



South  
Lanarkshire  
College  

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East Kilbride

# ACCESS & INCLUSION STRATEGY

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Owner	Alison Chambers
Approved by	Equality Group
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# ACCESS & INCLUSION STRATEGY 2020-2023

## Foreword by Principal and Chief Executive

As Chair of the Equality Group and as College Principal, I am personally committed to ensuring that Access and Inclusion remain at the heart of all our College activity. At South Lanarkshire College, we are proud to put our students first. We want all our learners to enjoy the very best learning experience in an atmosphere of respect and support.

We are committed to the aspirations set out in our Access & Inclusion Strategy and to supporting all Access & Inclusion initiatives. The College has a clear vision for our ambition to promote equality, access and inclusion, which reaches across all aspects of our activity as is demonstrated by our key core value of promoting equality and diversity.

Our Access & Inclusion Strategy outlines the actions we have taken and plan to take to ensure that equalities remain an integral part of College life. We are also committed to a regular review and refocus of our priorities to ensure that we continue to make progress in this key aspect of college life.

We work closely with our students to shape all aspects of College life and seek to ensure that there are no barriers to entitlement or success at South Lanarkshire College. We positively influence attitudes across the College by our promotion of Access & Inclusion, and by supporting people to gain access to education, employment and services provided by the College, free from any form of bias or difficulties. We want all our students to succeed in their course and to progress in their chosen career.

We are particularly proud that students from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve outstandingly well in our College. We are the highest performing college in Scotland for overall student achievement; we are best in class for students from deprived backgrounds and from minority ethnic backgrounds; we are second top performing college in Scotland for students who are care-experienced or who have a disability. The achievement of all these students is testament to their own hard work and determination and to the excellent support offered by the College. Nationally, our Access and Inclusion Strategy is recognised as one leading to the very best outcomes for our students.

We look forward to further progressing the aims of The Equality Act 2010, and to continuing to embed Access & Inclusion in all aspects of College life here at South Lanarkshire College, East Kilbride.

Aileen McKechnie, MA (Hons), MBA  
**Principal and Chief Executive**



## Our Vision is to be Scotland's leading college: delivering excellence.

### We achieve this through the key Strategic Priorities:

- **Successful Students**
- **Highest-Quality Education**
- **Support Sustainable Behaviours**

[Click here to view the Strategic Framework](#)

Our Access and Inclusion Strategy is aligned to these three strategic priorities. It is also aligned to the First Minister's ambition is to give every child born in one of our most deprived communities, the same chance of entering a University course as a child born into one of the least deprived communities. (Nicola Sturgeon 26 November 2014)

## PURPOSE

South Lanarkshire College (SLC) is committed to maintaining, developing and implementing services, policies and procedures with a positive focus on Access & Inclusion as an essential part of all aspects of the College's work. This document is a review and update of our original Access and Inclusion Strategy which aims to ensure that SLC continues to develop with a positive focus. The annual Action Plan is our working document, updated throughout the session and reported via the Equality Group quarterly meetings.

This document sets out SLC's commitment and approach to delivering the corporate and legal responsibilities for Access and Inclusion taking into account the Commission on Widening Access. In doing so, the College will communicate what is to be achieved through Equality Outcomes and will outline the approach to mainstreaming Access & Inclusion in all functions and activities. This involves local ownership and delivery of Access & Inclusion across all areas (teaching and non-teaching) of the College, to make a positive difference to the lives of individuals and groups.

The aim of this Access & Inclusion Strategy is to make sure that account is taken of the needs of all students, staff and diverse communities within and beyond the College and that, where appropriate, these are addressed. It seeks to include all students as well as staff and therefore will not single out any one "category" but assume equal and fair opportunity is granted to everyone without bias or prejudice. South Lanarkshire College is currently a Disability Confident Employer, working towards becoming a Disability Confident Leader in 2020.

Our commitment to this Access and Inclusion Strategy is evident in the values and culture statement in the Strategic Framework 2020 – 2025: "We are Inclusive and Diverse". Further affirmation that access and inclusion is well established in the culture and behaviour of SLC was demonstrated in 2019 when we became the first college in Scotland to achieve leaders in Diversity accreditation three times. This strategy will ensure continued improvement of the service delivered through seeking feedback from students and staff and by monitoring relevant Performance Indicators (PIs).

The College recognises the importance of Health and Wellbeing of students and staff. This commitment has resulted in the College achieving the Investors in People & Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award in 2016 and again in 2019.

The College's commitment to people is further demonstrated by being the first college to achieve Investors in People Platinum level in 2016 with re-accreditation in 2019.

The College is also a Living Wage employer; a Carer Positive Employer and a Centre for Reporting Hate Crime.

At Academic Boards full account is taken of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 of: religion, race, age, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or disability. In addition, reports on these are delivered annually to the Board of Management, actions are identified for improvement and monitored. The College's annual engagement with, and periodic reviews by Education Scotland also increasingly focus on the important links between quality and equality within the College.

South Lanarkshire College currently gathers data relating to both students and staff. This information is analysed by, Course Teams, the Equality Group, Academic Board, Board of Management and College Management Team to allow full consideration of any Access & Inclusion related issues. Particular data is considered in terms of student recruitment, retention, achievement, progression, support, outcomes of student and staff surveys, staff recruitment, staff retention and staff profile information.

In 2018/19 South Lanarkshire College is the highest performing college in Scotland for HE FT attainment at 75% and also first for Full-time FE attainment at 71.7% both of which are well above the Scottish average. 98.5% of our students have a positive destination at the end of their course (based on the number completing and achieving their programmes).

In the 18/19 In-course questionnaire (ICQ), overall, 94% (1552) of students agreed/strongly agreed that Learning and Teaching practices in the College suited them, helped them feel well prepared for assessments and extra help and advice are accessible.

ICQ - Part 1 2019-20, 95% of respondents said they could get extra help with learning and teaching if it was needed.

## MAINSTREAMING ACCESS & INCLUSION

“Mainstreaming”, as described by The Equality and Human Rights Commission means integrating equality into the day to day work of a public body, by means of taking equality into account in the way it works, and by making equality a part of everything that is delivered by the College.

“Access” is an issue of fairness and it is the belief of the Widening Access Commission, that Scotland has a moral, social and economic duty to tackle inequality.

The College will encourage access and inclusion, and thus widen participation, by recognising, prioritising and meeting the needs of individuals and groups which comprise the communities the College serves. Some key enablers of Access and Inclusion include:

- Local Market Intelligence – what employers need and the key employment sectors for the Region
- Curriculum Design
- Marketing and Communications
- Community Engagement including LAs; CLD and CPP
- Student Recruitment and Selection
- Student Funding
- Student Services
- Student Learning Support
- HR Recruitment and Selection
- Staff CPD and Development
- The Student Counselling Service

## APPROACHES AND SERVICE WE PROVIDE

- Institutional/group support and bespoke individualised support
- Learners with an additional support need are identified or can self-refer at a number of stages:
  - On their original application form
  - Prior to interview or at interview
  - At enrolment or induction
  - In one-to-one guidance sessions or
  - At any time during their course

Barriers to learning may be identified by staff at any time, where there has been non-disclosure and there is an obvious dislocation between a student’s performance and the manner in which they present themselves. Care has been taken to assure confidentiality and to remove, as far as possible, any stigma attached to the need for additional support.

The students will be interviewed by the Extended Learning Support Team to ascertain the support required to meet their individual needs. Students on a wide range of programmes require differentiated support depending on their needs. Our strategy includes providing targeted support for: estranged students; veterans and families; care experienced; carers; delivering supported courses and Extended Learning Support for groups and individuals and meeting the needs of our student population who come from SIMD 10 (17.1% of our student population) and SIMD 20 (28% of our student population) datazones.

Support for Learning on average assists around 4% of students annually. In session 18/19 that represented 172 students for whom evidence could be provided for Extended Learning Support with a further 30 students with recommendations. However, many more are assisted who do not fit into the traditional Extended Learning Support (ELS) categories for funding. In 18/19, that figure was 202. Currently, these learners are tagged in the FES system. Going forward, Access & Inclusion includes not only those students eligible under the ELS funding mechanism but students with any kind of barrier to success whether it is social, financial, medical, personal, ability to communicate using the English language, or any other. Many more students attend the focussed workshops that run on a drop-in basis eg UCAS support; essay writing; referencing; exam prep for Nat 5 Maths or Higher English; ESOL for students on mainstream and ESOL courses and the open workshops where any students can go for any support at all. The workshops run during the day and in some evenings

Assistance comes in a wide variety of forms, dependent on learner need. Recommendations are passed on to the Faculties by the Extended Learning Support Team and in some cases equipment and/or software may be lent out or a Support for Learning Assistant may be deployed to assist a learner. The learner will also receive any training required to operate equipment or use any software. In addition, resources and facilities within the campus are accessible to all students. The College recently increased the provision of the hearing loop system to all front-line areas within the College. We are currently updating all accessible toilets to make them Stoma Friendly with stoma bag changing facilities. Height adjustable, wheelchair-friendly tables were added recently to the Food Court and in the Bistro area. Hearing loop capability and accessible toilets are available on every level of the college and in the Annex, some with hoists and changing facilities. A new fully accessible toilet is being put in place on the first floor.

Fully accessible minibuses are available to take students on visits where previously, taxis had to be hired. All minibuses have lifts fitted and space for two wheelchair users.

The maintenance of the fire evacuation lifts ensures the safe passage for all students and staff who have mobility issues, in the event of an emergency evacuation. Waterproof ponchos and foil blankets have been purchased for every classroom where there are vulnerable students. The members of staff lift these and take them with them to the evacuation points for the comfort of those students with mobility issues for the duration of any evacuation.

Specialist staff are employed in the Learning Development area to assist learners and to complete Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) assessments. In session 18/19, the College invoiced SAAS for £14,456.38 for DSA invoices. The College employs one part-time permanent British Sign Language Interpreter; one fixed term 0.8FTE BSL Interpreter and lecturer as well as using a number of Agency staff. In addition, the College employs a range of Support for Learning Assistants some of whom have a degree of permanence. One of the SfLA is also qualified as an electronic note-taker.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The College has productive partnerships with local authorities, schools, SDS, voluntary organisations, specific interest groups and other colleges to provide as smooth a transition as possible for learners coming to or moving on from our courses.

The Faculties work closely with the Student Association and with the Student Services team. The President of the Student Association champions and supports students with additional support needs.

Once a session, Student Question Time is organised by the Quality Unit. The senior Management Team with the Head of Student Services and the Head of Facilities face class representatives who put their questions directly to the panel. As a result of that, the automatic doors have buttons to open them on both sides of the corridor in response to a request from a student who uses a wheelchair and who has limited motor control. Eye Gaze equipment which gives students a voice where they would otherwise have to use alternative methods of communication, was agreed at SQT as it will benefit 30% of our students who represent students with the most complex and profound needs.

We source assessment of students' barriers to success through our own Extended learning Support Team or an Educational Psychologist or local authority Psychological Services on a needs-led basis and according to the requisite expertise.

In order to enhance school/college transitions, detailed discussions take place both with South Lanarkshire and east Renfrewshire Councils about how to develop further the already existing transitions arrangements.

A successful employers' event has been held for the last two years where organisations are invited to attend and to offer placement/employment opportunities to our students with additional support needs.

We listen to and take on board feedback with the aim of incorporating good ideas during the early stages of forming policies, strategies and implementing new projects. Feedback can range from several hundred people as is the case with our Strategic Framework to listing to the South Lanarkshire Access Panel for the new build's design. In preparing this strategy, we have listened to our users, staff and the Student Association through both formal and informal mechanisms. Through this partnership approach we aim to embed the best possible approaches to support our learners to achieve the best they can.

The College also networks with a host of voluntary organisations including Who Cares Scotland, The Salvation Army, Loaves and Fishes, Christians Against Poverty, Dementia UK and many more. For our D/deaf students, we liaise very closely with Deaf Connections and Deaf services, Lanarkshire.

SLC is one of four colleges taking part in advanced HE project, "Supporting workforce Diversity-progressing staff development which aims to increase the recruitment and retention of disabled members of staff. The project is in line with the Scottish Government's Disability Employment Plan and is a perfect fit with our wider College strategy to recruit and retain a workforce with the skill and experience necessary to deliver operational and strategic aims. We have chosen to focus the project on the systems and processes that support recruitment and to develop innovative approaches and positive actions to ensure the equality of opportunity for candidates with disabilities.

The College is also working in partnership with Inclusion Scotland to provide an internship opportunity for a disabled person to support the Human Resources Team to explore ways of attracting disabled staff. This is part of the "We Can Work", the Inclusion Scotland Internship Programme.

## ONGOING CPD

Staff development activity centred around Access & Inclusion is an ongoing priority and is a key element of successful and sustained mainstreaming. Annually, significant levels of Access & Inclusion training, covering a range of related topics is delivered including an Introduction to Sign Language for staff (which has been repeated due to popularity) and informal sessions for students who have a classmate who is D/deaf so that they can more readily communicate with her in and outwith class. A class in BSL level 1 is offered as progression to members of staff and to the public.

The College has also recently introduced a Mental Health and Wellbeing course for staff to allow them to develop relevant skills.

The College has appointed an additional BSL Interpreter and has an electronic note-taker among our Support for Learning assistants, on the staff. We access other sign language interpreters from organisations within Lanarkshire.

All staff participate in a mandatory Equality & Diversity training e-learning course, bespoke to SLC. In addition to these all staff training initiatives, a significant amount of Access & Inclusion training covering protected characteristics is delivered. The annual All Staff Conferences are additionally used to promote Access & Inclusion to staff. SLC has responded to and won tenders relating to Access & Inclusion awareness in the workplace.

Continued Professional Development (CPD) for staff in dealing with a range of additional support needs is ongoing on three annual, designated staff development days, at the All Staff Conference, through the annual Career Review process via the College's PDLT cycle (Professional Discussion, Learning and Teaching: class room observation) and on an ongoing basis as required if a learner with a specific need is in one of their groups.

A refreshed Pathway is currently being developed for newly recruited members of lecturing staff to ensure that they are supported in the classroom and are prepared prior to undertaking the Professional Development Award (PDA), Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges and the Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE). Sessions on Differentiated Learning and Promoting Positive Behaviour were offered March 2020 as part of the staff development programme. Additional information to inform staff is available on the College Portal.

Career Reviews are used annually to identify or suggest training needs of all staff both teaching and non-teaching. These reviews are carried out by line managers. The resulting reviews are sent to HR where the team collates staff development requests and identifies themes for cross-college cpd.

At the beginning of each session, the Curriculum Manager for Learning Development and one of the ELS team visit each Faculty to go over the referral process for students with barriers to learning. Induction videos are available on the staff and student portals and on the website highlighting the support available from the Student Services team for example the named contacts for care experienced students or carers, those who are estranged from their families as well as highlighting health and wellbeing support and the Student Counselling Service. The College has a Student Counselling team who provide direct support to students. Using the funding allocated from the SFC/Scottish Government to provide additional counselling support has allowed the College to increase provision bringing the total complement to 2.5 FTE

In addition, 31 members of staff, both male and female are Asist trained. These staff are identified by the Suicide Awareness logo on their ID badges.

## INVESTMENT IN ICT

A wide range of hardware and software is available for students to ensure independence in learning.

There are 40 laptops available for short-term loan from the library.

Much of the software is available via the College network to ensure that it is available to all staff and students in College and at home. There is a wealth of “free” resources available to supplement the college-based support.

The variety of up to date equipment available throughout the College ensures that staff are able to adopt a wide range of teaching and learning methods and students can learn in a way that is best suited to their needs.

ICT is constantly being updated within the College to ensure that the most recent equipment possible is available to all.

In sessions 18/19 and 19/20 the College replaced all the Smart Boards with Clever Touch televisions which have added to the interaction of the students with their learning ( those in the classrooms used by students on supported programmes, have the ability to be lowered so that students in wheelchairs can access the screens) and to the resources we are able to offer to support all learning and teaching across all disciplines.

The College has also purchased Eye Gaze equipment which gives a voice to those students who cannot use their own voice or for whom fine motor skills are a challenge.

We expect to provide support to over 30% of our students who have the most profound and complex support needs. All of the PCs in the College have Claro Read installed, some also have Board Maker which can be accessed remotely. Browsealoud assistive technology facilitates access to the College website by providing speech, reading and translation support.

Much of the software is available via the College network to ensure that it is available to all staff and students in College and at home. There is a wealth of “free” resources available to supplement the college-based support. This includes full Office 365 suite free for all students in the college. Microsoft Teams is also available to all staff and students and is being used to help deliver learning across the college during the period of lockdown.

## SUPPORTED PROGRAMMES

The College provides a range of supported programmes designed for students with moderate to complex needs, to provide access to educational provision and to allow progression at a rate suitable to their abilities. Courses are held in College and are full time as well as part time in nature ranging from SCQF Level 1 to Level 4.

## OTHER INITIATIVES AND SERVICES TO ENHANCE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

- Managing your money sessions
- Suicide Alertness training for students
- Career Guidance sessions delivered by SDS
- College devised initial diagnostic core skills testing tool for those without a profile
- Supported Workshops for Core Skills
- Focused and open workshops
- Forever Button on the Student Portal for care experienced, carers, veterans and estranged students
- Breast Feeding and Child Restroom
- Support for Learning Team to assess needs
- Educational Psychologist to conduct DSA as required
- Dyslexia and Autism specialists on Learning Development team
- UCAS applications; specialist workshops
- Documents available in alternative formats on request
- Support at interview for students with barriers to learning including D/deaf student support
- Transition pathways from school to college and beyond
- Accessible minibuses
- Accessible toilets
- Quiet Room
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Electronic note-taker
- Support for Learning Assistants
- PEEPs for all students with mobility issues, logged with the Facilities team for evacuation procedures
- Care experienced student focus group and named contact identified
- Armed Forces Covenant signed and named contact identified
- LGBTQ Charter Mark Foundation Award
- LGBT Charter of Youth Foundation Award. Currently, the Student Association is working towards the Bronze Award.
- Fire evacuation lifts – all lifts in the college can be used during a fire evacuation for those with mobility issues
- The College has signed the Stand Alone Pledge to show support for estranged students
- The College is working towards the Going Further for Student Carers: Recognition Award
- Student Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan
- Student Mental Health Agreement produced annually in partnership with the Student Association

### Health and Wellbeing

- Counselling Service
- Mindfulness classes
- Guidance & Emotional Support
- Referral process to both internal and external specialist support agencies
- Monthly surgery support for carers
- Refreshers’
- UCAS Higher Education event
- ASIST trained staff
- Chaplaincy Service
- Carer support group; range of events “Bun and a Chat”
- Provision of ear defenders for students with noise aversion
- Foil blankets and waterproof ponchos to keep vulnerable students warm during fire evacuations
- The college is working towards updating all signage and to providing meaningful handouts to BSL students

### Annual Events

- Health and Wellbeing Week
- Equality Week
- Sustainability Week
- LGBT History Month and Purple Friday
- Supporting your Next Steps
- Lots of Socks – supporting World Down Syndrome Awareness Day
- National Autism Awareness Week
- Mental health Awareness Week
- Carers’ Week
- World Mental Health Week
- Health and Wellbeing event
- Positive MENTAL Health event

### Cross College Committees

- Mental Health Working Group
- Equality Group
- Safeguarding Group
- LGBT Champions Group
- Quality Group
- Access and Inclusion Steering Group

## MEASURING SUCCESS, IMPACT AND STATISTICS:

The College will know if the Strategic Priorities have been delivered and met by measuring ourselves against the SFC reporting categories across the Protected Characteristics and including Estranged Young People, Veterans, BSL learners and referencing the Scottish Government initiative Equally Safe.

We will conduct self-evaluation carried out annually by all Faculties and Departments of the College using Course Team Reports, student feedback gathered in a number of different fora and formats including Meet the FMT and Student Question Time ;we will carry out Academic Board rigour interrogating at our PIs three times in the session.

We will engage with external organisations for review and audit: Education Scotland, Investors in People, Investors in Diversity, Awarding bodies, Scottish Funding Council, and the NUS.

Our ambitions to enhance and develop Access and Inclusion are in our annual A&I Action Plan – [add link](#)

SLC is already a very inclusive College but cannot be complacent and must constantly endeavour to maintain and improve this status by constantly monitoring progress and taking action to ensure that Access & Inclusion are completely mainstreamed within the organisation.

## IMPACT & STATISTICS:

We will monitor our statistics regularly through Academic Board ( 3 times a session), The Equality Group and at the College Management Team meeting (weekly) across the protected characteristics and in line with the SFC reporting categories

Based on the available data for academic session 18/19 and using attainment as the measure of the impact of current support services offered to various groups this is what we know about our support services:

Group	Number of enrolments	Attainment/Completed successful at SLC	Scottish average
10% most deprived data zones	622	74.6%	65.6%
20% most deprived data zones	1080	73.7%	66%
Care experienced	104	67.3%	58.7%
Carers	162	83%	*
Ethnic minority	182	80.2%	69.9%
Disability	291	72.5	65.5%
All enrolments over 160 hours	3,760	76.2%	68.7%
FE FT	1,361	71.7%	65.2%
FEPT	1,741	84.7%	79.7%
FE Females	1335	71.8%	65.7%
FE Males	1,319	79.2%	69.4%
HE Females	846	75.9%	73%
HE Males	444	79.7%	69.4%
HEFT	977	75%	69.8%
HEPT	365	83%	78.9%

\* SFC currently don't publish this data

Success by age group:

Age	Enrolments	Completed successful	Scottish average
Under 18	782	70.3%	61.5%
18 - 20	995	76.5%	69.4%
21 - 24	548	77.7%	70.6%
25 - 40	1,095	77.9%	72.7%
41 and over	340	81.2%	72.7%

**Extended Learning Support for session 2018 – 2019 as at 11 February 2020: 165 ELS enrolments; 122 completed successful which is an attainment rate for those students of 74%**



## **ACCESS & INCLUSION STRATEGY**