify.



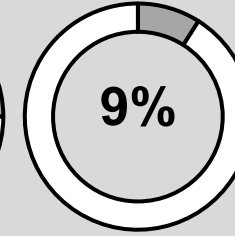
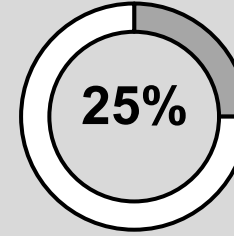
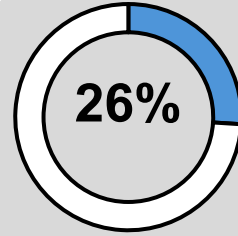
11% of staff at SGS College have declared a **difficulty and/or disability**, compared with 5% of the GFE workforce in England, a further 5% prefer not to say. At SGS only 3.7% of staff preferred not to say and 3.8% of the College's leaders and managers have declared a disability



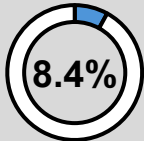
34% of students at SGS College have a **learning difficulty and/or disability**, compared with 23% in Colleges in England and 17% within our local community area.



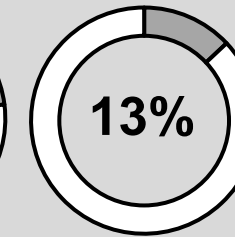
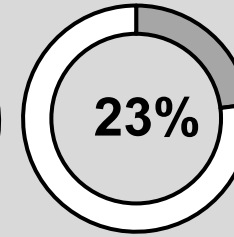
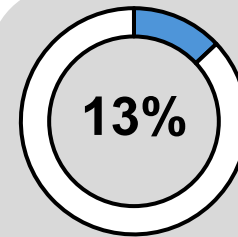
16% of staff at SGS College come from **Black, Asian, Mixed, or other ethnic backgrounds**, compared with 16% in Colleges in England. In England, 21% of teaching staff belong to this group, compared with 17% at SGS.



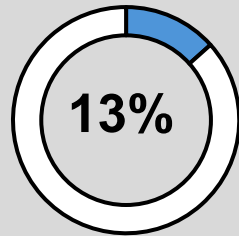
26% of students at SGS College come from **Black, Asian, Mixed, or other ethnic backgrounds**, compared with 25% in Colleges in England. and 9% within our local community area.



**Representation at leadership level** is lower nationally, with only 8–9% of FE leaders in England coming from ethnic backgrounds. At SGS the figure is 8.4%



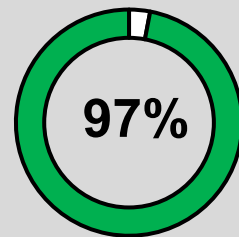
13% of students at SGS College are entitled to **free college meals**, compared with 23% of 16-18 year olds in colleges in England and 13% in maintained schools and 6<sup>th</sup> Forms in England.



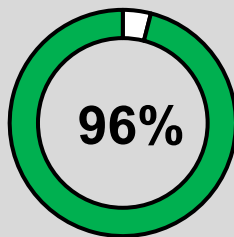
13% of young people studying at SGS College are supported by an **Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**. In Colleges in England this figure is likely to be around 10%



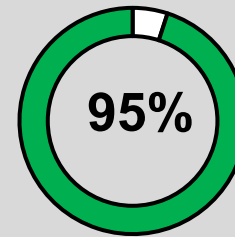
A further 20% of SGS students are in receipt of the **16-19 bursary**



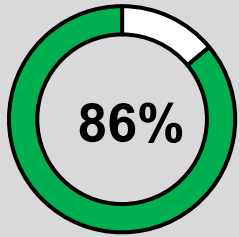
97% of students at SGS College agree that the **quality of teaching and learning and assessment is good**



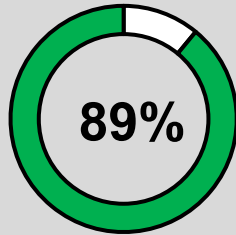
96% of students at SGS College agree that they receive the **support they need to succeed at SGS**



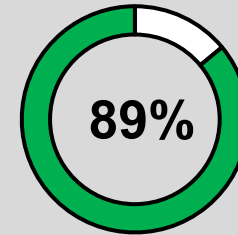
95% of students at SGS College agree that **relationships between staff and students are positive and respectful**



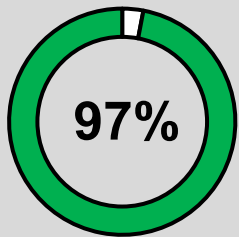
86% of students at SGS College agreed that they felt able **express themselves, their ideas, opinions, and beliefs**



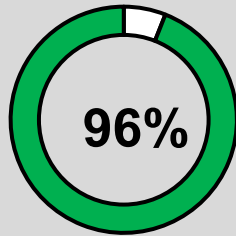
89% of students at SGS College agreed that they had **good opportunities to interact socially with others**



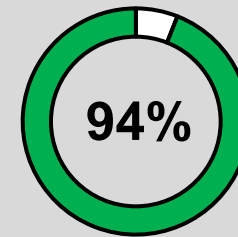
86% of students at SGS College agreed that the **College would take appropriate action to address student concerns**



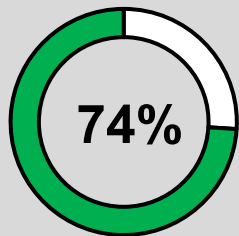
97% of students at SGS College agreed that their course met their **needs and expectations**



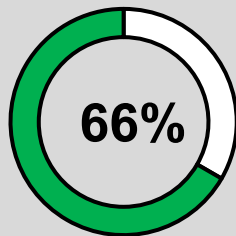
96% of students at SGS College agreed that their course **prepared them well for their next steps**



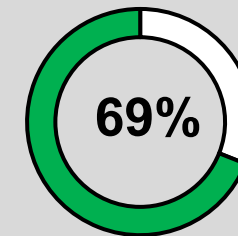
96% of students at SGS College agreed that they received the **support needed to help them take their next steps**



74% of staff at SGS College agreed that they have **clear work objectives**



66% of staff at SGS agreed that the College **motivated them to meet their objectives**



69% of staff at SGS College agreed that they can **access the right training and development**



By the end of 2025, SGS College achieved 80% of the objectives set out within our Accountability Agreement. Contributing to the **Government's economic growth mission** by delivering the right technical skills across all levels to boost productivity with our region



Throughout 2024-25 SGS continued to widen participation in education through our innovative In2Sport programme. The programme provides sport education and qualifications for individuals with experience of the criminal justice system. With a 0% reoffending rate the programme contributes to the **Government's mission: taking back our streets**

## Our Equality Objectives 2021-2025

**Objective 1:** Diversifying our talent and enhancing our community by attracting and recruiting a range of students and staff— those that have the relevant skills and experience and are 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.

**Objective 2:** Accelerating change, by building on the good work already done, we will continue to promote a culture where everyone has the confidence and space to be themselves at SGS. We will achieve this by building inclusive leadership behaviours, eradicating the fear of making mistakes, and by supporting all our people, to fearlessly hear, and act upon the voices of others.

**Objective 3:** Inclusive and Respectful Culture: 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.

## Progress 2025

- ✓ Through our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy and People Strategy, 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. The College is a supporter of both the West of England Employer Charter and the Disability Confident Scheme.
- ✓ Whilst the College's staff profile is broadly reflective of our community, we want to go further by retaining and developing staff from underrepresented groups, and ensuring leadership pathways are open to all.
- ✓ Through our Curriculum and SGS+ Teaching Resources we continue to support our learners to understand how Britishness influenced the Commonwealth and local communities, and how the Commonwealth and local communities influenced what we now know as modern Britain. This ethos extends to how we 'promote British Values' as part of the UK's Prevent Strategy.
- ✓ In 2025 we committed to training all staff and learners to be positive active bystanders.
- ✓ Through our investment in innovative software, we support our neurodiverse students to achieve more with reading and writing. The College has also invested in solutions to enable educators to identify and support hidden learning needs.
- ✓ Whilst we continue to work towards ensuring that all our web applications are compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at the AA level, some are not yet fully compliant.

## Our Equality Objectives 2026-2030

In addition to retaining the three broad equality objectives listed above, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College is committed to fostering a culture where early and accurate assessment of need is prioritised, reducing barriers to education, training, and support, and accelerating the economic growth of our communities by improving the educational attainment of everyone who chooses to study with us.

The measures outlined below have been established to help address the issues identified above in the 'Our Community' section of this report (which can be found on pages 3 and 4 of this report).

### **Measures targeted at learners in receipt of, or eligible for, Free College Meals (FCM):**

1. Reduce the achievement gap between FCM and non-FCM learners to below 5% within 3 years.
2. Reduce the gap in progression to higher learning between FCM and non-FCM learners to below 10% within 3 years.
3. Increase the percentage of new entrants to SGS higher education courses from deprived backgrounds (IMD Q1 & Q2) to 43% by 2028.
4. Raise the continuation rate of full-time HE students from deprived backgrounds (IMD Q1) to 82%.

### **Measures targeted at learners who are, or are at risk of, not being in education, employment or training (NEET):**

1. Develop tailored provision to reduce the proportion of NEET learners within our catchment area.
2. Develop tailored provision for learners who withdraw from SGS within the first 3 months of their course.

### **Measures targeted at learners who may be Economically disadvantaged:**

1. Ensure our educational offer is accessible to all learners across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Stroud Gloucestershire through flexible teaching models, mobile outreach education programs and improved transport connectivity with a particular focus on communities and groups with low engagement with education, including learners with additional needs and those seeking a different learning environment.
2. Working with local schools and multi-academy trusts to ensure that no young person is left behind after their GCSEs.

### **Measures targeted at improving equality of opportunity:**

1. Reduce the achievement gap for Black African, Caribbean, and White and Black Caribbean students to below 5% within 3 years.
2. Increase the continuation rate of full-time HE students from Black, Asian, Mixed, or other ethnic backgrounds to 85% by 2028.

### **Measures targeted at disabled learners:**

1. Reduce the achievement gap between disabled and non-disabled learners to below 5% within 3 years.
2. Reduce the progression to higher learning gap between disabled and non-disabled learners to below 10% within 3 years.
3. Increase the continuation rate of full-time HE students with a reported disability to 84% by 2027.
4. Increase the completion rate of full-time HE students with a reported disability to 74% by 2028.
5. Increase the completion rate of part-time HE students with a declared disability to 75% by 2028.



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and Stroud College**  
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