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## 1. Introduction

This is Shrewsbury Colleges Group Single Equality Scheme (SES), also serving as our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The Scheme describes in one document how we fulfil our statutory duties under existing equality legislation, most pertinently the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). As a public authority, as listed under schedule 19 of the Equality Act (2010), the college is bound by the general and specific duties of the PSED.

This SES has been devised with reference to the following sources:

- [Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK](#)
- [What equality law means for you as an education provider – further and higher education](#)

*The SES is updated on annual basis, including the college equality objectives, alongside the associated action plan.*

## 2. The General Duty

The general duty of the PSED requires the college to act in a way which is fair, non-discriminatory, and does not put individuals or groups at a disadvantage. We must develop strategies to rectify situations where particular groups are at a disadvantage in order to meet the different needs of all students and staff.

To this end we must be able to demonstrate due regard to the aims of the duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic

The relevant protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Marriage and civil partnership is a protected characteristic but not a 'relevant' one. This means the college has to consider it only in relation to the first aim of the duty. Discrimination because of marriage and civil partnership is only prohibited in relation to the work provisions of the act. This is because the parts of the act covering education do not apply to that protected characteristic. This means we must pay it regard as an employer but not specifically as an educational institution.

### 3. The Specific Duties

The specific duties are intended to enable more effective performance of the general duty, and to standardise some of the work of general duty holders. The specific duties complement the general duty but do not replace it.

Specific duties are determined the number of people employed by the organisation. As a college with over 250 employees we are required to publish:

- one or more equality objectives at least every 4 years
- gender pay gap data every year
- information on the organisation's compliance with the general duty every year (with regard to students and employees)

**This SES and associated action plan demonstrate on an annual basis how we work with students, staff, governors and stakeholders in partnership in order to pay due regard to the general duty and meet the stipulations of the specific duties of the PSED.**

### 4. The Strategic Approach of Shrewsbury College

As can be seen below in the Vision and Mission of the college, as well as in the Pillars that serve to underpin everything that we do, Shrewsbury College has a values driven approach. We strive to meet the needs of all of our students and all are valued equally. We work hard to promote a strong college community, that celebrates the things that the members of the college community have in common as well as recognising and responding to difference.

It is this approach that provides the set of shared values and behaviours that ensure that we pay due regard to the 3 aims of the general equality duty of the PSED.

### 5. Our Vision

Shrewsbury Colleges Group, where every student makes outstanding progress.

## 6. Our Mission

- Provide outstanding academic and vocational education and training in order that all students progress to university or employment
- Be a local centre of excellence for higher education
- Be the college of choice

## 7. Our Pillars

- **We are Student Centred** – we place our students at the heart of everything we do; we are ambitious for our students, enabling them to achieve and progress; we empower our students to own their own learning; we listen to our students and respond; we provide impartial advice and guidance; and we adapt our teaching and support to respond to our students; – we want the best experience for our students.
- **We act with Integrity** – we do what we say we will do and take responsibility for our actions; we treat others with courtesy and respect the views and opinions of others; we are honest with students and colleagues; we lead by example; we are passionate and engaged in our work.
- **We are Professional** – we lead by example and demonstrate the highest standards; we meet expectations and are accountable; we take responsibility for our continuing professional development; we establish and respect professional boundaries.
- **We are committed to Continuous Improvement** – we reflect on and share best practice; we empower staff and students to suggest and try new ideas; we believe in a culture where all outcomes are used as learning opportunities; we are aware of our behaviour and its impact; we invest in high quality feedback to colleagues, students and partners; we invest in our own professional development.
- **We are Positive** – we work with passion, energy and a smile; we adopt a ‘can-do’ and considerate attitude; we recognise and praise the contribution of others; we are open-minded and resilient in the face of challenges.
- **We are Inclusive** – we give all our students opportunities to develop and succeed; we value difference and respond to individual needs; we promote opportunities for all.

## 8. Shrewsbury College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Statement

The college’s EDI statement sets out our approach to matters relating to EDI across the college and underpins our commitment to demonstrate the due regard to the 3 aims of the PSED general duty.

Shrewsbury College celebrates and values the diversity brought to it by all members of the community and is committed to providing a supportive, creative and inspiring environment where everyone is treated fairly, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We are committed to creating a positive learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation and place equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do.

## 9. How we pay due regard to the General Duty of the Public Sector Equality Duty

The college approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ensures that there are a great many ways in which due regard for the 3 aims of the PSED can be demonstrated. These are embedded in the culture and processes of the college and are listed below. This list is constantly evolving and cannot therefore be exhaustive but gives a comprehensive indication of the range of substantive work undertaken to ensure discrimination, harassment and victimisation are eliminated, equality of opportunity advanced and good relations fostered.

- Discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics is tackled under the Student Anti-Bullying and Conduct policies and under the Staff Code of Conduct. Hate incidents and crimes are monitored and reported appropriately.
- All college policies and procedures are impact assessed for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in order to ensure that impacts on individuals with protected characteristics are appreciated as well as opportunities to pay due regard to the 3 aims of the PSED are not missed.
- Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is chaired by the Vice-Principal – Students and includes representation from students, staff and governors. They meet each half term to further the objectives of the college related to EDI.
- Opportunities for training and development related to EDI are extended to all staff. This includes mandatory EDI training at the commencement of employment with the college and as part of new staff induction.
- Provision of a safe environment where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Faith room facilities are provided at each of the 3 college campuses.
- ESOL provision is in place for full time students. This allows an entry point into college for refugees and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) that does not exist in many other colleges in the region.
- Harnessing the role of our curriculum in challenging and addressing discriminatory practice and discrimination. This includes significant work in our

Tutorial programme which raises awareness of EDI and challenges stereotypes.

- Monitoring of the admissions process to college taking into account the protected characteristics and ensuring these processes are non-discriminatory.
- The college has a strong student led PRIDE group at each campus that is overseen by a skilled and experienced member of staff.
- 3 Student Engagement Coaches are in place across the college to facilitate student facing EDI activity
- Our student facing Student Services team includes a member of staff with additional responsibilities as our Welfare Co-ordinator. This role, in part, is designed to work with students to meet needs related to the protected characteristics.
- Listening to the voice of students and staff around matters relating to EDI and working collaboratively to act upon priorities identified. This includes substantive work with our Student Union Executive.
- Ensuring that the partners that we work with adopt the same commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, for example through our sub-contracting arrangements.
- Producing a Prevent Risk Assessment, following the Department For Education template, and associated action plan that ensures that students and staff have an awareness of key issues related to extremism and radicalisation. This includes the promotion of British Values and terror risks that are prioritised in line with the Counter Terrorism Local Profile.
- Staff are trained following the Home Office Prevent awareness and refresher programmes.
- We ensure that when purchasing products or services from external providers, equality, inclusion and diversity are reflected in our tendering process.
- The College has a robust application process for recruitment of staff to ensure equality in employment processes. Monitoring of applicant data is in place, monitoring sex, sexual orientation, race, religion and disability. This is reported upon and actions taken where appropriate.
- Teachers are provided with information and individual learning strategies for students who have disclosed, or been assessed as having, additional learning support needs.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are considered throughout the college quality assurance processes. These highlight areas of good practice which can then be shared through our learning enhancement activities.

- Governors participate in EDI training to ensure a good grasp of the key relevant issues.
- There is a EDI link governor who works closely with the Vice Principal – Students to enhance the EDI work taking place in the college.
- The Head of Student Progress oversees the planning and resourcing of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and British Values/ Prevent topics for student tutorials. These sessions are differentiated according to course and level of the student group.
- A range of key events, celebrations and activities are organised by our students and staff following our EDI calendar to raise awareness across a range of issues pertinent to the protected characteristics.
- The Student Union Executive attend meetings, such as the EDI committee, to voice the views and suggestions of the student population in relation to EDI and are able to influence and drive forward strategies that raise awareness, break down barriers and ensure all students, including those with protected characteristics, have a positive experience whilst at college.
- Our Additional Learning Support team is structured in such a way to enable specialist advice to be given to staff and students regarding a range of needs including Specific Learning Difficulties, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Medical needs, Neurodevelopmental conditions and hearing/ visual impairments. Reasonable adjustments are made for High Needs and SEND support students.
- The EDI Action Plan constantly evolves in order to ensure due regard to the 3 aims of the general duty of the PSED. It is informed by student voice, learning from impact assessments, student achievement data, information regarding staff, policy changes and amendments to legislation.
- An EDI analysis is conducted on the outcomes of the two annual cross college student surveys, at the end of the Induction period and at the end of the academic year. For example the indicator question for student satisfaction 'I would recommend the College to a friend' is analysed through this lens and the results inform the EDI Action plan going forward. Focus groups are conducted for qualitative follow up where appropriate.
- 96% of our students would recommend the college to others according to the end of year survey in 2024. This indicates a high level of satisfaction across the protected characteristics. There is no perceptible difference in response across ethnic groups in terms of satisfaction. However, there is a lower level of satisfaction (at 88%) amongst gay men and this is something to be investigated and responded to during 2024-25.
- The annual college STAR awards celebrate the achievements of students overcoming adversity each summer. In 2024 over 30 students were nominated by staff. They attended an awards ceremony, accompanied by

their families. Many of these students had overcome challenges related to health and disability.

- The college works to a policy regarding Equality and Diversity in Employment. This approach is informed by the duties of the PSED in relation to all protected characteristics.
- The college monitors its workforce by ethnicity, sex, disability, age, religion/belief and sexuality in terms of staff profile and turnover, absence, applications for vacancies and success at interview. Workforce monitoring reports are produced and this informs the EDI Action Plan.
- The college operates a Fitness to Study process designed to support students who, for reasons beyond their control, need additional planning and support to complete their programme of study.
- Students who face challenges with their emotional health and wellbeing are supported by their personal tutor and/ or progression specialist and if required by our safeguarding team and emotional health and wellbeing practitioner. The college also works with external organisations, such as our subscription to the Student Assistance Programme from Health Assured and work with Crane Quality Counselling, to support students to overcome barriers related to their mental health.
- The College works closely with external organisations and community stakeholders in order to inform our work on EDI as well as working with students and staff to make a contribution in our community.
- At each of the 3 college campuses extensive work has been undertaken to ensure accessibility for students and staff. This is reflected, for example, in the provision of lift access and availability of accessible parking spaces at all campuses.

## **10. How we meet the requirements of the Specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty**

### **10.1. Our Equality Objectives for 2024-25**

- I. Objective 1: To ensure, in a context where the student population is becoming increasingly diverse, that all students feel a sense of belonging to the college community, that their voice is heard and their needs are met.
- II. Objective 2: To identify achievement gaps related to the protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act and to have in place an action plan to work to narrow these gaps over the next 4 years.
- III. Objective 3: To analyse the data related to the student conduct system in the college and identify any gaps related to the protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act. To then consider any such gaps when completing the review of the college Conduct Policy in 2025.

- IV. Objective 4: To assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms that are used to gather student and staff views relating to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act and work to introduce new ways to ensure the work of the college is informed by these views over the next 4 years.

#### **10.2. The Gender Pay Gap**

The college, as required under the specific duties of the PSED, reports on the Gender Pay Gap by 31<sup>st</sup> March each year and puts in place actions related to the findings. This report is available on the college website and can be found here: [Gender Pay Gap Report 31/3/2023](#)

#### **10.3. Monitoring, Reporting, Reviewing and Updating**

This SES covers the period November 2024 to October 2025. However, the Action Plan will be revised to include timescales, responsibility and managers and will be reviewed regularly. The SES and Action Plan are approved at least annually by the college Senior Leadership Team and are presented each year to the governing body.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee also review the SES annually and help shape the Action Plan.

Briefings on key aspects of the progress of the SES will also be given to the SLT and other management teams throughout the year as well as being shared in Tutorial for students and the college In the Loop updates for staff.

#### **10.4. Publishing the College Single Equality Scheme**

The College will make the Scheme as widely available as possible, not only to staff and students through InfoPoint and but also to external partners and other stakeholders via the website. It will also be made available in hard copy to any interested parties by emailing [vpadmin@shrewsbury.ac.uk](mailto:vpadmin@shrewsbury.ac.uk)

The accompanying Action Plan is updated regularly and is available on request.