

Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group

Single Equality Scheme

2022-2025



Foreword

Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG) is a welcoming and inclusive college, committed to equality, diversity and the promotion of British values in everything we do.

We believe that everyone has something to contribute to college life, which enriches the wider college experience. It is about recognising and celebrating our whole community and the ways in which a mixture of ages, genders, sexualities, religions, abilities and cultures can work, learn and be successful together.

NSCG was recognised as Outstanding in every area by Ofsted in November 2019. We have great ambition for our learners and our community with a relentless focus on high quality teaching and learning, supported by the very best facilities to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.

NSCG is free from discrimination; we are proactive in positively promoting equality and diversity across every aspect of our operation and the College takes steps to make sure everyone's experience of being here is a positive one.

This Policy and Plan sets out how NSCG will meet its commitments under the Equality Act 2010 and describes our aspirations to achieve real and lasting progress for the diverse groups and individuals we serve.



Craig Hodgson
Principal & CEO
September 2022

1. Our Strategic Aims

Our strategic plan “Committed To Excellence” outlines the aims and objectives of Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG). It outlines the ambitions of the organisation by stating, together we will:

- **Promote NSCG as a confident and successful organisation with a reputation for excellence;**

Promote and celebrate the diversity and achievement of our students, staff and institution locally and on the national stage. We will be recognised as a college where diversity is rooted in everything we do and everything we communicate.

- **Provide an inspirational learning experience which optimises the talent and expands the horizons of our students;**

Support students to develop knowledge and skills to keep safe and have respect for themselves and others through their academic and pastoral college experience. Promoting Fundamental British Values and maximising equality and success for all. Fundamental British Values are promoted in all aspects of the student experience including:

- Recruitment, enrolment and induction;
- Teaching learning and assessment;
- Tutorial provision including themed tutorials;
- Enrichment and wider College activities;
- Student's Voice;
- Student Council; and
- Pastoral and welfare support.

- **Deliver an innovative, creative and stimulating curriculum offer that anticipates and responds to local demand and national priorities;**

Deliver broad and sustainable academic and apprenticeship programmes which are appealing to students and employers and which prioritise student progression and employability whilst considering the uniqueness of all students and their individual needs.

- **Maximise the talent, expertise and performance of our staff:**

Deliver a continuous professional development programme which promotes high quality teaching, learning, assessment and develops staff to broaden their expertise and knowledge to support excellence across the organisation.

- **Continue the investment required to sustain a high performing and resilient College.**

Maintain and develop partnership working which benefits learners and staff.

NSCG affirms that all individuals are entitled to the same rights and opportunities regardless of their race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion/belief, transgender or age.

In relation to staff this means:

A fair and equitable application and interview processes (internal and external) =, job descriptions, contracts, access to continual professional development, special needs support, consultative meetings, awareness of disciplinary/capability processes.

The College will seek to identify and eliminate direct discrimination, harassment or any form of illegal treatment based on any of the above criteria.

In relation to students this means:

A fair and equitable application and interview processes from application and enrolment through to internal progression and intended destination. Alongside teaching, learning, and assessment, additional learning support is available to students who are recognised as requiring extra support to achieve their goals and aspirations. Students are made aware of the support mechanisms on offer here at NSCG including awareness of the Fitness to Study process.

NSCG will seek to identify and eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, harassment (including harmful sexual behaviours and sexual harassment) or any form of less favourable treatment based on any of the protected characteristics.

NSCG will respect and seek to fully utilise the diverse skills, talents and experience of all its workforce and students and whenever required, involve appropriate external agencies.

2. The Equality Act 2010

We have a statutory obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to show 'due regard' to the needs of people with protected characteristics as defined under the Act. Due regard means that we take steps to

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (**see Appendix 1**) and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3. Key Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Objectives

In delivering a more equal and diverse college we have set ourselves **six** key EDI objectives for the period 2022-2025 to meet, or in most cases, exceed the requirements of the 2010 Equalities legislation:

1. Develop and promote the College as a socially inclusive and accessible College for all staff, students, partners and local the community it serves, whilst being aware of socio-economic barriers our students face when continuing with education. We will ensure that EDI is core to both the strategic and day-to-day aspects of the college.
2. To enhance our collective understanding and expertise round EDI and use this to inform the way we deliver to and support our students inside and outside the classroom.
3. To monitor and reduce all achievement and destination gaps considering both national benchmarks and the performance of different groups within the college.
4. To ensure that all teaching, learning, training and enrichment activities promote appropriate and meaningful opportunities to explore and promote EDI, British Values (College Core Values) to develop both understanding and confidence the of all learners.
5. Ensure all staff and students are appropriately trained and supported to understand and promote EDI and prevent discrimination whilst removing barriers to learning.

6. Ensure our workforce represents, at all levels, the communities and students we serve

EDI Target 2022/2025	CPT Lead	22/23 actions
Develop and promote the College as a socially inclusive and accessible College for all staff, students, partners and local the community it serves, ensuring that EDI is core to the strategic and day to aspects of the college	Senior Management Team, Governors and Core Planning Team	Embed EDI into the NSCG delivery plan and monitor through the SAR process Continue to invest in continual professional development on a variety of themed activities Continue to review all policies and procedures at least annually
To enhance our collective understanding and expertise round EDI and use this to inform the way we deliver to and support our students inside and outside the classroom.	Director of Curriculum & Performance Assistant Principal - Teaching & Learning Director of Human Resources and Communication	Continue to invest in training and research linked to teaching learning and assessment and student support
To monitor and seek to reduce all achievement and destination gaps	Director of Curriculum & Performance Assistant Principal - Teaching & Learning	Data to be monitored through cross college reports and proactive steps taken to support identified gaps
To ensure that all teaching, learning, training and enrichment activities promote appropriate and meaningful opportunities to explore and promote EDI, British Values (College Core Values) to develop both understanding and confidence of all learners	Director of Curriculum & Performance Director of Student Engagement & Partnerships	Continue to monitor EDI inclusion and embedding s part of the curriculum quality review process Continue to monitor student feedback on EDI topics through all student voice activities including the Students Union and Student Board Continue to hold and improve the annual EDI Celebration Event
Ensure individuals are appropriately trained and supported to understand and promote EDI and prevent discrimination whilst removing barriers to learning	Director of Curriculum & Performance Director of Student Engagement & Partnerships Director of Human Resources and Communication	Continue to monitor student feedback on EDI topics through all student voice activities including the Students Union and Student Board

		Continue to hold and improve the annual EDI Celebration Event
Ensure our workforce represents, at all levels, the communities and students we serve	Director of Human Resources and Communication	Monitor recruitment processes, procedures and the profile of the workforce compared to local and national demographics

4. Scope

This scheme applies to all staff, Governors, students, customer, volunteers, workers supplied by agencies and contractors. It applies to all processes relating to employment, education and training and interactions with staff, students, customers and contractors.

In line with our duties, NSCG will:

- Report annually on progress made, and
- Review and revise the scheme every two years through the Core Planning Team (CPT)

5. Core Planning Team (CPT)

The Group will meet throughout each academic year to stay abreast of developments with regard to the duties and responsibilities placed on NSCG. CPT will:

- Drive targeted interventions to meet the EDI objectives where there is an identified need for change and improvement. The CPT will carry out this termly and then annually through the College Self-Assessment Report;
- Organise opportunities to consult, share good practice, arrange celebration and specify training needs for staff at all levels.

6. Responsibilities

The Principal and the Governors are responsible for ensuring that the college complies with the Equality legislation and for approving and reviewing the Scheme and monitoring its implementation. The Principal is the strategic lead for Equality and Diversity across the College with delegated responsibility to the Director of Student Engagement and Partnerships.

The Human Resources Department is responsible for the monitoring and implementation of all aspects of this scheme relating to the employment of staff. This includes the monitoring of fair selection processes and their impact on the staff profile of the college at all levels. The department also provides information on training and professional development related to aspects of equality & diversity.

Managers are responsible for putting the scheme into practice, making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive support and training as necessary.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they are able to recognise discrimination, challenge it and report it following the organisational policies and procedures. Staff will encourage students to speak up and seek support when required.

The Students' Union Executive Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Students' Union conducts its business in a manner, which conforms to the requirements of this scheme and promotes equality of opportunity amongst its membership.

7. Communication and Engagement

NSCG take every opportunity to celebrate the diversity of our learners, staff, volunteers and local community. We highlight our commitment to this every year when we hold our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion event. This is a day where students, staff and partners come together to celebrate diversity and wherever possible raise awareness of our diverse student population, local community and wider World cultures and beliefs.

The College encourages student feedback on all aspects of college life, including EDI, and this is obtained in various ways including:

- Annual Student Conference
- Student Surveys
- Class Representative system
- Student Union
- "Have Your Say" – comments and compliments
- Student Board
- Personal tutor one to one meetings

Appendix 1

The Equality Act 2010

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people based on **nine** protected characteristics

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual Orientation.

Age

The act defines age by reference to a person's age group. An age group can be:

- People of the same age or a range of ages.
- Wide such as 'people under 25'.
- Narrow such as people born in 1976.
- Relative such as 'a person older than me' or 'younger than me'.
- Linked to an actual or assumed physical appearance.

Disability

A person is a disabled person under the Act if they have 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

There is no need for the person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment. What matters is the impairment and not the cause.

Colleges have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, and cannot unlawfully discriminate, harass or victimise you because of your disability.

Aids & HIV

Aids and HIV is a health issue that often attracts widespread publicity and high levels of stigma because of misinformation, fear and prejudice. The College will regard AIDS in the same way as any other serious illness or disability.

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment is defined as a personal rather than a medical process which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

A person will be protected because of gender reassignment where they:

- Make their intention know to someone.
- Propose to undergo gender reassignment surgery (even if it is not completed).
- On starting gender reassignment surgery.
- Start or continue to dress, behave or live according to their gender identity.
- Undergo any treatment related to gender reassignment.
- Receive gender recognition under The Gender Recognition Act 2004.

Trans Equality

A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process (or part of a process) to change his or her sex from their 'birth' sex. This process can be referred to as 'Gender Reassignment'. Transvestites (sometimes known as 'cross-dressers') are not transsexual because they do not intend to live permanently in the gender opposite to their birth sex and, therefore, are not protected by The Equality Act. However, they would be protected from direct discrimination and harassment if this were experienced because someone thinks that they are transsexual, even if that is not the case.

The college is committed to preventing discrimination and harassment, in addition to advancing and promoting equality for Trans persons. This commitment extends to individuals that are perceived to be Trans when in fact they are not (discrimination by perception), and to individuals that are associated with a Trans person (discrimination by association).

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships' and be legally married. Civil partnerships and same sex marriages must be treated no less favourably than heterosexual married couples. All employees are protected against discrimination on the basis of marriage or civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

The Act defines race as a person's:

- Colour.
- Nationality.
- Ethnic or national origin.
- Racial group – a group of people that share a colour nationality or ethnic or national origin.

Religion or belief

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. For a religion to be protected it must have a clear structure and belief system.

Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and includes lack of belief. For a belief to be protected under The Equality Act:

- It must be genuinely held.
- It must be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the information available at the moment.
- It must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.
- It must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance.
- It must be worthy in a democratic society.
- It must be compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights or others.

Sex

Unlawful sex discrimination happens when someone is treated unfairly because of their gender. Women, men and transsexual people can all experience sex discrimination.

Sex discrimination also includes treating someone less favourably because they are married or in a civil partnership: for example, by not hiring married women.

Sexual Orientation

The law protects people from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientations towards people of the same sex, people of the opposite-sex, or people of both sexes. This means they protect lesbian women, gay men, bisexual people and heterosexual people in employment, services, and education.

Positive action provisions

Learners with protected characteristics may be disadvantaged for social or economic reasons or for reasons to do with past or present discrimination. The Act contains provisions, which enable education providers to take action to tackle the particular disadvantage, different needs or disproportionately low participation of a particular student group, provided certain conditions are met.

These are known as the positive action provisions and allow (but do not require) education providers to take proportionate action to remedy the disadvantage faced by particular groups of learners. Such action could include targeted provision, resources, or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged student group.

It is never unlawful to treat disabled learners (or applicants) more favourably than non-disabled learners (or applicants).

Law allows employers, to take positive action to help redress any imbalances that may have arisen in the workplace because of past discrimination or disadvantage. The aim of positive action is to ensure that people from previously excluded groups have the opportunity to compete on equal terms with other applicants.