

South Thames Colleges Group

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report 2023/24

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 the profile of Black staff among our employees has risen above our target. The representation of Black colleagues among the senior leadership 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 2023/24 and our aspirations for 2024/25.

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.

The Pay Quartiles are based on a rank order of all the male and female full-pay relevant employees from the lowest hourly rate of pay to the highest hourly pay rate. The generated rank order is divided into four equal quarters to provide 4 pay bands or quartiles.

The below information is based on the 31 March 2023 'snapshot' that was published in March 2024. Information regarding the Gender Pay Gap information as at November 2024, based on proxy calculation, is recorded at the end of this report.

	Female	Male	Gap	Variance
Mean Pay	£19.61	£21.54	9%	+0.2%
Median Pay	£19.68	£22.37	12%	+0.9%

	£7.04 - £13.65			£13.65 - £20.66		
	Lower Quartile			Lower Middle Quartile		
	All Staff	Female	Male	All Staff	Female	Male
Number	269	205	64	268	182	86
Percentage		76%	24%		68%	32%
	£20.66 - £22.38			£21.38 - £121.73		
	Upper Middle Quartile			Upper Quartile		
	All Staff	Female	Male	All Staff	Female	Male
Number	268	162	106	268	177	91
Percentage		60%	40%		66%	34%

	Female	Male
Lower Quartile	28%	18%
Lower Middle Quartile	25%	25%
Upper Middle Quartile	22%	31%
Upper Quartile	24%	26%
	726 Staff	347 Staff

Ethnicity Pay Gap

	White	BAME	Mixed	Unknown	Any Other	All Non-White	Gap 2023
Mean	£ 20.50	£ 19.45	£ 20.22	£ 20.22	£ 19.71	£ 19.90	2.9%
Median	£ 21.17	£ 19.69	£ 19.31	£ 21.11	£ 20.09	£ 20.09	5.1%

ED&I Targets 2021/24	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce Gender Pay Gap down to 3% gap. 2. Reduce Ethnicity Pay Gap down to 3% gap. 3. Staff population to be 30% for All Ethnic Minority Backgrounds incl management tiers 1-4. 4. All Ethnic Minority Background student achievement to be within 2% of each Colleges rate and across the Group. 5. HNS student achievement for 19+ Vocational and E&M High Grades to be to 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%. 	
2021/22 ED&I Progress against Objectives	Outcomes as at 31 July 2024
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce Gender Pay Gap down to 3% gap. 2. Reduce Ethnicity Pay Gap down to 3% gap. 3. Staff population to be 30% All Ethnic Minorities Background including management tiers 1-4. 4. BAME student achievement to be within 2% of each Colleges rate and across the Group. 5. HNS student achievement for 19+ Vocational and E&M High Grades to be to 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%. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The median Gender Pay Gap increased in 2023/24 by 0.9% to 12%. Based on the 31 March 2023 'snapshot' that is published in March 2024. 2. The median Ethnicity Pay Gap increased in 2023/24 by 3.2% to 5.1%. Based on the 31 March 2023 'snapshot' that is published in March 2024. 3. The percentage of All Ethnic Minorities Background managers (Levels 1 to 4) has decreased by 1% from 21% in 2022/23 to 20% in 2023/24. 4. 2023/24 Overall Ell Ethnic Minorities Background Achievement at 86.0% was 0.1% lower than the Overall Achievement Rate (86.1%). This identical to 2022/23 where overall All Ethnic Minorities Background at 86.3% was 0.1% lower against Overall Group Achievement (86.4%). 5. 2023/24 Overall HNS 19+ Group Achievement at 85.3% was 1.7% lower than the Overall 19+ Achievement Rate (87.0%). This is a decline on 2022/23 where overall HNS 19+ Group Achievement at 92.9% was 4.8% higher than the Overall 19+ Group Achievement Rate (88.1%). 6. Disclosure Rates Staff: 2023/24 Staff disclosure rates for Sexual Orientation and Religion/Belief: Sexuality 49% disclosure – down from 51% in 2022/23 Religious Belief 52.2% disclosure – down from 52.7% in 2022/23 Students: 2023/4 Student disclosure rates for Sexuality and Religion: Sexuality 63.6% disclosure – up 6.7% on 2022/23 Religious Belief 68.7% disclosure – up 6.3% 2022/23

GROUP PROFILE

All data correct as at 31 July 2024

Gender

- The Group student population consists of 57.5% female and 42.5% male. In 2020/21 this was at 56% female and 44% male. This is a 1.5% increase in females.
- The Group staff population consists of 68% female and 32% male. This is unchanged since 2021/2022 and slightly higher than the national sector average at 65%.
- The proportion of staff in each category is as follows:

Post Type	Female %	Male %	Grand Total Nos
Business Support	73%	27%	443
Teaching Support	66%	34%	208
Teaching	66%	34%	640
First Line Managers	68%	32%	139
Middle Managers	64%	35%	34
Senior Management Team	53%	47%	17
Grand Total	68%	32%	1481

Age

- 16–18-year-olds account for 37% of our student population, with the greater majority, 63%, at 19+.
- 26% of staff across the Group were aged 60 or above, and this is unchanged from 2022/23.
- The majority of staff, 31%, are aged between 50-59. This is 2% lower than in 2022/23.
- The average age of staff is 52 years old. The 2021/2022 Department for Education sector survey shows that the highest percentage of staff within the FE sector fall within the 50-59 age bracket.
- The minimum and maximum age for staff employed in each post category is as follows:

Post Type	Minimum Age	Maximum Age
Business Support	19	84
Teaching Support	18	72
Teaching	22	94
Management	26	72
Senior Management Team	41	67
Overall	18	94

Disability

- 17.6% of our students declared a learning difficulty, disability or health problem in 2023/24. This is an increase on 2020/21 (15.6%).
- 5% of staff declared a learning difficulty, disability, or health problem in 2023/24. This has remained at the same level of declaration since 2018/19.

Ethnicity

- In 2023/24, the largest proportion of students are of students are White British or from another White background at 41.8%. In 2020/21, the largest proportion of students were White British or from another White background at 49.5%.
- The staff ethnic minority (including all mixed ethnicities) profile for the Group increased in 2023/24 by 3% to 29%. The ethnic minority profiles were 26% in 2022/23 and 25% in 2021/22.
- 20% of management colleagues (Levels 1 to 4) are ethnic minority (including all mixed ethnicities), down from 21% in 2022/2023. This is lower than the average in the London area which stands at 29%.
- White representation in the Group is 63%. In 2022/2023 it was 65% and in 2021/22 it was 63%.
- The Group does not know the ethnicity of 8% of staff, a decrease of 1% from 2022/23, either because they prefer not to identify their ethnicity or have not provided the information.
- The proportion of staff by role type is as follows:

Post Type	Ethnic Minority (incl Mixed Ethnicities)	Prefer not to say/Not known	White	Grand Total
Business Support	125	26	292	443
Teaching Support	75	16	117	208
Teaching	188	66	386	640
First Line Managers	36	4	99	139
Middle Managers	7	2	25	34
Senior Management Team	2		15	17
Grand Total	433	114	934	1481

Ethnicity by Management Levels

	Ethnic Minority (incl Mixed Ethnicities)	Prefer not to say/Not known	White
First Line Managers	36	4	99
Middle Managers	7	2	25
Senior Managers	2		15
All Managers	45	6	139

Key:

First Line (Team Leaders, Curriculum Managers)

Middle Managers (Heads of Department and Heads of School)

Senior Managers (Directors, Vice Principals, Principals, Deputy CEO and CEO)

Sexual Orientation

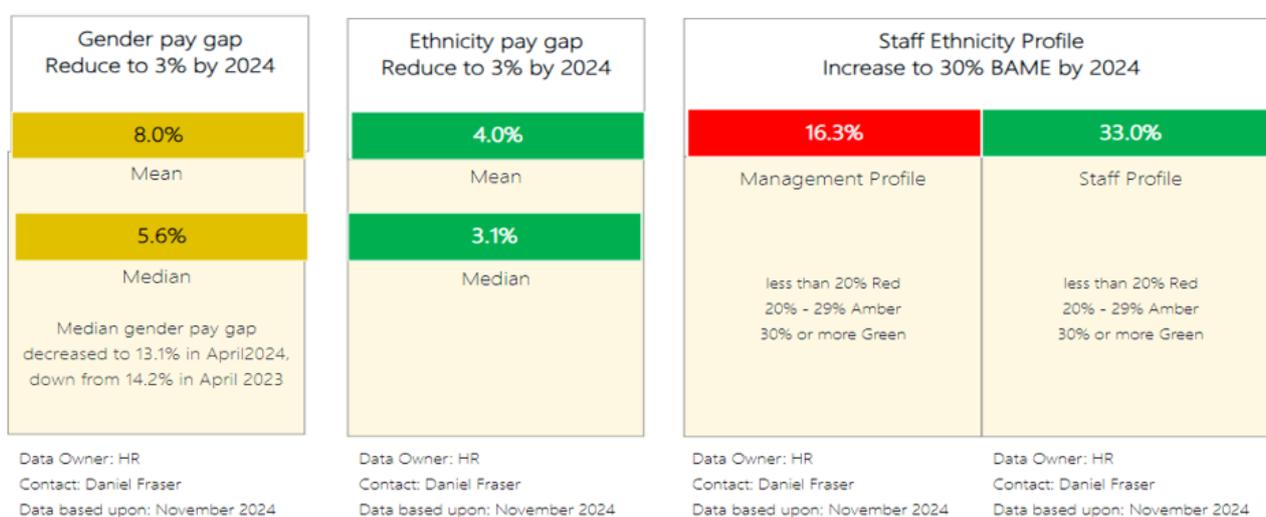
- In 2023/24 89.4% of students declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual, the same as in 2020/21 (89.1%).
- In 2023/24, 42% of staff declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual. This value is unchanged from 2022/23. 51% of staff have not recorded their sexual orientation. The disclosure rate has improved by 38% since 2021/22.

Religious Belief

- 68.6% of students declared their religion at enrolment. Of which the largest proportion are Christian (inc CoE, Catholic) at 40.1%. 25.6% declared as No Religion, 21.8% Muslim.
- 52% of staff have declared their religion. The largest proportion are Christian (inc CoE, Catholic) at 24%, followed by Muslim (2.7%) and Hindu (2.0%). 13.5% declared No Religion. Disclosure rates have increased by 37% since 2021/2022.

November 24 Update

The following provides an update regarding the key indicators included in this report, based on November 2024 data:



Staff Disclosure Rates

As a result of a significant increase in participation in the Staff Workforce Survey this year, with over 70% of staff reviewing and updating their personal data, our disclosure rates have also significantly increased. The below table identifies the improvement in disclosure rates for the protected characteristics over the last 4 years.

	Disability	Sex*	Ethnicity	First Collected 2022/2023		
				Gender Identity	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation
2023/2024	85%	100%	93%	95%	62%	64%
2022/2023	82%	100%	91%	45%	46%	44%
2021/2022		100%	89%		15%	11%
2020/2021		100%	91%		28%	12%