

## Access and Participation Plan at South Thames College Group 2019-20 (comprising Carshalton, Kingston, Merton and South Thames Colleges)

A New College Group for South West London

### Introduction to the College and its component parts

From 1 August 2017 Carshalton College, Kingston College and South Thames College (which also included the Merton College campus) merged under type B merger arrangements (governed by the Further Education Corporations (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012 No. 1157) to create a new college group for South West London. Under these arrangements Carshalton and South Thames College were dissolved and their property, rights and liabilities transferred to the remaining college, Kingston College.

Kingston College, the successor body, subsequently proposed to the Secretary of State a name change to "South Thames Colleges Group" and this was approved and adopted from 1 December 2017.

All three colleges deliver vocational education and skills training (see below section entitled "Merged Group College characteristics"). The South Thames Colleges Group includes one additional college - Merton – which is actually located in Morden and which in 2009 had merged with South Thames College, and has, as part of the new merged college development, been revived as a College brand. Merton College at the time of writing this participation plan does not offer Higher Education (HE) courses. The four colleges are situated in different London Boroughs each with different socio economic profiles.

**Kingston College** is situated in Kingston town centre, in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. According to the Children and Young People's Plan for 2013-17 the Royal Borough describes itself as:

*"The 2011 Census estimated that 25.5% of the population came from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, compared to 15.5% in 2001, and the borough is predicted to become more ethnically diverse over the next decade. However, Kingston remains less ethnically diverse than London as a whole, where over 40% of the population are from BAME groups. Kingston has significant numbers of Koreans, Tamils and Arabs relative to the size of its population. The borough also has the tenth highest percentage in England and Wales (10.7%) of households with multi-ethnicity partnerships. The school age population is estimated to be even more ethnically diverse: according to the 2012 Spring School Census, 35.7% of children living and attending a state school in Kingston came from BAME groups and 32% spoke English as an additional language. The same Census recorded at least 143 first languages other than English within Kingston's school population.*

*Kingston ranks as the third least deprived of all 33 London boroughs according to the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation. However, there are extremes of advantage and disadvantage across the borough: for example, Kingston contains super output areas ranked within both the 2% most deprived and 2% least deprived in England for income deprivation affecting children. The people of Kingston are relatively healthy, affluent and well educated. The number of school leavers attaining 5 GCSEs at A\*-C, including English and Mathematics, is well above both the London and National average at 70.1 per cent (National average of 59.3% and London 62.3%)"*

The local educational environment is competitive with 6<sup>th</sup> forms in all local secondary schools, Grammar Schools and independent provision.

The College student population is significantly different to that of Kingston, with approximately 50 per cent of learners from minority ethnic groups. Learners are recruited from a wide area of South West London and the average travel to learn is in excess of 5 miles.

**Carshalton College** is situated in the London Borough of Sutton and the sole provider of HE in the borough. The College attracts learners locally primarily from the boroughs of Sutton, Merton and Croydon. Approximately 30% of the student cohort is from minority ethnic heritage backgrounds. The London Borough of Sutton's 2016/17 Economy Watch describes the borough in the following ways;

*"The economy is in a good position, being one of only a few boroughs to experience population growth, with a professional workforce lending itself to a higher proportion of disposal income. This provides a good platform for future investment and developments where families have schools that are performing well and achieving excellent educational standards for children, performing above London and national averages. The economy attracts micro enterprises which are able to sustain and develop over the longer term being driven by a resourceful population driving the commercial and retail sectors forward. The overall health of Sutton's economy is in a resilient position to face new challenges and build."*

**Merton College** is situated in the London Borough of Merton. According to the London Borough of Merton's Economic Narrative Report of 2012 the Borough is described below with a recognition of a social and economic divide within the borough ;

*"..strengths of the borough are that it is generally a very safe place, with good transport connection and relatively low level of deprivation and crime. This has been reflected in relatively high average house prices compared to London as a whole. However, the aggregate picture masks a significant divide between the west and the east of the borough {in which Merton College*

*located}. The west is a prominent employment location, with better transport connections, a more highly skilled population, an consequent levels of crime and deprivation.*

*In contrast the east of the borough has poorer transport links, fewer numbers of jobs, a less highly skilled resident population a higher – though not high – levels of crime and deprivation. Whilst the east of the borough is not struggling in the same way that more seriously deprived parts of London are, the differences between the two halves of the borough are still jarring and suggest a need for economic strategy to focus on supporting opportunities for residents across the borough. There is a need to recognise the role which differential quality of transport connections play in determining areas of economic strength in the borough.*

*"Merton has many economic strengths, including a well-educated resident population, high average wage levels which can support local retail and leisure, an internationally recognised sporting venue and competition, and excellent transport links. Nonetheless, the poor employment growth record of the past decade shows that these strengths alone will not bring additional employment ."*

**South Thames College** operates from two campuses – Wandsworth High Street and the other in Tooting High Street – both in the London Borough of Wandsworth. Ofsted in its May 2016 described the college's student body using the following words; *Most earners live locally to the college, three quarters of whom are from socially disadvantaged areas. The majority of learners are of minority ethnic heritage backgrounds. The proportion of school leavers locally who achieve five GCSEs at grades A\* to C is higher than the national rate. The majority of the local population are qualified to level 2*". The London Borough of Wandsworth described itself, in May 2017, in its Economic and Prosperity Profile in the following words;

- *"Wandsworth has a very well qualified workforce, receiving above average earnings compared to other London residents. According to the 2011 UK Census, 53.6% of usual residents aged 16 and over had Level 4 qualifications and above (degree level or higher), the second highest proportion nationally outside the City of London.*
- *Correspondingly, the proportion of residents with no qualifications, Level 1 (1+ GCSE or equivalent) qualifications and Level 2 (5+ GCSEs Grade A to C or equivalent) were amongst the lowest in the country.*
- *33.1% of Wandsworth's full-time students aged 18 to 74 were also in employment, higher than the Inner London (28.7%) and London (31.4%) averages.*
- *Hours and Earnings - The Office of National Statistics' annual survey of hours and earnings (as shown on [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk) Labour Market Report) found that the gross weekly pay of full time workers living in Wandsworth to be £689.70 compared to the London average of £613.30 and GB average of £508.*
- *According to a Local Futures Place Profile (© 2012) prosperity scoring, Wandsworth is ranked 7 out of 408 districts on a prosperity score, indicating incomes amongst the resident population in the top 20% of districts nationally. "At £49,500, the average total income in Wandsworth is well above the national median, with the area ranking in the top 20% of districts nationally. By comparison, the London Central figure is £63,170 and the national figure is £26,845.*
- *At £535,290, the average house price in Wandsworth is very high, with the area ranking in the top 20% of districts nationally. By comparison the London Central figure is £718,039 and the national figure is £238,638*

**The South Thames College Group – a new college for south west London – rationale for change - ethos and vision** (source; "A consultation on a proposal for merger – Carshalton College, Kingston College and South Thames College March – April 2017")

In December 2016, the Governing Bodies of Carshalton College, Kingston College and South Thames College and the Board of Kingston and Sutton Educational Partnership (KSEP, which was, as part of the Federated arrangements, the shared services company owned by Carshalton College and Kingston College) decided to merge. In deciding this Governors adopted a vision for the new College Group (key points in the table below) that built on the historic legacies of the Colleges, the historical focus on teaching, learning, achievement and employability and explained in the consultation document that "the benefits and opportunities [of merger] will be achieved as a result of the organisation's core goal to achieve outstanding results. Success will be judged by students' achievements and their progression into higher study or sustainable careers, with a focus on Specialisation, Diversification, Responsiveness and Improvement".

- “Local delivery in a regional context: building on our valued local identities to continue to provide people and businesses with the skills they need.
- Realising growth: this new group will have the versatility to respond to new or expanding markets and the strategic scale to turn these into opportunities across the region.
- Promoting excellence and innovation in curriculum design, delivery and teaching: our new structures will need to secure solid, consistent improvement and the ability to do things differently.
- Delivering efficiency and the means to invest: the new college group will be able to manage cost decisively, handle curriculum overlaps, create financial capital and invest wisely in learning, people and buildings.
- Increasing relevance: the success of this strong new college group will be measured by its ability to meet and satisfy needs within the local and regional economies and population.
- Building resilience and sustainability: the new group will have sufficient scale and depth to handle tough challenges in the years ahead and provide the potential for investment for the benefit of learners and the local and regional economies and population.
- Leading social justice: the new group will retain its commitment to delivering the very best outcomes for all who users of Further Education [and Higher Education] in S W London.
- Valuing partnership: the success of the new group will be derived in part from its partnerships, so it will foster trust, consultation and shared solutions”.

Above all South Thames Colleges’ Group, as were its individual predecessor colleges, is a **learning and teaching** institution that welcomes a very diverse profile of students and supports excellent teaching. The focus upon learners, inclusion, social mobility and communities is readily identifiable in the following extracts from the merger consultation document published in April 2017 entitled “*The South Thames College Group – a new college for south west London – rationale for change - A consultation on a proposal for merger – Carshalton College, Kingston College and South Thames College*”. The table below lists the principal benefits and opportunities of merger identified in the above publication, already achieving fruition and of particular relevance for learners, learning, achievement, progression, career development and the community;

For learners	For communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ An enhanced curriculum which meets learners’ needs, helping them to progress on to employment or further study</li> <li>➤ A wider range of expert teaching staff, many of them industry experts too</li> <li>➤ Improved resources and facilities to support learning and progression</li> <li>➤ More opportunities to develop the essential enterprise and employability skills required by local employers</li> <li>➤ Increased opportunities for enrichment and a diverse student population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Enhanced career or specialism opportunities</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Further opportunities for professional development and peer support</i></li> <li>➤ <i>A more financially stable college ensures longer-term job stability</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Greater opportunities for sharing best practice and professional expertise</i></li> </ul>

### Profile of HE provision at South Thames College Group

The College is unusual due to the high number of its HE provider partners (eight); Kingston University; University of West London; University of Greenwich; Middlesex University; University of Roehampton; Canterbury Christchurch University; University of Northampton, University of Chichester plus Pearson’s courses. These arrangements encompass more than fifty individual degree and sub-degree programmes ranging from Foundation Year Zero programmes to a post-graduate teaching certificate. Partners have been specifically chosen to complement the expertise of the College’s Schools, as well as to widen the range of progression opportunities available to students. The provision of HE is embedded within the College Group’s School structures and apart from some separate Learning Resources zones the College Group does not separate Further Education (FE) and HE students by any physical barriers on its campuses. HE students in College are able to progress from FE courses; this in turn provides inspiration to new FE learners and helps to raise awareness of progression opportunities to HE particularly for those from non-traditional backgrounds and whose parents did not attend university.

At the time of writing there are around 1,500 students enrolled on HE courses, approximately half are on directly funded courses and the other half on franchised programmes. Kingston College has the largest number of HE students with a little over 1,000 currently enrolled, 250 approximately at South Thames College, and 180 approximately at Carshalton College.

In a changing economic environment and with increasing concern about the challenge of student loan liabilities, students are looking for more viable routes into HE that are both affordable, offer vocational avenues into employment, and are supportive of non-traditional learners. With this in mind there has been particular development of the HNC/HND portfolio which has been substantially expanded in the areas of the Creative Industries as well as the launch of a two new Honours Degree at South Thames College.

Carshalton College's HE student profile remains almost exclusively adult/mature learners studying for Foundation Degrees/ Top Up degrees alongside work. A substantial proportion of those are first generation undergraduates from a very diverse background and the majority are female. With the majority of learners returning to study after a substantial period of time and with limited prior experience of study the levels of academic support required are high.

### **Higher Education Strategy**

At the time of writing this Access and Participation Plan Agreement for 2019/20 the new merged College's Higher Education Strategy (2018-2021) is in process of approval by the Governing Body (its publication slightly delayed due to a desire to reflect the changing regulatory for higher education introduced by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and the launch of the Office for Students (OfS)). Reference should be made to the Colleges' website for the new merged College's Higher Education Strategic Objectives that underpin and expand on the College's values described earlier.

### **South Thames Colleges Group's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Widening Participation**

The College Group's published Equality Policy appears in the table below and as this Access and Participation Plan is read the implementation of this strategy and it's translation into operation will become evident. For example the commitments in the strategy below;

- to "actively promote access to learning programmes" is outlined in the College's Outreach access and success activities on pages 12 and 13,
- "provide services which are effective in recognising and assessing the specific needs of individuals and in ensuring that the right kinds of support and interventions are provided to meet these needs" are outlined on pages 13 and 14 in the section entitled "Retention and Success Activities and HE experience" and our support for learners with disabilities is outlined on page 15.
- The section in this plan on pages 5 -9 entitled "Assessment of Performance" outlines in detail how in this context the College Group will "undertake rigorous monitoring of learner achievement and take action aimed at addressing any equality gaps" and this will enable us to implement change a necessary and achieve the strategy's objective of developing " a systematic approach to assess the impact of new and existing policies, procedures and processes to ensure that where there is the potential for negative impacts that they are identified and addressed".

Equality and Diversity are central to the work of the South Thames Colleges Group. We will treat all people with dignity and respect and we will promote equality of opportunity and diversity. Within each College, we treat each other fairly, with respect and dignity regardless of:

• Age, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion/Belief, Pregnancy/ Maternity, Marriage /Civil partnership, Sexual Orientation

We strive to create an environment where everyone is supported in realising their goals and aspirations. Therefore, we promote equality and celebrate diversity and will not tolerate discrimination, which is not only wrong but also hurtful and can be illegal.

#### **How is this achieved?**

Our underlying commitment is to eliminate discrimination and promote equality across all protected characteristics which translate to Equality and Diversity being embedded in all policies, practices, decision making and evaluative processes.

- We actively promote access to learning programmes and services for all our learners and potential clients to enable them to improve their skills, to make progress and be successful in realising their ambitions.
- We create a visibly diverse environment, which values and celebrates difference and raises the aspiration of existing and potential learners.
- We are striving towards developing a staff profile, management team and governing body which are commensurate with the above.
- We provide services which are effective in recognising and assessing the specific needs of individuals and in ensuring that the right kinds of support and interventions are provided to meet these needs.
- We will, wherever possible, procure services from organisations who demonstrate a commitment to Equality and Diversity.
- We tackle discrimination, whether direct or indirect.
- We promote an ethos within The South Thames Colleges Group whereby all learners and members of staff respect the views, values, culture and beliefs of others.
- We undertake rigorous monitoring of learner achievement and take action aimed at addressing any equality gaps
- We develop a systematic approach to assess the impact of new and existing policies, procedures and processes to ensure that where there is the potential for negative impacts that they are identified and addressed.

The South Thames Colleges Group will implement change to achieve this Policy through action plans defined within a Single Equality Scheme. The Single Equality Scheme will integrate all actions that The Group will take to address each of the protected characteristics.

### **Supporting, understanding and implementing widening participation strategy**

As a method of implementing the HE Strategy the College developed, in 2014, a HE management committee structure incorporating a HE Academic Board (HEAB), and an HE Operations Group (HEOG), which report into the College's overall Committee and Governance structure. Agenda points relating to widening participation activities provide the basis for the oversight and enhancement of the College's strategic approach to both academic activities and support activities throughout the students' life cycle. It is via this Committee structure that the impact of the College's past Access Agreements and this newly titled Access and Participation Plan and widening participation activities are and will be monitored. This demonstrates the real importance that the College accords to the widening of participation in HE.

Significant HE documents have been mapped to the Quality Code, and mapping to the Quality Code has also taken place in Admissions, Marketing and Student Support to help towards a better understanding of HE requirements inclusive of access and widening participation activities. As this plan is being written updating and mapping to the requirements of the new regulatory framework for higher education introduced by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and to be implemented by the Office for Students (OfS) is also being undertaken. This first South Thames Colleges Group Access and Participation Plan attempts to reflect the *"approach to supporting social mobility, and equality and diversity, through higher education"* that is outlined in the Forward (written by Sir Michael Barber – Chair of the Office for Students) to "Securing Student Success; Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England – February 2018".

### **History of Access Agreements**

This is the fifth annual Access Agreement (now named Access and Participation Plan) published by the successor College (Kingston) (the first having been agreed by OFFA during the Summer of 2014) and the second written to recognise the new merged College Group identity. Planned widening participation activity in the context of these Access Agreements have only been in place for the past three academic years at Kingston College and only for one year at South Thames College and just the current academic year at Carshalton College.

The first and subsequent Access Agreements outlined the plan to increase the tuition fees for Honours Degree above the basic tuition fee to initially £6,850 per year and in 2017/18 to £7,500 and also outlined the College's plans to further develop its work to promote widened participation in Higher Education study. Alongside this the College made ongoing commitments that the majority of HE learners would be charged at or below the basic tuition fee level and indeed the part time tuition fees remain at a very modest level compared to many other HE providers.

South Thames College had published an Access Agreement in 2016/17 when planning to recruit students to a new BSc (Hons) Live Sound and Studio Engineering bearing a tuition fee of £9,000 but recruitment to that did not take place until 2017/18 and no other courses incurred a fee in excess of the basic tuition fee. Carshalton and Merton Colleges had never published an Access Agreement.

This fifth Access and Participation Plan which represents the second of the merged College Group looks to confirm a more rationalised and simpler set of fee arrangements for the new merged entity by reducing the number of different tuition fee amounts charged, making these more consistent across the College Group (which in a number of cases means that students will pay a reduced fee). This plan also confirms the opportunity for the College Group to apply index linked tuition fee rises which are available as a result of the College Group's receipt of a Bronze Award under the Teaching Excellence and Outcomes Framework published in June 2018. The Plan also outlines the College Group's objectives (milestones), and activities in respect of its widening participation activities through the student lifecycle – access, success and progression.

### **Assessment of Performance**

At this stage it is still difficult to draw strong conclusions about the impact of Kingston College's early Access Agreements, and at the time of writing only 10 months into the life of the newly merged South Thames Colleges Group this is also the first really "joined up" set of plans for this activity. Whilst the 2018/19 Access

Agreement was written as a true collaborative commitment it was completed pre-merger with each College at the time of writing operating separately.

This assessment of performance will therefore comprise of **three parts** – part one – an evaluative commentary on the successor College, Kingston's second Access Agreement which operated in 2016/17 and which will draw upon comments (in *italics*) made in the Monitoring Report submitted to OFFA in January 2018 - and part two – using Teaching Excellence and Student Outcome Framework (TEF) data now available an assessment of the new College Group's position as it completes its first year of operation in terms of an analysis of gaps in equality of opportunity for four of the five priority target groups and – part three – as a newly merged college an outline of the internal processes to be put in place to assess future performance.

### **Part one – an evaluative commentary of Kingston College's second Access Agreement which operated in 2016/17**

*“The progress made against targets has been less than hoped for in three cases of access activity (1) increasing the number of students from within the college to enter college based HE, (2) increasing the number of students with disabilities that enter college based HE and (3) an increase in satisfaction levels about information about HE progression). In a fourth case the recruitment of mature/adult learners to a part time course the target has been missed and the numbers actually recruited has reduced. The decline in the actual numbers of mature/adult learners studying part time is a major disappointment. Another area of concern has been progress on recruiting disabled students which has slowed from the previous year”.* The major disappointment is the lack of progress and indeed declining numbers of mature students on Foundation Degree courses particularly Early Years where entry to year 1 has declined by 33% since its peak (2015/16), and Business where year 1 start numbers are less than half of the 2014/15 numbers, teaching courses and particularly PGCE where student numbers are down one third from two years ago and at Carshalton College the decline led to the closure of the PGCE course in September 2017. This trend does match the external environment with a decline in popularity of mature learners entering HE. The tuition fee loan situation could be a deterrent although we cannot state that categorically as there has been not only a decline in enrolments, but a decline in applications, meaning that conversations to evidence the cause have not readily been available. Bursaries to subsidise tuition fees have been less effective than hoped and failed to attract attention and applications. This lack of demand has also led to some new planned part time provision being postponed and the part time HNC/D in Travel and Tourism no longer operating at Kingston College.

This “poor performance in access for mature students and flat performance in access for students with disabilities” recognised by the College in the monitoring process were echoed by the Director of Fair Access in a letter to the College in April 2018. The College was asked to consider “how it you will address its performance in these areas in regards to future access and participation work”.

*Three access targets have been met ((1)the maintenance of the proportion of the students studying at HE level in the College from ethnic minorities, (2) increasing the number of students from disadvantaged economic situations as identified by postcodes and (3) increasing the number of students progressing to HE at any institution)*

*Whilst the College's history of Access Agreements is quite short the areas of success in access activities in attracting learners from ethnic minorities, and from POLAR 1&2 neighbourhoods is very much in line with the overall college performance (including FE as well) where the College's reputation as a safe and supportive environment offering a wide range of vocational courses with high levels of pastoral, academic and tutorial support has contributed to these trends. The college's overall student population has a significant ethnic minority population and its harmonious, safe and comfortable atmosphere (as recognised by Ofsted) has undoubtedly contributed to the attraction of HE students from such groups who see and benefit from these positive features. The College's success and progression activities include high level of pastoral, academic and tutorial support also contributes significantly to the attraction of students to the lower UCAS entry tariff courses and attracts students with more modest past academic performance a significant number of which live in POLAR 1&2 postcode locations. The College's overall uplift of performance (at FE level) has contributed to the increase in number of students progressing to all HE - the increased numbers reported has also been influenced by capturing data about all students progressing to university whichever route of application taken.”*

The milestones that the College has set itself for 2019-20 on pages 16/17, demonstrate responses to both good and less good performance as outlined above and identities changed and new focuses and objectives.

## Part Two – the new College Group’s position as it completes its first year of operation in terms of an analysis of gaps in equality of opportunity for four of the five priority target groups

At the time of writing this agreement the most relevant and reliable data about the College’s HE student population can be drawn from the year 3 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) metrics which provide an average profile of the College Group’s HE population over the past five year period (the table immediately below is extracted from TEF year three metrics provided by HEFCE in October 2017). This equalities gap analysis uses TEF year 3 data which is a more reliable source of data upon which to assess the position of the College Group rather than use data collected by the three colleges separately using different methodologies.

The tables which follow on pages 7 and 8 look to identify gaps in equality of opportunity for four of the specified target groups and use comparisons against the College Group’s core performance of its whole cohort, and against benchmarks and again use TEF Metrics.

		Full-time	% of total	Part-time	% of total	Total
Overall	Headcount	2,030	81%	470	19%	2,490
	FTE	1,950.00	86%	310.00	14%	2,260

		Full-time		Part-time		Total	
		Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Level of study	PG / UG boundary	80	4%	25	6%	110	4%
	First degree	1,210	60%	95	20%	1,305	52%
	Other UG	725	36%	350	74%	1,075	43%
Age	Under 21	1,110	55%	185	39%	1,295	52%
	21 to 30	550	27%	150	32%	705	28%
	Over 30	355	18%	135	28%	490	20%
Ethnicity	White	880	44%	250	53%	1,125	45%
	Black	405	20%	90	19%	495	20%
	Asian	475	24%	80	17%	555	22%
	Other	245	12%	50	11%	295	12%
	Unknown	15	1%	5	1%	20	1%
Sex	Male	940	47%	270	57%	1,215	49%
	Female	1,075	53%	200	43%	1,275	51%
	Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Disability	Yes	180	9%	50	11%	230	9%
	No	1,835	91%	420	89%	2,260	91%
Entry qualifications	HE-level	65	3%	90	20%	160	6%
	High tariff	30	2%	15	3%	50	2%
	Medium tariff	135	7%	30	6%	165	7%
	Low tariff	975	48%	170	36%	1,145	46%
	Non tariff	690	34%	155	33%	845	34%
	Non-UK students	120	6%	10	2%	130	5%
Domicile	UK	1,900	94%	465	98%	2,360	95%
	Other EU	50	3%	5	1%	55	2%
	Non-EU	70	3%	5	1%	70	3%
Local students	Yes	735	39%	165	36%	900	38%
	No	1,100	61%	295	64%	1,455	62%
POLAR	1	80	4%	10	6%	90	7%
	2	95	10%	15	8%	110	9%
	3	235	23%	55	29%	290	24%
	4	245	24%	45	24%	290	24%
	5	365	36%	60	33%	425	35%
National IMD (EIMD / WIMD / NIMD / SIMD)	1	355	19%	70	15%	420	18%
	2	535	29%	120	26%	655	28%
	3	410	22%	105	23%	515	22%
	4	290	16%	80	18%	370	16%
	5	285	15%	85	18%	370	16%

Learners with disabilities	No Disability indicator %	Disabled indicator %	Gap %	Benchmark % Disabled	Gap %
The teaching on my course	79.7	82.2	2.5	85.3	-3.1
Assessment and feedback	71.1	73.3	2.2	74.7	-1.4
Academic Support	76.4	76.8	0.4	79.6	-2.8
Continuation	83.8	84	0.2	87.2	-3.2
Employment or further study	93.8	96.2	2.4	93.2	3
Highly skilled employment or further study	67.2	62.5	-4.2	71.8	-9.3

The table above identifies that when comparing the situation of students with disabilities against those without there appears no gap in their access to teaching, assessment and academic support and in their outcomes, excepting access to highly skilled employment. However, when comparing that data of students with disabilities against the benchmark we do see significant gaps in all but employment outcomes.

Mature learners					
	Young indicator %	Mature indicator%	Gap %	Core benchmark %	Gap %
The teaching on my course	78.5	81.4	2.9	85.7	-4.3
Assessment and feedback	67.9	74.4	6.5	76.2	-1.8
Academic Support	75.8	77.1	1.3	81.7	-4.6
Continuation	86.1	81.6	-4.5	86.6	-5
Employment or further study	91.4	96	4.6	93.6	3.6
Highly skilled employment or further study	62.1	70.2	8.1	72.2	-2

The table above identifies that when comparing the situation of mature students with young students there appears no gap in their access to teaching, assessment and academic support (indeed mature learners express higher satisfaction rates) and their outcomes are better than young learners. Continuation is poor but when comparing that data of the mature students with the core overall college benchmark we do not see a gap but an overall college wide gap between college performance and benchmark.

POLAR 1& 2 students					
	Polar 1&2 indicator %	Polar 3-5 indicator%	Gap %	Core benchmark %	Gap %
The teaching on my course	82.9	78.5	4.4	85.7	-2.8
Assessment and feedback	72.2	67.3	4.5	76.2	-4
Academic Support	75.4	76.1	-0.7	81.7	-6.3
Continuation	91.1	83.8	7.3	86.6	4.5
Employment or further study	83.8	93.9	-10.1	93.6	-9.8
Highly skilled employment or further study	50	66.9	-16.9	72.2	-22.2

The table above identifies that when comparing the situation of students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 with students from POLAR quintiles 3-5 there appears no gap in their access to teaching, assessment and a very small gap in terms of academic support (indeed these learners express higher satisfaction rates) and their continuation rates are better than learners from quintiles 3-5. However, employment outcomes are very significantly lower. When comparing that data of the students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 with the core overall benchmark for all learners in the College we do see significant gaps in all apart from continuation but that is college wide gap and not one of specific reference to this group.

BME Students					
	BME indicator %	White indicator%	Gap %	Core benchmark %	Gap %
The teaching on my course	81.6	79	2.6	85.7	-4.6
Assessment and feedback	71.5	71.2	0.3	76.2	-4.7
Academic Support	78.8	74.6	4.2	81.7	-2.9
Continuation	82.8	85.2	-2.4	86.6	-3.8
Employment or further study	92.7	95.5	-2.8	93.6	-0.9
Highly skilled employment or further study	67	66.3	0.7	72.2	-5.2

The table above identifies that when comparing the situation of students from Black and Ethnic Minority Groups with White students there appears no gap in their access to teaching, assessment and academic support (indeed these learners express higher satisfaction rates) but their continuation rates are lower than white learners. Employment outcomes are also a little lower but high skilled employment matches the performance of white learners. When comparing that data of the Black and Ethnic Minority Groups students with the core overall benchmark for all learners in the College we do see significant gaps in all but that is a college wide gap and not one of specific reference to this group.

TEF metrics do not provide specific data about care leavers and the Colleges' data about access, success and progression of care leavers is currently incomplete for HE learners. As an FE college we monitor close the performance of our younger students in care leavers and those that have left care and those mechanisms will be extended to the monitoring of those studying at HE level.

**Part three – as a newly merged college an outline of the internal processes which will be put in place to assess performance.**

With effect from academic year 2018/19 the College Group will have adopted a single student registration and information system. This will provide information about students from five underrepresented groups;

- Students from areas of low higher education participation identified by postcode and classified under 5 POLAR quintiles
- Students of particular ethnicities – there will be 18 different ethnicities available for selection by a student
- Mature students – identified by age
- Disabled students – students will be able to identify disabilities from 20 categories (and identify all relevant disabilities and a primary one)
- Care leavers

This data will permit the college to monitor performance, identify trends, measure success against milestones and evaluate the impact of the Group's activities and financial support by reviewing data in connection with;

- Applications
- Enrolments
- Completion
- Continuation (from year one studies)
- Progression
- Achievement

The availability of this data will also enable the College Group to analyse potential equality gaps in sub groups (eg. specific ethnicities) and explore intersections of disadvantage (eg. disabled students from low socio economic backgrounds).

The College Group will evaluate the impact of its financial support activities by reviewing the performance of the individual students benefiting from the support (bursaries and hardship funds) with particular respect to their status in connection with;

- Retention (in year)
- Continuation (from first year of study to second)
- Progression in subsequent years
- Achievement
- And post course progression to employment/further study
- In developing these evaluative mechanisms the College will adopt parts of the OFFA financial support evaluation toolkit including the interview tool.

A similar mechanism will be used to evaluate the impact of support provided to disabled students.

The College Group will review its outreach access activities, which incorporate college and school activity (including raising attainment), and will monitor this in a more focussed way than in the past by reviewing activity and impact considering;

- School/college type and cohort characteristics
- Characteristics of students/pupils interacted with
- Progression and achievement data of those pupils
- Feedback from school link representatives

The impact of success and progression activities in college and to support HE learners in learning, to help them achieve and progress to employment and/or further study will be reviewed as part of the College's Quality Assurance processes which integrate with analysis of TEF metrics and apply TEF criterion. This will include an annual review of data outlined in part 2 of this Assessment and Performance section which focus on the analysis of equality gaps. This will be supported by more direct feedback from students and those progressing from the College who have received this support.

### **Publication of Tuition Fees, Financial Support and Marketing**

The Group's marketing for Higher Education provision consists of a wide range of local and regional promotional activities including: the colleges' websites, e-marketing, promotional videos, WhatUni, Hot Courses, social media, pan-London and National press, and radio advertising. Membership of UCAS and attendance at events facilitates awareness and participation locally, nationally and internationally.

Each college within the Group continues to use its local brand name eg. Kingston College, Carshalton College etc. and websites are maintained for each of the different colleges. Currently the Group operates four individual college websites; each of these platforms features an Undergraduate landing page, tailored to HE audiences. These highlight subject specific opportunities as well as support available for learners studying on HE programmes. The website is compliant with BS8878 Web Accessibility Code of Practice which ensures the following groups can navigate the website: Dyslexia sufferers, those with English as a second language, those with colour blindness, those who are deaf and hard of hearing and use a personal reader and those suffering from Epilepsy. Each websites' undergraduate section includes information and guidance about tuition fees, student finance and bursaries and hardship funds will be displayed. Tuition fees will also be detailed in offer letters to applicants. Staff involved with interviews and auditions will be trained to ensure information and guidance about tuition fees, student finance and bursaries and hardship funds are included as part of that activity (and hard copy information will be made available). The College's HE Admissions Team will advise Student Finance England via the appropriate student loan portal of each course's tuition fee and this will appear in the Student Loan Portal. This Access and Participation Plan will be published on all relevant college websites for the duration of the study period of students affected by the plan.

Information and the method of application for bursaries and financial support (such as hardship funds) will be included within the undergraduate pages of Colleges website for enquirers and applicants, be included as part of the communication with offers, and be made available at point of acceptance and enrolment. Students in study will be reminded of the availability of this support in course handbooks and at induction and in course tutorial. The support will be promoted on the front page of the College's Moodle learning environment.

Information about courses, support and tuition fees also appear in a hard copy HE prospectus which provides information about the whole College Group's offering.

### **Admissions**

The College Group's Admissions work is reviewed by the Higher Education Operations Group as well as the Higher Education Academic Board to ensure that the Group's Admissions, HE Clearing and HE Enrolment processes respond to the changing HE landscape.

The College Group makes full use of its UCAS membership, which raises its profile regionally and nationally. At the time of writing, the successor college Kingston's Admissions processes are guided by its bespoke HE Admissions Policy. During the 2018/19 recruitment cycle this policy will have been implemented across the Group, along with the review of HE Admissions processes to ensure consistency of the group-wide procedures and underlying activities such as UCAS, CMA, reporting and Service Level Agreements. More so, this will enhance the monitoring of fair admissions centrally within the Group.

### **Strategies to increase access from 2019-2020**

#### **Financial Support**

The College Group will offer five types of bursaries, one of which is new for 2019/2020, the bursary for care leavers, and another of which, the bursary for adult/mature learners entering HE, has been amended to make it available for entry to any HE course (part or full time). These bursaries whilst ostensibly acting as an access tool to attract a range of learners including those from areas/backgrounds of low HE participation, low income and / or low socio economic status, care leavers and mature learners are also intended as success tools to support individual learners whilst in learning to be successful despite difficult personal financial circumstances. Similarly the HE Hardship Fund acts as a success tool being available to support learners from the above groups at all of the Colleges who face immediate and urgent financial crisis to maintain their focus on study in spite of those difficulties.

#### **Internal College Progression Bursaries (First year of study)**

The College will continue to offer "progression bursaries" to four students progressing from within the College from a level 3/Access course to a full time Higher Education programme. The bursary of £2,500 will be paid, half as a partial fee discount on first year fees, and the other half as a cash bursary also in the first year. The eligibility for this bursary will be that the applicant;

- Has progressed from a L3 course at one of the colleges within the South Thames Colleges Group
- holds a firm offer to study on one of South Thames Colleges Group's higher education full time courses, starting in September 2019;
- is eligible to receive student finance (maintenance loan and tuition fee loan for UK students; tuition fee loan for EU students);
- has a household income assessed by Student Finance England (or equivalent) at £25,000 or less;
- has not studied at university level before; and

- that neither parents hold a university-level qualification, or the applicant is a mature and independent student (over 21 years old on 1 September 2019).
- In the event that more applications are received than we can assist we may also use an academic merit criterion to prioritise applications.

### **Bursaries to School Leavers from non-selective state Schools with the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, the London Boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Richmond upon Thames, Wandsworth, Sutton and Merton, and Elmbridge Borough Council.**

The College will continue to offer a bursary scheme available to school leavers progressing to a South Thames Colleges Group's full time Higher Education Programme from non-selective state schools in the above named London boroughs (this is actually a widened geographical offering covering the catchment areas of the four merged college centres and for this year the adjoining South London boroughs and councils). Four bursaries of £2,500 each will be paid, half as a partial fee discount on first year fees and the other half as a cash bursary also in the first year. The eligibility for this bursary will be the same as mentioned for the Internal College Progression Bursary (above) apart from the origin of the applicant ie.. in this case a school leaver from a non-selective state school.

### **Bursaries to applicants for full time/part time programmes of learning in subjects offered in the School of Creative Industries**

The College will offer a bursary scheme available to those accepted to a South Thames College Group full or part time Higher Education Programme in the subject area of Creative Industries. A total bursary pot of £7,500 will be available and will be awarded either as a bursary of £2,500 to a full time student which will be paid half as a partial fee discount on first year fees and the other half as a cash bursary also in the first year, or as a bursary of £1,250 to a part time student, which will also be paid half as a partial fee discount on first year fees and the other half as a cash bursary also in the first year. The eligibility for this bursary will be the same as mentioned for the Internal College Progression Bursary (above) apart from that of type of study ie.. in this case a student studying a Creative Industries subject.

### **Bursaries for adult/mature learners entering higher education courses at South Thames Colleges Group (First year)**

The College will for 2019/20 extend the financial support (bursary scheme) for adult learners by providing this opportunity to adult students entering both full and part time higher education courses for the first time (previously it was available to those adults study on courses offered on a part time basis only. This bursary will be of the value of £1,250 (those receiving the bursary will have a choice to take this as a partial fee discount in first year fee or as cash. Ten such bursaries will be available). The eligibility for this bursary will be that the applicant;

- holds a firm offer to study at South Thames College Group, starting in September 2019;
- is eligible to receive student finance (maintenance loan and tuition fee loan for UK students; tuition fee loan for EU students);
- has a household income assessed by Student Finance England (or equivalent) at £25,000 or less;
- has not studied at university level before; and
- the applicant is a mature student (over 21 years old on 1 September 2019).
- In the event that more applications are received than we can assist we will apply the criteria of date of application (supported by necessary evidence).

### **Bursaries for Care Leavers entering higher education courses at South Thames Colleges Group (First year)**

The College will for 2019/20 extend the financial support (bursary scheme) for care leavers by providing this opportunity to students entering both full and part time higher education courses for the first time. Previously Care Leavers were priority applicants for other bursaries but the College Group feels that to achieve real progress on encouraging and supporting Care leavers to apply to HE, and be successful, this support and opportunity needs to be more visible. Three bursaries of £2,500 each will be paid, half as a partial fee discount on first year fees and the other half as a cash bursary also in the first year. The eligibility for this bursary will be that the applicant;

- holds a firm offer to study at South Thames College Group, starting in September 2019;
- is eligible to receive student finance (maintenance loan and tuition fee loan for UK students; tuition fee loan for EU students);
- has a household income assessed by Student Finance England (or equivalent) at £25,000 or less;
- has not studied at university level before; and
- the applicant is a care leaver.

- In the event that more applications are received than we can assist we will apply the criteria of date of application (supported by necessary evidence).

## **Outreach access and success activities**

South Thames Colleges Group's outreach programme encompasses a number of widening participation activities which focus on under-represented groups within the Colleges' own communities, local boroughs of Kingston, Merton, Wandsworth and Sutton as well as the adjoining Boroughs of Elmbridge and Richmond upon Thames. The activities outlined immediately below on this page and page 14, include a major focus on access and helping younger students understand and recognise the opportunity of HE study and that is attainable for them, and in some cases are success focussed activities helping to uplift attainment and are aimed at the following groups of younger learners:

- Disadvantaged socio-economic localities and communities and areas where there is low level of participation in Higher Education (as measured by POLAR data).
- Non selective state schools with records of lower levels of progression to higher education.
- Those without a family history of Higher Education
- Students from a range ethnic minorities where progression to higher education is low

Examples of such good practice from the current academic year include the work with a number of schools in SW London including :Hampton High School, Graveney School, Carshalton High School for Girls Sixth Form, Esher College/Elmbridge Schools' Consortium, Greenshaw School, Tolworth Girls Sixth Form, Richmond Park Academy and Esher High School.

The College Group supports these, other 6<sup>th</sup> Forms and year 10 and 11 groups with a range of activities including: Post 18 Options talks, Interview preparation and CV writing workshops, Higher Level Apprenticeships and work-based learning talks, Study Skills and Preparation for University Life sessions. These are aimed at uplifting aspiration and help to make HE study a realistic opportunity for those without a family history of HE and situated within areas of lower socio economic prosperity and HE participation.

Activities aimed at younger students for 2019/20 will include:

- Working with further education students within the College Group who are historically less likely to access HE, including students with an entitlement to free College meals and in subject areas where progression to HE is lower to raise aspirations and promote progression to vocational HE study.
- Working on access and success with relevant local partnerships/organisations such as Aim Higher London South (see later section) and Linking London to raise aspiration, motivation and achievement particularly with young people from lower socio economic settings and lower HE participation groupings, including work with non-selective state schools, education business partnerships, and other career and advice providers.
- Providing internal progression events and HE Fairs which will, as in previous years, also be promoted to local schools and, will provide access support and advice and workshops on such things as student finance, financial planning, and with specific focus on debt consequences of study after graduation and career and employment potential post-graduation. This aimed particularly at students with no family history of HE, lower socio economic groupings and from areas of low HE Participation where the perception of student debt may create a particular barrier to aspiration.
- Developing access by signposting progression routes from selected feeder schools in the local non-selective state sector into the College's Higher Education provision which will attract learners from groupings with a lower HE participation rate and local learners including care leavers and students from poorer socio economic areas where studying near home may have advantages.
- The continuance of access activity and the 1:1 support for college students (via personal tutors and the Colleges' Information Advice and Guidance teams) researching HE opportunities, supporting the making of choices, the completion of UCAS applications and appropriate confirming and signposting of HE progression routes. This is particularly important to promote access amongst those where there is no family history of HE and support at home for these processes may be absent.
- Facilitating the meeting with, and presentations from past students who have progressed to HE and those students studying for a HE award in the College (these opportunities to be provided to L3 College learners and students studying in local state non-selective schools) which will uplift aspiration for HE and identify its relevance and availability and is particularly important to promote access amongst those where there is no family history of HE, for those with financial disadvantages and for care leavers.

- Engaging with our partner HEIs through Compact arrangements to facilitate progression routes for College Level 3 students and developing compact arrangements for schools in the local and neighbouring boroughs to our College based HE. Such activities are specifically aimed at students with no family history of HE, from lower socio economic groupings and areas of low HE participation.
- Providing enhanced 1:1 information advice and guidance for late applicants to HE (for College students and students studying within the local borough and those adjoining and who will often be those with limited family history of HE, limited personal support such as care leavers and those from lower socio economic groupings perturbed by the perception of student debt), particularly during the Clearing period, and as appropriate additional entry support to the programme.
- Exploring the development of links with local primary schools with a higher index of deprivation to promote awareness, and raise aspiration.

The successor College, Kingston had less experience of working with adult/mature groups but within the newly merged College at South Thames College and Merton College, in particular, there is a much larger active adult learning cohort and the local population of these and Carshalton College contains a lower proportion of graduate educated adults.

- The College Group will explore and implement new access and success strategies and activities to promote access to HE for this group and to help them succeed. These actions will address the disappointing progress made with this group of learners as identified earlier in the Assessment of Performance section.

The College Group is the biggest Access to HE Centre in London and offers 14 Access to HE pathways: Midwifery, Engineering, Media, Social Work, Nursing, Teaching, Computing, Digital Marketing, Business Studies, Art & Design, Paramedic Science, Science, Sport Science and Humanities and Social Science. These courses are for students from a very wide range of backgrounds, some without prior qualifications, mostly aimed at mature students, offered on a full- time or part- time basis to allow flexibility for working students or students with young families and provide the opportunity to uplift attainment at a later point in the students' lives. The majority of students on these courses gain university places at a very broad range of universities (and some within the college), in particular at local universities which for those students with families helps with managing childcare.

Whilst not a formal part of the Access and Participation Plan the College Group will work with HE partners, the National Apprenticeship Service and others to increase the awareness and take up of degree apprenticeships. To support this College aspires to deliver a minimum of 3 degree apprenticeships by September 2019.

### **Retention and Success Activities and HE experience**

Retention across all Higher Education within the college has been in excess of 90% in the past three years although the TEF continuation rate of learners is lower at 83.8% (and 2.8 percentage points below the benchmark).

The college will continue to enhance the success activities it offers and the support students from the widening participation cohorts receive with the following activities.

- Applicants meeting the minimum entry criteria are interviewed. This provides an opportunity to discuss the suitability of the course, review individual support needs and personal plans and ensure a successful match of course and choice.
- Students are provided with a 1:1 tutorial entitlement with a named personal tutor to provide a source of advice and a means of monitoring performance. Examples of the high level of support offered to HE learners in the College continues to include the arrangements on the FdA Early Years, Management and Leadership, and Children's Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practice, courses populated with adult/mature learners where each student in addition to their personal tutor has a work based mentor to help support them through their studies. These mentors are offered training and termly road shows, a regular newsletter to support their work. Previous students are also invited to speak to current students as a way of support and to build their confidence.
- The opportunity to create a personalised individual learning plan, via the Pro Monitor system (a student performance monitoring system), which will also provide the ongoing opportunity for the student and their tutor to monitor progress throughout the year.
- The provision of learning materials in a number of formats including hard copy, learning resources materials and via the virtual learning environment (Moodle) to match the range of needs of college learners and allow them to choose their preferred method.

- Induction and progression programmes prepare students for new learning experiences and enhance their chances of success by helping them recognise the changes in the demand of courses at different levels.
- Close monitoring of attendance patterns and the follow up of unexplained absences by personal tutors via a variety of media supports learners with less disciplined and structured learning habits to be successful. In the Kingston College School of Business learners on full time courses who join with very modest prior academic achievement continue to benefit from the following practices; individual and personalised assignment tutorials and assignment feedback, very effective personal tutorial support, involvement and engagement with work place mentors, the accessibility of the teaching teams to students, both in person, remotely by phone and by email, and design of student friendly timetables. The academic year 2017/18 saw the introduction of an attendance monitor role for this group of learners and was designed to provide a supportive but proactive function to help students with less well developed study skills to be more of their performance, including attendance and support and encourage them to develop improved independent study skills and behaviours.
- The assessment of performance appearing earlier in this plan has identified a gap in continuation rates for adult/mature learners and student from black and ethnic minority groups. The College Group will address these issues firstly by identifying the specific learning needs of these groups/individuals within them, and any external influences which may impact harmfully on their study and then implement a more targeted application of the range of strategies outlined here.
- Provision of Student Support services including academic skills workshops aimed at student cohorts with characteristics of inhibited success and equality achievement gaps such as adult/mature learners and student from black and ethnic minority groups.
- The College has understood the need to develop an HE ethos for its HE cohorts and despite a decline in HE student numbers dedicated HE Study Centres have been maintained at two of the college centres. In particular the LRC staff offer advice and guidance specific to the needs of the College's HE profile of students and help with access to e-books and e-journals. The College will address the particular need to provide access to such facilities at all its sites for adult/mature learners studying outside daily study hours and the importance of such access for learners from lower socio economic settings where access to learning resources may be less easy in the home environment.
- In-depth inductions are delivered throughout the academic year. Induction programmes are structured and communicated to students in advance of use and reinforcement with further sessions can also be delivered by LRC staff during the year. Induction session content is routinely reinforced through information in Moodle. Induction and information skills delivery is regularly evaluated following student and staff feedback regarding effectiveness with considerations of when, how and to whom. These sessions are of particular value to the adult/mature learner who may have experienced a gap since their last formal learning experience.
- Promotion of independent learning through study skills and information skills sessions and study skills online guides are provided through LRC pages on Moodle. Information about the LRC services and resources are available to current students through Moodle. The College recognises that with its range of learners and in the case of adult/mature learners some need for flexibility of delivery and therefore there is a strong emphasis on e-learning and schemes of work, and learning materials are accessible online by students at all times via Moodle.

### **Student Support Services:**

The Student Support Teams comprise a group of experienced professionals who provide a high quality service, including emergency support, to all students at all centres offering an accessible success focussed service across the week which can assist students with a range of support needs from mental health issues to housing crisis and help them still succeed despite their difficulties.

The counselling service is open to all students across the College centres. The Student Engagement Advisors and Counsellors offer support for a wide range of issues that arise for students. If more specialist help is required, then appropriate referral to outside organisations is sought.

### **Progression**

Strong links with partner institutions mean that students on Foundation Years, Foundation Degrees, HNCs and HNDs have clearly articulated and facilitated pathways to complete Bachelor degrees. For many of the current courses, the progression routes are clearly identified with a named course and HE partner and the expectation that students should progress (and to where) is explicitly stated (e.g. Foundation Year in Business (with pathways in: Management, Marketing, Accounting and Real Estate Management)). There are continuing

opportunities for students to progress internally within the College Group and convert a Higher National Certificate into a Diploma (a range of opportunities in Performing Arts and Sports), Top Up a Foundation Degree (eg. Art and Design), or Higher National Diploma, to a full Honours Degree (eg Business). All of these arrangements provide more accessible progression to students less familiar with and less supported in their HE study such as students from families without HE experience and areas of lower HE participation and for adult/mature learners less familiar with application processes such as UCAS.

### **Additional Learning Support (ALS):**

South Thames College Group welcomes applications from all students. Each application is considered individually and the aim is to provide all students with high quality tuition and support. This is part of the College's wider commitment to equal opportunities. Help is available for students who have a learning difficulty, disability or medical condition. The ALS Team is a group of specialist tutors and experienced Senior Learning Mentors and Learning Mentors. These provide an essential service to support the College's commitment to equality and diversity and to enhancing the learning experience of our students.

The College is committed to providing support for students with disabilities, dyslexia and other learning differences. The ALS Team provides support and advice to students and is available to help with application and implementation on the Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA). ALS is actively involved in the admission of prospective students to the HE courses in Kingston College and in working with curriculum teams during study. Students who have indicated a learning need or disability on application are contacted to establish their support needs prior to their enrolments. Within the Schools with the larger HE cohorts Student Learning Improvement Mentors (SLIMS) are placed to be available to HE learners to help with DSA applications and provide other and additional non funded support. The College is committed to support students that are not eligible for DSA but still would benefit from support and will make reasonable adjustments. The College also loans equipment such as adapted keyboard, mouse and advises on specialist software .

As mentioned elsewhere in this plan the College's progress with regard to recruitment of students with disabilities to HE has been less than successful. The College's plans to achieve its milestones include;

- The publication of a new HE teaching and admissions staff guidance booklet on making reasonable adjustments and their role in the DSA process including at the interview stage.
- Increased and improved publicity about the availability of adapted equipment and specialist software to support learners to be independent.
- Increased allocation of access and success investment to support applicants and students with disabilities to access support and be more confident in their ability to succeed. This will include the allocation of funds to support students with upfront fees for diagnosis in advance of DSA approval.

### **Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) - progression:**

The CIAG service within the College works to professional standards set within the Careers Guidance Practice Framework and offers impartial careers guidance, embracing the Widening Participation Agenda. Through targeted internal workshops, the team actively promote and encourage students, many first generation learners to research and access HE. The service offers one-to-one careers guidance to the wider community, many embarking on access courses. CIAG help to promote the Bursary Schemes throughout the year, both within the service and online; they also work closely with school liaison within universities. The service offers information and support around HE employability and career planning which is tailored to the needs of the students. As in previous years the team has organised during 2017-18 a series of successful student finance events to raise awareness of support and loans available to HE students via Student Finance England (SFE) and University schemes. Local banks were invited to explain their own individual schemes and this has been particularly effective in helping those from lower income earning homes and students such as care leavers who may be concerned at the prospect of student debt. The CIAG teams have worked with over 1,000 students so far this academic year (2017-18) specifically around accessing HE. Interventions have involved: one to one UCAS drop-in support, specialist appointments. HE partner institutions also run workshops for level 3 students at the College to help with UCAS applications and writing personal statements. These all raise aspirations and for those college students from areas of lower HE participation and/or families with no history of HE study raise aspirations and help them recognise the relevance and attainability of such opportunities.

As a result of the assessment of performance appearing earlier in this plan there is a clear need for higher levels of support (and some targeted support for learners with disabilities, and from lower participation and socio economic groups and for learners from black and ethnic minority groups) for HE learners as they approach the end of their study to enhance their opportunity for future employment and study.

## Summary of Planned Access and Participation Plan (APP) expenditure 2019-20

Access expenditure	£4,000 (1.6% of Higher fee income)
Student success expenditure	£10,000 (4.1% of Higher fee income)
Progression expenditure	£6,000 (2.5% of Higher fee income)
Expenditure on financial support - comprising Bursaries of; £35,000 for full time students with household residual incomes up to £25,000 £12,500 for adult/mature students with household residual incomes up to £25,000 £10,000 Hardship funds for all students	£57,500 (23.7% of Higher fee income)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£77,500 (31.9% of Higher fee income)</b>

### The planned expenditure for 2019/20 detailed above indicates;

- An reduction in total expenditure from South Thames College's 2018/19 plan due to a predicted decrease in the number of students in above basic tuition fee categories (14 - 9%) as a result of a predicted decline in demand for the two Honours Degree course (Acting for Stage and Media and Business (Top Up)) which historically have had the largest cohort of above basic tuition fee payers. At the time of writing there is no clear and apparent increase in demand or new additional courses which will compensate for this. This decline in these numbers can be partly explained by the increasingly competitive HE environment and in the case of the College's Business subject provision a change in the agreement with the partner university.
- Whilst there is a decline in total planned expenditure value the number and value of bursaries has been maintained as they are, in any case, quite small in number, and includes a revised focus on supporting adult learners into HE (on both full and part time courses) and a new and separate recognition of support provision to Care Leavers.
- Whilst the focus of student success and progression activities is maintained the value of planned expenditure has fallen in line with the decline in above basic tuition fee income.

### The Kingston Academy (TKA)

South Thames Colleges Group is a partner (with Kingston University and the Royal Borough of Kingston) in the Kingston Education Trust (KET) which established The Kingston Academy in North Kingston. The Kingston Academy is a co-educational, non-selective, non-faith secondary free school which first opened its doors to Year 7 pupils in September 2015. The over-riding aim of the school is to provide pupils with an outstanding education in line with the school motto, "to go beyond what schools ordinarily do." The values and skills of the partners ensure that KET contributes to enhancing the diversity and quality of education at The Kingston Academy. The structure of the Governing Body reflects this enviable partnership (The Chair of the Trust Board is the South Thames College Group Principal and another College member of staff sits on the Trust Board and a range of specialist committees). The link with the College and Kingston University as well as other industry partners provides opportunities to enrich the learning experience for The Kingston Academy student.

The College's contribution to the School, in addition to its involvement with the establishment of the Trust and ongoing governance, includes an exchange of experiences for school pupils and College students. Pupils from the school use the College performance space for plays and to exhibit work in the College art gallery. Whilst a significant aim of the College's involvement with the School will be to raise aspirations and to ensure that as new entrants to the school approach their FE/HE choices they are fully informed and aware of choices (with a particular focus on those from areas of lower HE representation) there is also a focus upon raising outcomes and achievements. Information on The Kingston Academy can be found on the school's website <http://www.thekingstonacademy.org/>.

### Milestones for 2019/2020

This is the fifth year of Kingston College (the successor college in the merger explained on page 1) operating an Access Agreement / Access and Participation Plan and the second year of the plan applying to the South Thames College Group. The milestones set for 2019/20 are a development of those set for 2018/19 when the first merged college Access was created. For some milestones such as participation by students from ethnic

minorities the College Group continues to perform significantly above sector benchmarks. Given the continuing challenges (both perceived and real) of the new HE funding methodology and tuition fees of very significant amounts, the college will be focussed on maintaining its good performance in some areas and developing its performance elsewhere (particularly the focus upon attracting mature/adult learners and learners with disabilities – explanation of the change of strategy and focus appears below). These milestones appear in the College’s Resource plan accompanying this document and in the table below);

1. Maintain the percentage of HE students from an ethnic minority background (circa 56% non-British).
2. Identify across the extended college catchment area five target areas where white males from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and areas of participation rates in HE are lower than national averages which will contribute to an increase in the number of students joining College HE courses from disadvantaged/low participation post codes (measured by POLAR classification and numbers of students derived from localities in quintiles 1 and 2) by 9 percentage points annually.
3. Increase the number of students progressing internally within the College to its own HE provision by 10 percentage points annually.
4. Increase the percentage of disabled students studying on College HE courses by 15 percentage points annually. The newly merged College will adopt, from 2018/19, a new and more clearly articulated approach to the provision of advice, guidance and support to learners with disabilities which will be both more centralised, consistent and supported by dedicated funds to support the learner in identification of need for support and in the DSA application process to obtain it.
5. Increase the number of Level 3 students from the College progressing to study HE [at any institution] by 2 percentage points annually (this has been reduced from previous figure of 4 which referred to Kingston College alone. The South Thames Colleges Group has a much larger cohort of level 3 students and this revised, but lower target in percentage terms, is more realistic of the College Group situation and in student number terms will be an increase).
6. As part of the outreach, access and success activities outlined on pages 13/14 the particularly study skills focussed sessions offered within target schools, and in some cases to targeted groups within those schools, will look to uplift attainment, and the impact be measured in terms of student performance of those who were at the time identified by the schools as “at risk” – the milestone achievement being that 40% of those will have at least achieved their target grades and 30% will have exceeded their target grades.
7. Extend partnership working with AimHigher London South to cover the entirety of catchment area of the enlarged college and establish engagement with 10 new schools with lower HE participation rates.
8. Increase the number of mature students (aged 21+) studying at the College by 7.5%pa (non-compound). This target has been changed from 2018/19 to recognise that the focus of increasing adult/mature participation in College HE has not been successful by targeting recruitment to new part time provision only and that this target will now be pursued more widely by attracting adult/mature learners to the full range of provision (ie. studying full time provision, offered full time provision in part time mode and to existing and more modestly targeted development of new part time study).
9. Ensure across the new and extended college the application of consistent and accessible academic and other support services for HE learners to limit non continuation rates to a maximum of 12% and increase the percentage of students “completing their study in their intended year” to a minimum of 88% (this is a slightly lower target than set for 2018/19 and has been based upon the understanding of TEF metrics which were not available for the merged college at the time of setting that target). There will also be a targeting of this support to adult/mature learners and student from black and ethnic minority groups in line with the outcomes of the College’s assessment of performance.
10. An increase in the percentage of students progressing into positive employment/further studies destinations to 88%. These two milestones represent the College’s continuance of the 2018/19 There will also be a targeting of this type of support and increased commitment and focus on success and progression for learners with disabilities, and from lower participation and socio economic groups and for learners from black and ethnic minority groups, a need identified in the College’s assessment of performance.

### Partnership working - AimHigher London South (AHLS)

The College Group is an active member of Aim Higher London South (<http://aimhigherlondonsouth.org.uk/>) ‘National Collaborative Outreach Programme’ (NCOP). Through a range of activities this is designed to ensure fair access and progression onto Higher Education support for young people from non-traditional backgrounds. This is achieved by linking schools, colleges, universities and education providers together to work effectively. AHLS works in partnership with 8 universities, 20 schools, 3 further education colleges, 10 Local Authorities and 11 other Associate Partners across London and the South East.

The College Group is involved in not only promoting its key widening participation opportunities within the College but also contributes content and the actual delivery of these activities at other colleges and schools.

The College Group also contributes to Aim Higher leadership and organisation with the Group’s Director of Student Services sitting on the organisation’s strategic committee and the Group’s Head of Marketing and Admissions on its operations committee. At the time of writing the Director of Student Services was nominated for the Aim Higher London South Practitioner of the Year Award. In 2017/18 Aim Higher formed its Bridging Working party to which the College is an active contributor to ensure that all partners work together on reviewing support and partnerships required for a smooth transition between school, college and university.

## **The student voice and student contributions to College plans**

The HE Student Voice policy adopted at the successor College, Kingston, has grown from local programme and school feedback, to a more central structured whole College concern and has been adopted by other parts of the College group. The more formal and coordinated approach to bringing together elements of programme feedback and school focus group feedback into an HE Forum led by students continues. This feedback also feeds into the overall College Student Council. The Student Union at Kingston College also has a dedicated HE officer and an extension of the presence of the Student Union across the College is planned in 2018/19. The key elements of feedback are: from focus groups, National Student Survey (NSS), Destinations of Leavers from HE (DLHE) survey, SSCCs, HE representative training feedback, end of module and end of programme feedback. Other cross-College surveys include an LRC survey and an HE Admissions Survey which in 2018/19 will include questions designed to establish the level of awareness of the different type of support for students (financial and others) and the level of satisfaction about information received and available about aspects of the student contract including admissions, finance arrangements and tuition fees. There is also a cross college internal HE survey answered by students not eligible for the NSS.

The aims and purpose of the Access Agreement/Access and Participation Plan and the concept of “Fair Access” to HE and “Widening participation” in HE, has been for a number of years discussed at the College’s HE Student Forum which meets termly (three times a year) and will discuss;

- in the Autumn term meeting the College’s assessment of performance of its widening participation activities, the impact of the current and past Access and Participation Plan and activities;
- in the Spring term meeting plans for the Access and Participation Plan due for submission for future academic years and proposed changes to existing arrangements will be reviewed.
- In the Summer term the meeting will be more discursive in nature and capture students’ ideas about effective widening participation activity.

These meetings are attended by students of a variety of ages and backgrounds from a range of courses. The HE Student Forum’s membership is made up of the elected student representatives of each HE course. Recent feedback from this group which has had direct impact upon our plan and activities has included;

- An inconsistency in application experience and information provision between colleges and courses with respect to financial matters and particularly with regard to college provided financial support eg. bursaries and hardship funds. This has led to the implementation of a more consistent process for the provision of such information at a number of points in the student application, enrolment and induction cycle as explained in the Publication of Tuition Fees, Financial Support and Marketing section.

The College Group’s Higher Education Board (HEAB) which contains student representation makes decisions about future Access and Participation Plans and assessment of performance is ratified.

\* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.		
Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.		
The college may decide to increase tuition fees year on year at a reasonable rate in line with inflation. Any increases would not exceed the Office for Budget's Responsibility forecast for RPI-X (the retail price index that excludes mortgage interest payments). This intention will be clearly advertised on the College's promotional materials.		
Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Full time degrees at Kingston College	£7,250
First degree	Blended delivery/work linked first degree	£5,450
First degree	Top Up Degrees at Carshalton College	£6,165
First degree	Live Sound Production at South Thames College	£9,250
Foundation degree	Full time foundation degrees at Kingston College	£6,165
Foundation degree	Blended delivery/work linked foundation degrees	£5,450
Foundation degree	Foundation Degrees At Carshalton College ( C )	£6,165
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND	HNC/Ds at Kingston College - high cost delivery	£5,450
HNC / HND	HNC/Ds at Kingston College lower cost delivery	£4,950
HNC / HND	Computing (K)	£6,165
HNC / HND	HNC/Ds at South Thames College Wandsworth	£4,950
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND	- Engineering (Various) (K)	£3,950
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT	- PGCE	£2,950
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

**Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body**

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	Ethnicity	<b>Other statistic</b> - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	1. Maintain the percentage of HE students from an ethnic minority background (56% non-British).	Yes	2016-17	merged college data 2016/17	56%	56%	56%	56%		data for 2017-18 to be confirmed for new merged college
T16a_02	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	<b>HESA T1a</b> - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	2. Identify across the extended college catchment area five target areas where white young British male participation rates in HE are lower than national averages which will contribute to an increase the number of students joining College HE courses from disadvantaged/low participation post codes (measured by POLAR classification and numbers of students derived from localities in quintiles 1 and 2) by 9 percentage points annually;	Yes	2016-17	merged college data 2016/17	+9%	9%	+9%	+9%		data for 2017-18 to be confirmed for new merged college
T16a_03	Access	State school	<b>Other statistic</b> - Other (please give details in the next column)	3. Increase the number of students progressing within the College to HE provision by 10%pa (Non compound%)	No	2016-17	merged college data 2016/17	+10% students from STCG	+10% students from STCG	+10% students from STCG	+10% students from STCG		data for 2017-18 to be confirmed for new college
T16a_04	Access	Disabled	<b>Other statistic</b> - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	4. Increase the percentage of disabled students studying on College HE courses to 15%pa (non compound%).	Yes	2016-17	merged college data 2016/17	+15%	+15%	+15%	+15%		data for 2017-18 to be confirmed for new college
T16a_05	Access	State school	<b>Other statistic</b> - Other (please give details in the next column)	5. Increase the number of Level 3 students from the College progressing to study HE [at any institution] by 2% (non compound%).	Yes	2016-17	merged college data 2016/17	+2%	+2%	+2%	+2%		no data for 2017-18 as new milestones for new college
T16a_06	Access	School sponsorship	<b>Other statistic</b> - Other (please give details in the next column)	6. Study skills sessions offered as part of the College's outreach programme with target schools will look to uplift the attainment of those students identified by the partner school as "at risk" to the extent that 40% achieve target grades and 30% exceed their targets	Yes	Other (please give details in Description column)	national benchmarks	40% achieve target - 30% exceed target	40% achieve target - 30% exceed target	40% achieve target - 30% exceed target	40% achieve target - 30% exceed target		school pupil target attainment provided by schools
T16a_07	Access	Mature	<b>Other statistic</b> - Other (please give details in the next column)	7. Increase the number of mature students (aged 21+) studying at the College by 7.5%pa(non compound).	No	2016-17	new merged college data 2016/17	+7.5%	+7.5%	+7.5%	+7.5%		data for 2017-18 to be confirmed for new college
T16a_08	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>Other statistic</b> - Other (please give details in the next column)	8.Ensure across the new and extended college the application of consistent and accessible academic and other support services to limit non continuation rates to a maximum of 12% and increase the percentage of students "completing their study in their intended year" to a minimum of 88%. Also a particular focus to reduce continuation gap in adult / mature learners and BME students	No	2016-17	TEF data Oct 2017	min 88% ach. & Max 12% non contin.	min 88% ach. & max 12% non contin.	min 88% ach. & max 12% non contin.	min.89% ach. & max 11% non contin.		TEF data for merged college
T16a_09	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>Other statistic</b> - Other (please give details in the next column)	9. increase the percentage of students into positive employment/further study destinations to 88%. Also a particular focus on learners with disabilities, learners from low socio economic groupings and BME students	No	2016-17	new merged college data	88%	89%	90%	90%		no data for 2017-18 as new milestones for new college 2018-19

**Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.**

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Attainment raising	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	10. Outreach activities undertaken in partnership with AimHigher S London/HE London to be further extended to entire enlarged college catchment area and to include minimum of 10 new schools and positively influence the awareness of the range of HE progression opportunities available (this uplift in awareness to be measured by pupil survey activity following the school events - compared to prior knowledge)	Yes	2016-17	new merged college data	10 new schools (250 students)	10 new schools (300 students)	12 new schools (360 students)	12 new schools (480 students)	12 new schools (480 students)	no data for 2017-18 as new milestones for new merged college - actual impact to be evaluated by at event pupil survey comparing knowledge acquired at event with prior knowledge)

**Optional commentary on milestones.**

This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.