

**Peter Symonds College**  
**Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty**  
**Equality Analysis**  
**January 2019**



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

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

*Zoe McKellar, Scarlet Standen, Maya Gadd and Tamsin Koumis*

## 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, “we aim to work in the best interests of each individual and to help them fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations”. The Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020, states as a strategic objective:

***“To ensure equality of opportunity for staff and students, challenging discrimination and fostering good relations.” (Strategic Objective 7.6)***

Furthermore, “we seek to develop well-rounded, open-minded individuals with ambitious goals and a sense of social responsibility towards the local, national and international communities of which they are a part”.

Peter Symonds College has a Single Equality Scheme (SES) developed to set out our commitment to diversity and equality and to address the statutory duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.

<http://www.psc.ac.uk/reports/eo/>

Over the past twelve 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 we moved to a more focused approach by identifying key aspects to analyse, concentrating on specific areas of the student journey that have been identified as an area for further development (eg: through complaints, student feedback, the self-assessment process, etc), or where there have been new developments (eg: an on-line application process in the sixth form college). The starting point is to always look back at the recommendations made previously, to assess progress.

Similarly, regarding staff matters, it was felt that it would be more valuable to focus on individual areas of interest or concern rather than start a new college-wide cycle.

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 also arranged as appropriate when examining the student or staff journey, as follows:

1. Student Focus Groups (organised by the Head of Study Support and the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator).
2. Staff Focus Groups (organised by the Personnel Manager and Vice Principal).
3. AHED Focus Groups (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 2017-18, there were 4,029 full-time 16-18 year old students, including 71 boarders.

The Adult and Higher Education Division (AHED) caters mainly for post-19 and a mixture of vocational and non-vocational education and, in 2017-18, had 396 SFA/24+ loans funded adult students, 286 students on higher education programmes and 18,50 enrolments on leisure courses.

As at 1 November 2017, the sixth form site had 241 teachers and 195 support staff. AHED had 78 teachers and 37 support staff. All figures exclude casual and hourly paid staff.

### **Our staff and student profile in relation to disadvantaged groups:**

#### **Students**

In 2017-18, a total of 6,561 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 2017-18, 4,029 students were aged 16-18. The gender split was 55% female and 45% male. 12% of learners were from minority ethnic groups. 28% of learners had a learning difficulty or disability.

#### **Adult and Higher Education (AHED)**

In 2017-18, of the 396 SFA/24+ loans funded adult learners, 77% were female and 23% male.

The college has an emerging programme of higher education courses. In 2017-18, there were 286 enrolments on HE courses, 79% were female and 21% male.

At AHED, 28% of learners were from minority ethnic groups. 18% of learners had a learning difficulty or disability.

#### **Staff**

The majority of our employees are female and this is a percentage that is likely to increase as the majority of those appointed are female; last year, women made up 67% of those who applied from outside the College and 72% of those appointed. 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. Our percentage of staff who come from an ethnic minority is about 3%, unchanged over recent years.

Our workforce continues to age, with slightly under half being aged 50 or over. We have increasing anecdotal reports of the numbers who are struggling to balance the demands of work with caring for elderly relatives. A number request to decrease their hours and/or responsibilities as retirement approaches and the College is very accommodating of requests to do this. We continue to recruit staff across all age groups.

## **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**

For example, 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, along with a disclosure form, which is now embedded in the Tutor Handbook. With the refocusing of the tutorial programme on 'one to one' work with students, opportunities to disclose are greater.

Equality and diversity is one of the themes for the tutorial programme and Symonds lecture programme that operates throughout the academic year. Tutors have a pack of resources to use in tutorial time with their students.

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

### **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

#### 1. The Student Journey – Single Equality Scheme (SES) Action Plan:

##### SFC

During 2018, Student Services and the Learning Resource Centre were examined in the sixth form college via student focus group discussion. They were both last discussed as part of an EO&D focus group in 2015.

##### Discussion about Student Services covered the following areas:

- applications to the Student Support Fund,
- Counselling Service,
- the Hub,
- the Sexual Health Clinic and
- the administration of travel passes.

##### Key points that emerged were:

**Student Support Fund:** students reported that they found it to be a discreet service and easy to access. When the Student Support Fund was last examined, students had asked Student Services to review the wording of the Student Support Fund documentation to ensure all procedures are clearly set out. From September 2019, it is hoped that applications will be made online.

**Counselling and the Hub:** it was generally agreed that the focus of these two college services needs to be made clearer to students. (Hub focuses on 'lower level' emotional needs and Counselling is aimed at students with 'higher level' mental health needs. The Hub is more practical and strategy based, whereas Counselling is there to talk through problems and can advise on cognitive behaviour therapy strategies.). Ideas were discussed about how to make students more aware of the difference between the Hub and Counselling.

Students reported that they valued the Hub as a place to go to, away from stresses of daily college life, and that the Hub Co-ordinator was doing an excellent job. Students said they would like the Hub to be open for longer, and so since September 2018 the timings of 'drop in' have been revised.

**Sexual Health Clinic:** is available once a week, run by a nurse employed by the NHS. There is a need for more sessions, but this is probably not possible as this service is supplied by the NHS. Students felt that it would help to make it clear that the clinic is independent of the college.

**Travel advice and travel passes:** students reported that this service was very good.

Overall, students said that the college felt inclusive and the above services are well promoted.

## **Discussion about the Learning Resource Centre focused on the following:**

### **Accessibility of the building**

- Students reported high levels of satisfaction with the accessibility of the building itself, especially the lift which can be used without any staff having to be in attendance, but would like the accessible route to be shorter and suggested where another ramp could be installed. This suggestion will be passed on the Estates Manager.

### **Accessibility of resources**

- Students expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the resources available and the ease with which these can be accessed in college and at home.

### **Inclusivity of materials**

- It was noted that the LRC has a wide range of self-help resources on stress, mental health and anxiety.

### **Inclusivity of the environment**

- Students liked the awareness-raising displays and the information screens, and suggested publicising the fact that student suggestions for potential displays in the LRC are always welcome. The Head of Department will follow this up.
- Since the LRC was last examined, displays have included topics about different groups:
  - Black History Month
  - LGBTQ History Month
  - World Religion Day
  - Autism Awareness
  - Genocide Awareness Day
  - Holocaust Memorial Day

...and aspects of politics / British Culture:

- Magna Carta
- Vote 100
- 70 years of the Human Rights Declaration
- Shelves were considered to be a good height for students in a wheelchair, although it was suggested that the cabinet where Journals are stored could have a 'cover' that was not so heavy to lift. The Head of Department will follow this up.
- Students reported that it can be difficult finding a place to work for students whose disability means they cannot be in a quiet or silent study area. Suggestions were made that Study Support could make a list of rooms available for private study.

**Since 2015, the LRC have produced a working document: “Peter Symonds LRC: Equality, Diversity and Accessibility”.** This audit looks at accessibility / equality issues across the LRC service, including:

- physical and online resources
  - online presence: library catalogue, intranet page and Moodle
  - software
  - equipment
  - signage
  - leaflets and handouts
  - training sessions for students
  - staff training
  - accessibility of our buildings
- This audit has been used to:
    - Create induction training materials for new members of the LRC team
    - Produce an information statement (for students) about accessibility on the LRC intranet page
    - Advertise a ‘named person for equal opportunities and diversity’, in common with other libraries.
  - They have also:
    - Ensured most of the e-resources links are WAYFless (so fewer clicks and fewer accessibility issues).

#### **Cross-college survey April 2018, sixth form students:**

In the cross-college survey of students undertaken in April 2018, students expressed a high level of satisfaction:

- “Equal opportunities are actively promoted at the college” – the large majority of student agreed or strongly agreed – 93%
- “I felt safe and secure at college” – the very large majority of student agreed or strongly agreed 96%
- “Bullying and harassment are tackled effectively” - the large majority of student agreed or strongly agreed – 93%

#### **AHED**

During 2018, the following areas were explored:

- Supporting students with mental health issues: Because of the awareness of the increasing number of students with mental health issues, this has been a focus of attention with additional support available during examinations to counsel students who find examinations emotionally challenging. In order to support the rising number of students displaying mental health issues more effectively, key staff are undertaking a course in mental health to develop and deepen their understanding of the issues and approaches to support.

- Under 19s Moodle site was enhanced to provide more extensive coverage of radicalisation, British values covering tolerance, faiths and beliefs and mutual respect. This correlates with the wider tutorial picture being experienced on the sixth form site.
- In Higher Education, the Programme Leader Team considered the partner University's approaches to support for students with disabilities or dyslexia, making reasonable adjustments to assessments and ensuring that marking of those assessments is conducted fairly for those students.

## **2. EO Audits:**

Equal Opportunities Audits are embedded within both curriculum and support department self-assessment 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 2018 as examples that reflect the further development of best practice in the SFC with regard to equality and diversity.

#### **Careers**

- Continues to support students identified by Study Support as having Education, Health & Care Plans by offering 1-1 support and attending all annual reviews in the summer term.
- A Careers Day is planned for February 2019, to enable all lower sixth students to attend a wide range of talks from employers, higher education and training providers. The Head of Careers meets regularly with Head of Study Support to keep up to date with student support needs and to ensure all events arranged are accessible to all students.

#### **Estates**

- The Estates Manager liaises closely with Study Support and provides reasonable adjustments when required; previous examples include: Installation of a Platform lift – Art building; mobility equipment – Sports Hall & Study Support buildings; improved pedestrian walkways (enhanced zebra crossing - front of Northbrook); new additional bollard lighting on campus. Toilet signage showing Gender-neutral usage.

#### **LRC**

- Training has been provided for the LRC team on ClaroRead, Claroldeas and text-to-speech facilities in Word / Adobe Reader.
- These packages are now advertised in the LRC and Hopkins Study Area as productivity tools.



## **Tutorial**

- The continued development of tutorial activities gives students a 'safe space' for controversial discussions and to develop knowledge and skills to counter prejudice, stereotypes & discriminatory behaviour.

## **Student Services**

- Continues 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. Currently, students who were in receipt of FSM are being targeted to claim FCM if they are eligible and have not yet applied.
- Continue to support the LGBTQ+ group, encouraging members to help with events and campaigns throughout the year.

## **The Hub**

- Ongoing development of this project to promote wellbeing and enhance the inclusion of those with mental health needs.

## **Study Support**

- Ongoing development of creative and imaginative ways of supporting students outside the classroom, including home tuition & use of skype for 1 to 1 sessions.
- Continuing to develop the expertise of LSA team in relation to students with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and rolling out whole staff training.

## **AHED**

**Within the AHED curriculum SAR process in 2018**, feedback was gathered on the equality and diversity priorities for 2018-19. These included:

### **Study Support**

- Ongoing development of innovative methods to support students on a one to one basis using SKYPE. Feedback from subject teachers is that is effective and resulting in improved standard of work submitted by students.
- To support Higher Education students through additional Academic Support class sessions during progress review periods to deliver targeted study support to groups based on their needs. Extension of previous year's work based on positive feedback from students and teaching staff.

### **Access to HE**

- Ensure that the units of work in each subject specification consider Equality & Diversity.
- 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.

### **Functional Skills**

- Assist higher-level students for whom English is not their first language to achieve an English qualification now that ESOL classes will no longer be available.

## **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.

### 3. Data Analysis:

Each year for the Self-Assessment process the Assistant 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.

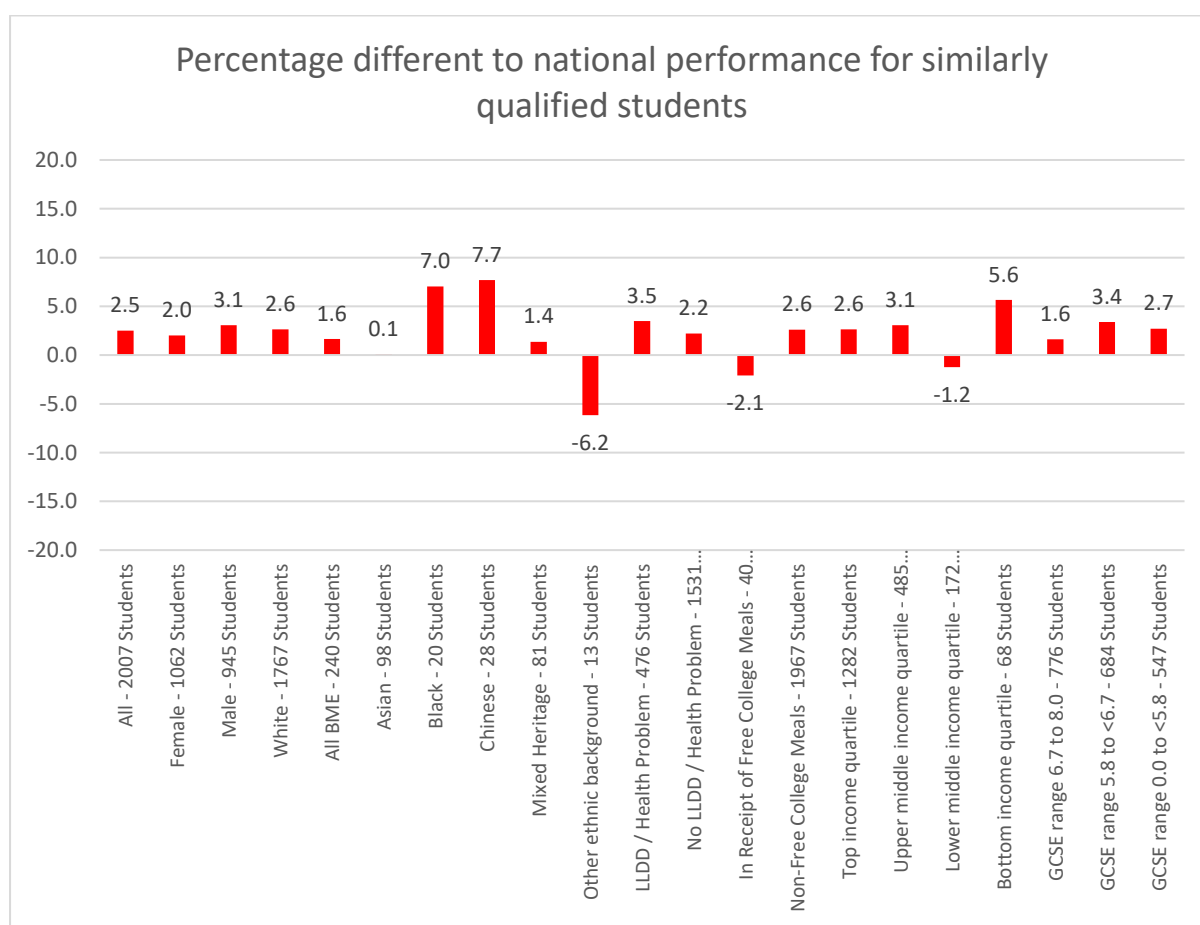
#### SFC

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.

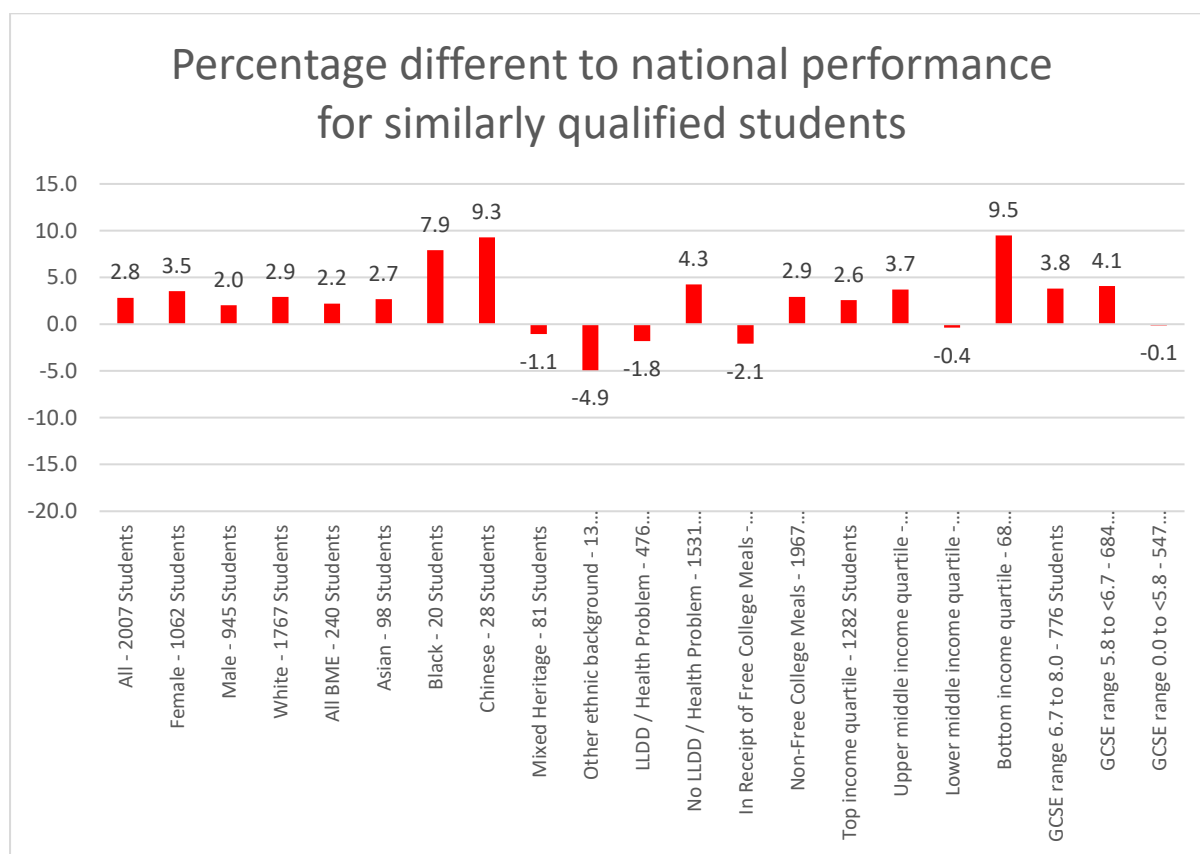
**Figure One: Retention over two years, by equality and diversity category**



**Figure One** shows that for most categories the college does well. Overall, 2.5% more students get to the end of a two-year programme of study than would be expected nationally – an extra 50 students across the college. Of those groups that perform less well than is typical we have to be cautious in over-interpretation. Students of Other Ethnic Background are 6.2% below expectation, but there are only 13 student in this category – each of them equating to 6%.

- Note that those students with relatively modest GCSE backgrounds do well in terms of completing courses

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



The analysis of the proportion of students achieving three A levels or equivalent in **Figure Two** echoes that of retention in **Figure One**. Interestingly, it is those students from the most disadvantaged communities that perform best in this analysis (though this contrasts with data about how well these students perform in individual subjects).

### 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 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. This report is available on the college website [www.psc.ac.uk](http://www.psc.ac.uk)

We continue to seek to identify issues arising from the report and act upon them. We published our first Gender Pay Gap Report in 2018, which confirmed that we have a disproportionately large number of women among our lower paid staff. We have proposed some action points to try to address this, although it is challenging given the relatively few numbers of men who apply.

#### **Section 5: Equality Objectives**

The following objectives were set for the college in April 2016, for a four-year period to April 2020. An action plan in relation to these objectives is available on the college website: <http://www.psc.ac.uk/reports/eo/>

**Equality Objective for the Sixth Form College (Students):** To improve the outcomes for sixth form students with a mental health difficulty.

**Equality Objective for the Adult and Higher Education Division (Students):** To improve the outcomes for AHED students with a mental health difficulty.

**Equality Objective for all College staff:** To undertake a gender pay gap analysis.