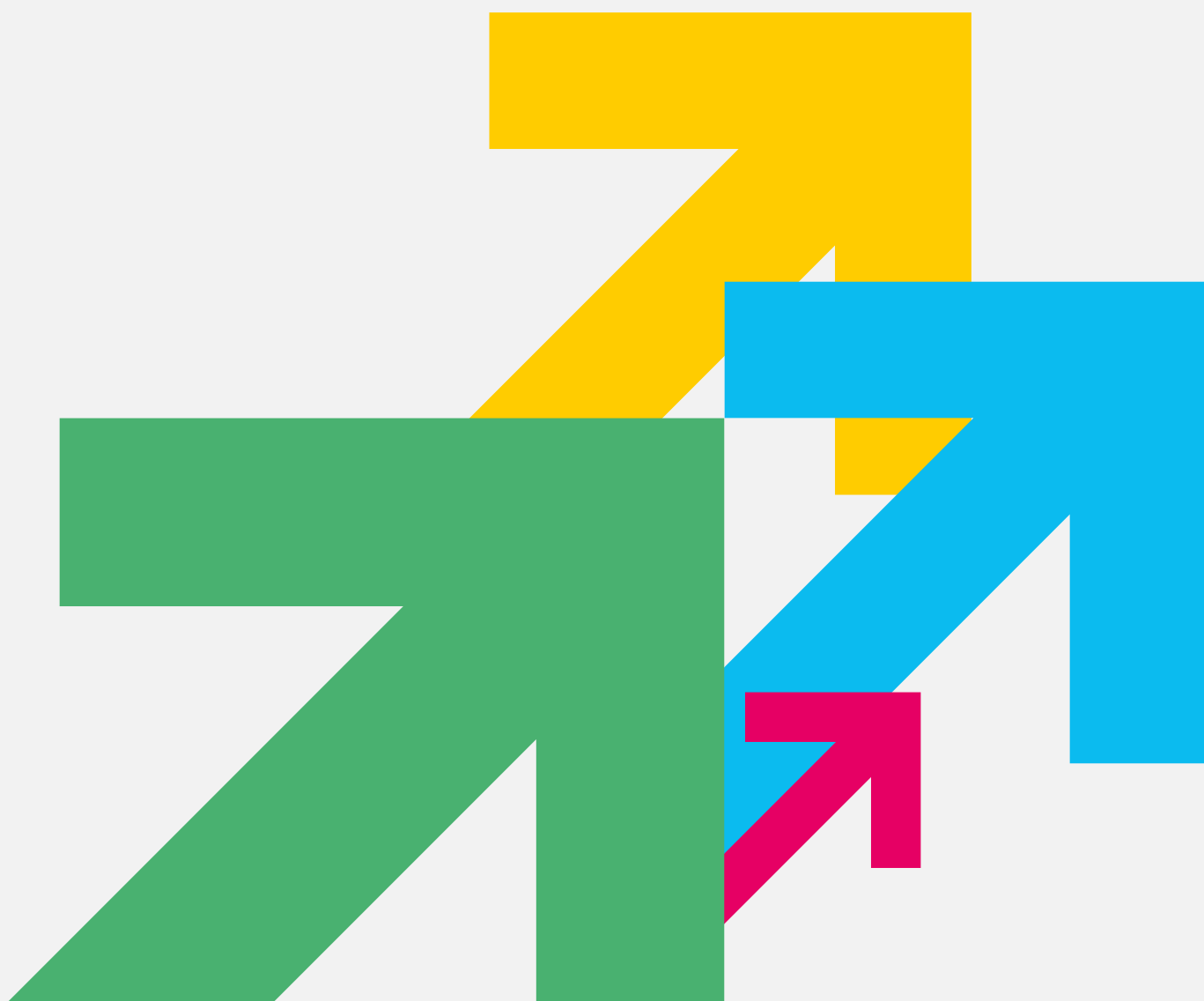




# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report

2024/25



## Welcome to the South Thames Colleges Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report.

There is a profound and enduring commitment to Diversity and Inclusion at South Thames Colleges Group. In July 2024, Ofsted commented:

‘Learners and apprentices thrive in an inclusive, caring and welcoming environment at the college. Governors, leaders and staff create an environment in which all learners feel they have the opportunity to succeed, and in which diversity is acknowledged and celebrated.’

The events of the past few years have prompted us to look again at the progress we are making, especially in terms of tackling racism and promoting race equality. Beyond that, we also chose to focus on an evidence-based hunt for our largest equality gaps and identified a number of areas for attention, including:

- Achievement among our Black students compared to their White peers
- Achievement rates for our students with disabilities and learning difficulties compared to their peers
- Equal pay gaps for female and black colleagues
- Black representation among our general staff body and the senior leadership team

We are proud to attract students and staff from such a rich diversity of backgrounds but, in talking to our staff and students, we understand that we are not meeting all their expectations, and the Group has much more to do. We have established an advisory group through which staff can express their beliefs and expectations about the diversity and inclusiveness of the Group; their passion for equality has been abundantly obvious throughout the years that this Group has been active. We adopted KPIs for all of these equalities gaps and appointed a link Governor to improve our accountability for progress on these critical measures.

And we have made significant progress on many of these counts. Our gender pay gap has halved, although we still have work to do to finish this task. However, achievement rate differences among our diverse student cohorts have closed as has the ethnicity pay gap, while staff the profile of Black staff among our employees has risen above our target. The representation of Black colleagues at senior leadership level remains stuck at a low level and again we have a lot more to do to resolve this.

In December 2024, the Group’s Governing Body signed off a new strategic plan, expressing ambition and high expectations for the Group. Central to these aspirations is a renewed focus on inclusion and Governors have set a requirement that the Group will be:

‘Driven by culture, practice and ambitious targets to find and close equalities gaps while identifying new areas for development to serve disadvantaged students and diversify our workforce, measured by new equalities targets’.

This Annual Report provides information on what the South Thames Colleges Group has achieved in 2024/25 and our aspirations for 2025/26.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Group has a public duty to publish specific information on an annual basis on the progress made regarding:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity for those who share a protected characteristic.
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This Report provides an analysis of the diversity profile of the Group's current workforce and student population, a review of the progress towards our strategic equality objectives, and an overview of how the Group continues to effectively integrate and embed equality and diversity into the planning, delivery, and monitoring of the curriculum. The Report portrays only a small proportion of the actions and experiences that take place across the Group, but we hope that the information provided demonstrates the outcomes achieved by the Group impacting across the many people who are part of it from a wide diversity of backgrounds, as well as our overall performance in respect of the Equality Duty.

The focus of our aims for the future is to have a measurable impact on the outcomes directly affecting the lives of our staff and students, continuing to reduce the gaps in pay and seniority for staff and learning outcomes for students. To strengthen this work, we will renew our metric targets for improvement over an extended period and report on them every term to our Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Equalities committee of the Governing Body. We expect to drive new and ambitious changes and to make a real difference to the experiences of the diverse people who work and study at South Thames Colleges Group.

**Peter Mayhew-Smith**  
**CEO/Group Principal**

## About the Group

South Thames Colleges Group was formed in August 2017 and was a merger between Carshalton College, Kingston College, and South Thames College. To allow the three merged Colleges to continue to build on their successful reputations, they have all continued with their existing names. South Thames College's Merton Campus formally became Merton College, meaning the new group has four distinct member colleges.

The merger has brought together the strengths of all the Colleges, enhancing opportunities for current and future students, and safeguarding the provision of further education to local businesses and across South West London.

Carshalton College is recognised for its strong local presence and its thriving vocational curriculum, especially in construction, media, and engineering. Kingston will continue to deliver some of the best Further Education provision in the country across a very wide range of high-profile subjects, sending around 1000 students a year to university. South Thames College's modern Wandsworth Campus is recognised for providing an industry-standard learning environment, whilst Merton College is home to the highly regarded Hospitality and Catering Academy.

## The Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 created a public sector equality duty, which was developed to harmonise the Equality Duties relating to race, disability, age, and gender, and to extend it across the other protected characteristics. These are sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, and marital status. The Group must therefore have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Duty requires the Group to ensure consideration of equality and good relations into all practices.

## This Annual Report:

- Demonstrates the work we are carrying out to achieve these duties.
- Provides published information relating to employees who share protected characteristics.
- Demonstrates how the Group endeavours to be an inclusive environment.
- Show how we are meeting our core values and behaviours, which relate to respecting and valuing all individuals.

The information contained in this report uses feedback and contributions from across the STC Group and from internal reports.

## EDI TARGETS 2021/24

1. Reduce Gender Pay Gap down to 3% gap
2. Reduce Ethnicity Pay Gap down to 3% gap
3. Staff population to be 30% AEMB including management tiers 1-4
4. AEMB student achievement to be within 2% of each College rate and across the Group
5. HNS student achievement for 19+ Vocational and E&M High Grades to be within 4% of each College rate and across the Group
6. Improve disclosure rates on sexuality and religious belief/faith amongst staff and students by a minimum of 10%

Target	Update as at 31 July 2024	RAG
1. Reduce Gender Pay Gap down to 3% gap <b>ACHIEVED</b>	The median Gender Pay Gap decreased in 2024/25 by 9.1% to <b>2.9%</b>	
2. Reduce Ethnicity Pay Gap down to 3% gap <b>ACHIEVED</b>	The median Ethnicity Pay Gap decreased in 2024/25 by 5.1% to <b>0%</b>	
3. Staff population to be 30% All Ethnic Minorities Background including management tiers 1-4 <b>MAKING PROGRESS</b>	The percentage of All Ethnic Minorities Background managers (Levels 1-4) has increased by 1% from 20% in 2023/24 to 21% in 2024/25	
4. All Ethnic Minorities Background student achievement to be within 2% of each College rate and across the Group <b>ACHIEVED</b>	<u>2024/25</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group overall achievement rate 88.2%</li> <li>• AEMB overall achievement rate 88.1%</li> </ul> <u>2023/24</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group overall achievement rate 86.1%</li> <li>• All Ethnic Minorities Background overall achievement rate 86.0%</li> </ul>	
5. HNS student achievement for 19+ Vocational and E&M High Grades to be within 4% of each College rate and across the Group <b>PARTIALLY ACHIEVED</b>	<u>2024/25</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group 19+ overall achievement rate 89.3%</li> <li>• HNS 19+ overall achievement rate 89.1%</li> <li>• Group 19+ E&amp;M High Grades 26.6%</li> <li>• HNS 19+ E&amp;M High Grades <b>8.8%</b></li> </ul> <u>2023/24</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group 19+ overall achievement rate 87.0%</li> <li>• HNS 19+ overall achievement rate 85.3%</li> <li>• Group 19+ E&amp;M High Grades 25.9%</li> <li>• HNS 19+ E&amp;M High Grades <b>9.5%</b></li> </ul>	
6. Improve disclosure rates on sexuality and religious belief/faith amongst staff and students by a minimum of 10% <b>PARTIALLY ACHIEVED</b>	<u>Staff</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual Orientation – 71.1% (up from 11% in 2020/21)</li> <li>• Religious Belief – 70.7% (up from 15% in 2020/21)</li> </ul> <u>Students</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual Orientation – 67.5% (up from 59.6% in 2020/21)</li> <li>• Religious Belief – 72.8% (up from 64.3% in 2020/21)</li> </ul>	

## 2025–28 EDI KPI Targets

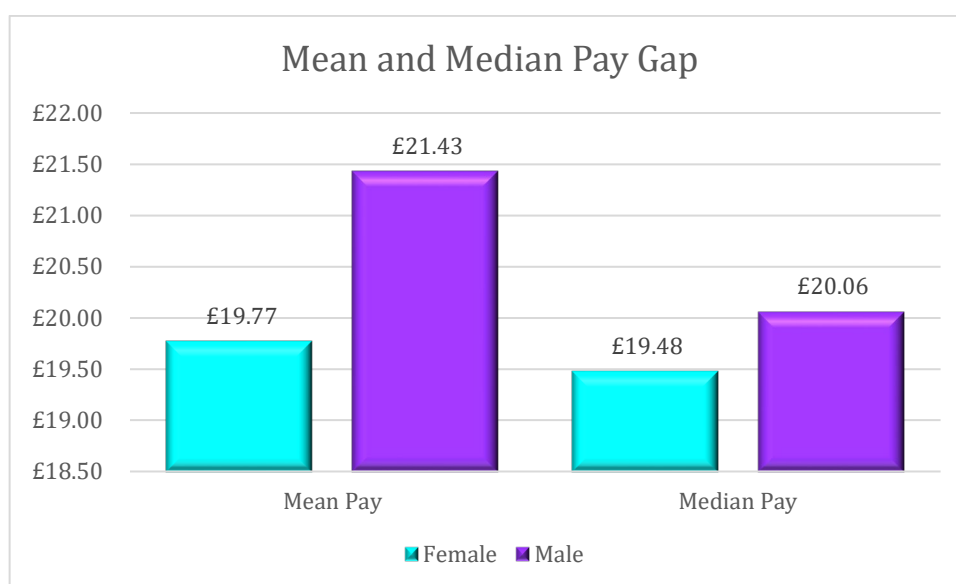
1. Gender Pay Gap
  - Target: Reduce to  $\leq 3\%$  and maintain at no more than half the UK average
2. Ethnicity Pay Gap
  - Target: Reduce to  $\leq 3\%$
3. Staff Diversity
  - Target: 30% of staff from all ethnic minority backgrounds, including management tiers 1–4
4. Leadership Diversity
  - Target: 40% ethnic minority representation in SLT, GLT, and Heads
5. Student Achievement – AEMB
  - Target: Achievement rates for All Ethnic Minority Background students within 2% of each College rate and across the Group
6. Student Achievement – HNS (19+ Vocational and E&M High Grades)
  - Target: Achievement rates within 4% of each College rate and across the Group
7. Disclosure Rates
  - Target: Improve disclosure rates on sexuality and religious belief/faith among staff and students by minimum 10%
8. Achievement Parity
  - Target: Ensure achievement levels are broadly consistent across gender, ethnicity, and support needs

## GENDER PAY GAP

The Gender Pay Gap Information is detailed below, with the information based on the six calculations that are required to assess the pay gap, and these are described below. This information can also be found on the Groups website.

### MEAN AND MEDIAN PAY

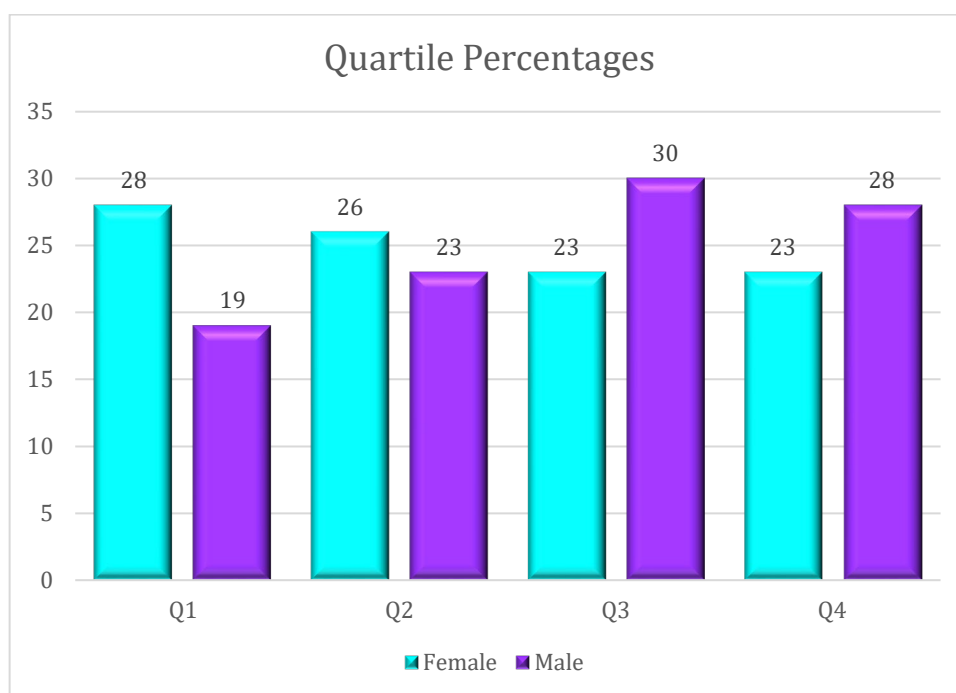
The Mean and Median pay gaps are:



In 2024/25 the Mean pay gap was 7.7% and the Median pay gap was 2.9%

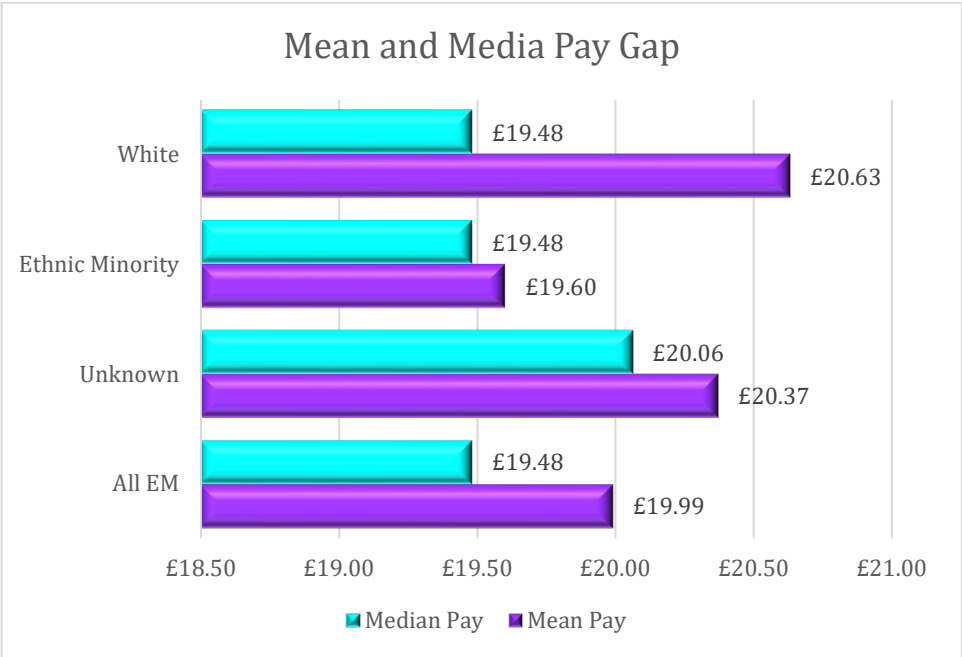
	£8.98 - £15.71			£15.71 – 19.48		
	Lower Quartile			Lower Middle Quartile		
	All Staff	Female	Male	All Staff	Female	Male
<b>Number</b>	273	202	71	273	190	83
<b>Percentage</b>		74%	26%		70%	30%

	£19.48 - £23.52			£23.52 - £127.90		
	Upper Middle Quartile			Upper Quartile		
	All Staff	Female	Male	All Staff	Female	Male
<b>Number</b>	273	177	96	273	177	96
<b>Percentage</b>		65%	35%		65%	35%



**ETHNICITY PAY GAP**

The Group also monitors its pay gap in relation to declared ethnicity. In the absence of statutory guidelines, the same approach is taken as with the gender pay gap calculations



In 2024/25 the Mean pay gap was 3.1% and the Median pay gap was 0.0%

Note: The Group calculates the Gender and Ethnicity pay gaps on a more regular basis than the current statutory requirements. The data from the latest calculation is provided below and is based on information as at 31 August 2025.

**Gender Pay Gap**

<b>Mean</b>	7.2%
<b>Median</b>	7.1%

**Ethnicity Pay Gap**

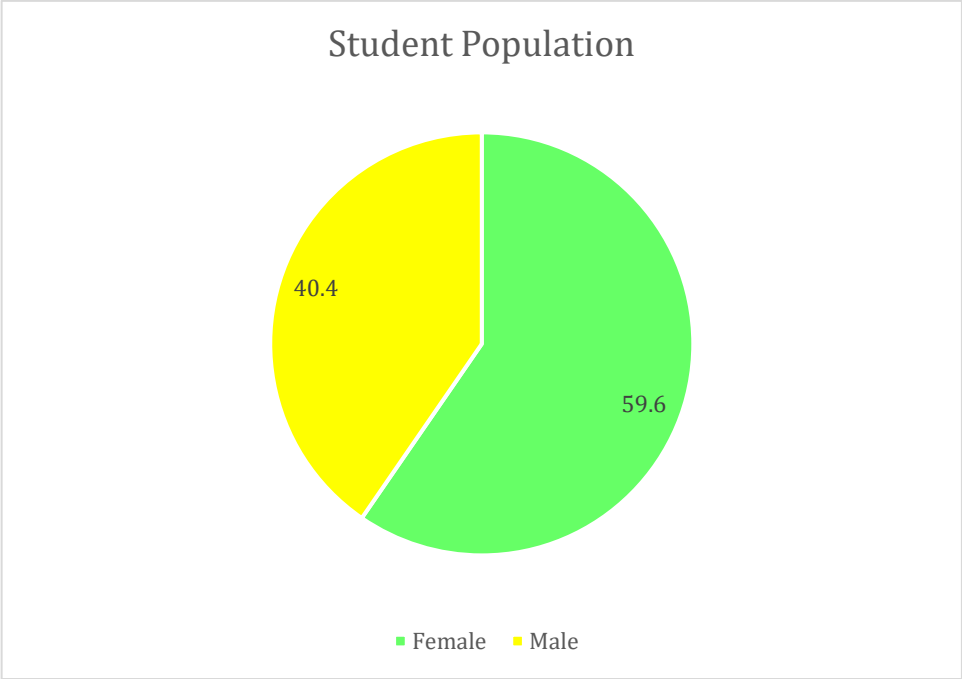
<b>Mean</b>	4.0%
<b>Median</b>	2.0%

# GROUP PROFILE

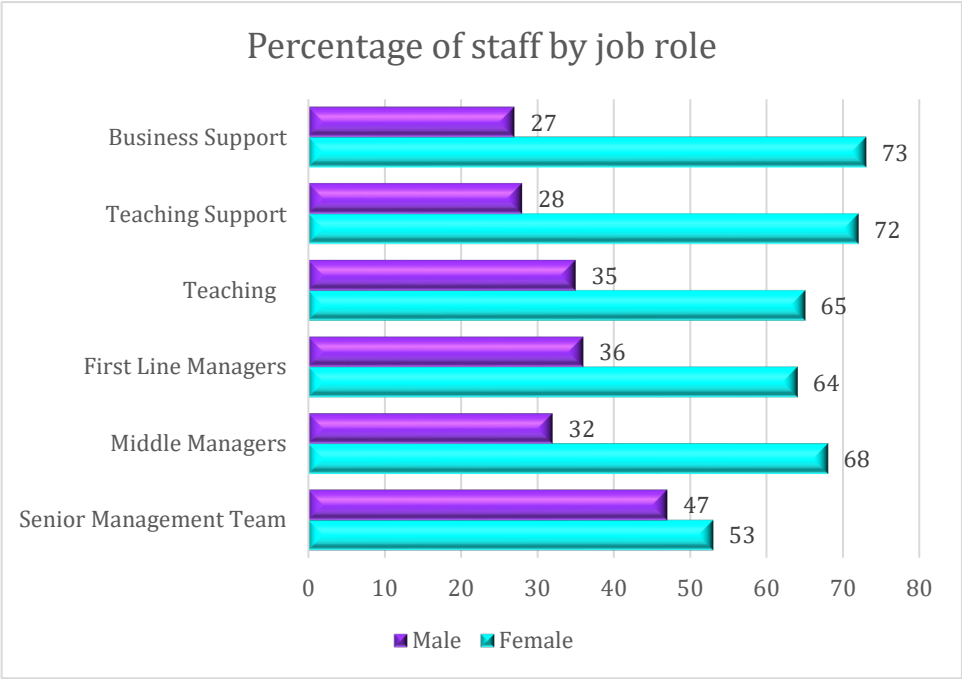
All data correct as at 31 July 2025

## Gender

There has only been a minimal change in the student population since 2020/21 with the ratio of female students increasing by 3.6%



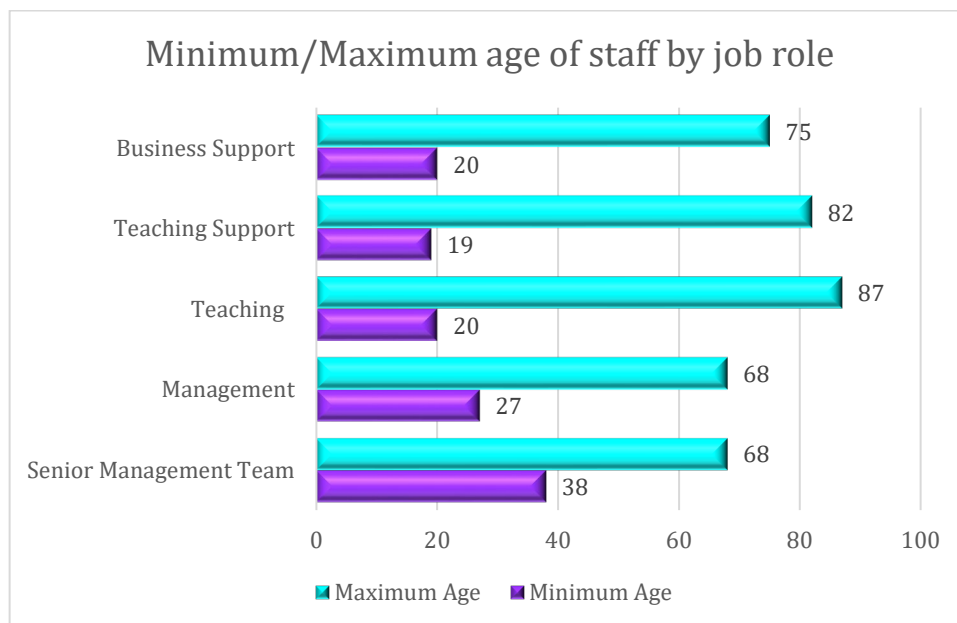
The Group staff population consists of 68% female and 32% male. This is unchanged since 2021/22 and slightly higher than the sector average at 64%.



## Age

16-18 year olds account for 42.9% of our student population, with the greater majority, 57.1% at 19+.

23% of staff across the Group were aged 60 or above, and this is 3% less than in 2023/24. The majority of staff, 32% are aged between 50-59. This is 1% higher than in 2023/24. The average age of staff is 50 years old. A 2024/25 Association of Colleges survey shows that the highest percentage of staff within the FE sector fall within the 50-59 age bracket at 27%, slightly lower than the Group average.



## Disability

18.4% of our students declared a learning difficulty, disability or health problem in 2024/25. This has increased from 15.6% in 2020/21.

7.8% of staff declared a learning difficulty, disability or health problem in 2024/25. This is an increase of 2.8% since 2023/24 and slightly higher than the sector average of 6%.

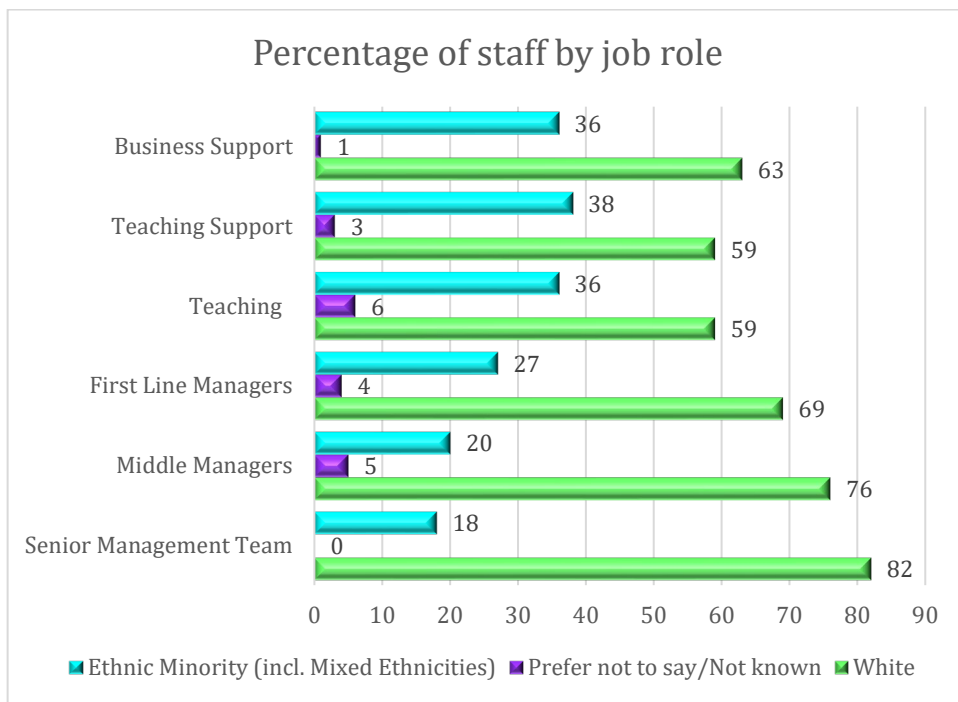
## Ethnicity

In 2024/25, the largest proportion of students are White British or from another White background at 36.3%. In 2020/21, the largest proportion of students are White British or from another White background at 49.5%.

The staff All Ethnic Minorities Background (including all mixed ethnicities) profile for the Group increased in 2024/25 to 35%. The All Ethnic Minorities Background profiles were 29% in 2023/24 and 26% in 2022/23. This is lower than the sector profile in the London area which stands at 39%.

21% of management colleagues (Levels 1 to 4) are from an All Ethnic Minorities Background (including all mixed ethnicities), and this has increased by 1% from 2023/24. This is lower than the average in the London area which stands at 37%, but higher than the sector average at 12% according to the Association of Colleges.

White representation in the Group is 62%. In 2023/24 it was 63% and in 2022/23 it was 65%. The Group does not know the ethnicity of 3% of staff, a decrease of 5% from 2023/24, either because they chose not to identify their ethnicity or have not provided the information.



### Sexual Orientation

In 2024/25 89.8% of students declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual, the same as in 2020/21 (89.1%)

In 2024/25 68.5% of staff declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual. This is an increase of 16% from 2023/24. 28% of staff have not recorded their sexual orientation.

### Religious Belief

72.7% of students declared their religion at enrolment. The largest proportions are Christian (including Church of England and Catholic) at 39.6%, 25.2% declared as No Religion and 21.9% Muslim.

70.7% of staff have declared their religion. The largest proportion are Christian (including Church of England and Catholic) at 35%, followed by Muslim (5.24%) and Hindu (2.97%). 21.2% declared no religion.