



## **The Windsor Forest Colleges Group**

### **Access and Participation Statement**

The Windsor Forest Colleges Group (WFCG) is a medium sized general further education college which offers a diverse range of courses from pre-entry to level 3 and, in some areas, levels 4 and 5 for young people and adults. It draws students from across Berkshire and Surrey West London, and surrounding areas. We have three main sites: Langley College, Windsor College and Strode's College, Egham. Langley College offers technical, vocational and apprenticeship programmes including Construction, Accountancy, Engineering, Technology, Hair and Beauty, Health and Care and Sports. Windsor College, a relatively new build opened in 2006/07, offers A-Level provision and substantial full-time and part-time vocational programmes in Science, Business and the Creative Industries for adults and young people. Strode's College are the largest provider of A Level education in north-west Surrey, offering more than 30 A level subjects as well as a full range of Level 3 and Level 2 BTECs.

The £31 million Langley College Redevelopment Project, was completed in 2015, and provides exemplar work ready environments and a much improved flexible learning environment for vocational learners of all ages. This included a brand new, much needed provision in Hospitality and Catering, a brand new state-of-the-art Lecture Theatre and dedicated HE rooms.

The Windsor Forest Colleges Group is committed to widening access and participation and providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of colour, race, ethnicity, national origins, gender, transsexual/transgender, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or marital/civil partnership status. We are committed to equality and diversity and have effective policies, reporting and practice in place, including a strong Equality and Diversity Strategy Group with sub-committees at each college. This commitment runs throughout the activities of The Windsor Forest Colleges Group including:

- Outreach Activities
- Admissions Policy
- Apprenticeships
- Financial Aid
- Student Learning Support
- Careers and Employability

### **Part 1: Widening Participation Primacies**

The Windsor Forest Colleges Group is committed to widening participation and access (WPA) to Higher Education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those coming from non-traditional routes to HE. This commitment is embedded in our proposition with regard to the collaborative outreach WPA initiatives that we deliver to ensure our direct impact on numbers of students entering into both our further and higher education from such backgrounds and routes, enabling widening participation with 68.8% of students are 21 years of age or older; 9.4% of students declaring a disability and 41.95% of students from a Black or ethnic Minority background. In 2016 the overall satisfaction is 95% in the National Student



Survey (NSS)<sup>1</sup> which is an upturn of 8% since 2014. The wider College is dedicated to its municipal role to meet the ambitions of young people in the wider geographical regions by continuing to apply best practice in relation to the use of data in the admissions process<sup>2</sup>. We will always aim to improve:

- Our provision of information and guidance for prospective higher education students
- Our collaborative links with appropriate source institutions
- Our quality of higher education provision with an emphasis on retention, success and targeted financial support for prospective students experiencing financial difficulties

The raising of aspiration and attainment of disadvantaged groups is at the heart of the College's mission and core values.

**Our Mission Statement is:** "Inspire ambition and make a positive difference to lives through learning"

**Our Core Business is:**

- Study programmes which enable young people to be in the best place to secure access to higher learning or skilled employment in the local economy
- Further Education courses which enable adults to maximise their access to higher learning, skilled employment and career progression
- Traineeships and Apprenticeships which enable access to higher learning or sustained employment in a skilled workforce
- Higher Education courses which are rooted in the world of work and recognised by employers
- Commercial education and training supporting employers to meet their current and future skills needs

**Our Values are:**

- Learners First – placing the learner at the heart of all we do
- Community – working collaboratively to achieve
- Empowering – enabling all in a caring environment to achieve their full potential
- Excellence – a culture of creativity, high expectations, ambition and aspiration
- Diversity – celebrating diversity and inclusivity as a key to our success
- Integrity – honesty, openness and trust at the heart of College life
- Respect – showing fairness, courtesy and mutual respect

**Strategic objectives:**

**WORKING TOGETHER: COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING:**

- Develop outstanding learning communities, driven by the learner voice, carefully designed to meet the needs of our diverse student groups
- Provide outstanding support services to enable the best possible careers and progression opportunities
- Develop programmes of study that prepare students well for the world of work

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<sup>1</sup> National Student Survey (NSS) 2016

<sup>2</sup> The Windsor Forest Colleges Group Admissions Policy November 2017



- Provide outstanding support for safeguarding, Prevent and to prepare all our students for modern British life

### **WORKING TOGETHER: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE**

- Drive professional development, sharing and transference of excellent practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the three Colleges, demonstrated by lesson observations and student and staff feedback
- Develop strong cross College quality improvement and assurance processes to drive quality improvement across all areas of the College

### **WORKING TOGETHER: SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES**

- Develop specialist post 16 Sixth Form and Technical Education pathways to create a comprehensive offer for young people and increase participation and market share
- Work collaboratively with employers and our Local Enterprise Partnerships to shape, develop and grow our offer to and for local businesses, particularly for Apprenticeships and technical Higher Education
- Work in partnership with local authorities, other partners and local employers to expand training and education opportunities for adults in three key strands: essential English, maths and language; adult community courses and business and professional courses for upskilling and workforce development
- Explore expansion of our successful 14-16 partnership provision to meet the needs of our local communities
- Explore expansion of our High Needs provision to meet local demand
- Expand our Higher Education provision to meet demand for local progression pathways at all three colleges
- Develop a positive staff culture across the new merged College enabling good staff engagement, recruitment and retention
- Maintain at least Good financial health, ensuring on-going investment into our estate and resources for students and learning<sup>3</sup>

The Windsor Forest Colleges Group is a leading provider of high quality higher education and has many of the significant features in place to ensure further WPA success, for example, we have a long history and good reputation for supporting students from disadvantaged and low-economic backgrounds.

The College works with a range of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) partners and Teaching and Learning are consistently at least good with positive student and staff relationships embedded in a culture of commitment and student focus.

Our WPA approach at the WFCG includes, but is not exclusive to:

- Creating tailored activities for communities, schools and employers to raise aspirations for students progressing onto higher education programmes in lower socio-economic postcode areas
- Actively encouraging recruitment of female students across the WFCG
- Promotion of STEM subjects particularly at Level 3 and above
- Having an effective monitoring process of equality groups to inform practice

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<sup>3</sup> The Windsor Forest Colleges group Making the Difference Strategic Plan 2017-2020



- Bursaries to support students in financial hardship from low-income households to enable students whose access to, or completion of, education or training is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers

## **Funding Scope**

Vulnerable students; those disadvantaged by financial constraints; students with disabilities or have learning disabilities; in care, have been in care, or are young parents, young carers (16-19) or otherwise considered to be at risk; lone parents.

19+ year olds, for example;

- Are vulnerable students
- Are disadvantaged by financial constraints
- Are disabled or have learning difficulties
- Are in care, have been in care, or are young parents, young carers (16-19) or are otherwise considered to be at risk
- Are lone parents
- Are taking programmes where the primary learning goal is adult basic education or English for Speakers of other languages (English as a second language –ESOL)

## **Part 2: Student Opportunities Fund and WPA**

The WFCG is in receipt of HEFCE Grant funding for Enhancing Student Opportunities and Widening Participation. These funds take the form of annual non-mainstream allocations that help FE colleges and HEIs develop a strategic approach to enhancement of the student experience and addressing widening participation during the whole life cycle of a student in HE. The HEFCE emphasis lies on teaching enhancement and improving retention. The WFCG has provided further investment in:

- Equipment such as Microsoft Surface Pros and CiteThemRightOnline licence, e-books to ensure all students have access to resources which will enable success and help to overcome barriers to retention
- Financial support available with clear guidelines for application and relevant information, such as criteria for acceptance<sup>4</sup>
- Outreach programmes within areas for learning, primarily contributed to staff costs associated with delivery. (These activities are generally managed and delivered by our schools liaison outreach team)
- Disability, such as dyslexia assessments
- Welfare, targeted support for HE students

## **Part 3: Retention**

The WFCG has identified the needs of students from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible, including those coming from non-traditional routes into HE, and to ensure that as many of those needs can be met through systems of support. We will always endeavour that accurate and timely information is available to prospective students through our;

- Own publications and website content

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<sup>4</sup> Student Opportunity Fund. NB These funds are limited so applications are encouraged as soon as a need is identified



- Planned marketing and promotion campaigns
- Well established and enduring partnerships with all of our HEIs, local schools and communities
- Pre-entry guidance and events, for example Taster days

Enhancement of the Student Experience through our:

- Focused support for identified groups
- Workshops, team building activities and educational visits
- Guest speakers from industry to strengthen links to employment
- Timetabling flexibility to accommodate work and personal commitments

#### **Part 4: Evaluation and Monitoring**

The quality assurance processes ensures groups such as staff, students, HEI partners and other applicable stakeholders are involved in the process. The WFCG believes that all our students are co-creators of the student experience and as such, student representation is rooted in all groups and communities – formal and informal within the Group. WFCG has an agreed HE Quality Cycle and HE SAR<sup>5</sup> to ensure the monitoring of progress against targets and enabling improvements in practice are effective and timely. Developments around monitoring and evaluation will include, but are not exclusive to:

- The HE Steering Group<sup>6</sup> and includes invitations for student representation will focus on developing effective systems through tracking, monitoring and reporting on the progress of students entering WFCG from non-traditional backgrounds. This will allow for more useful data analysis to identify areas for improvement in relation to admissions<sup>7</sup>, progression and success of students from particular target groups<sup>8</sup>. This in turn will contribute to more effective research and data analysis to support effective targeting of outreach activities and allocation of funding

The WFCG are committed to always developing our knowledge and understanding about the Widening Participation Access requirements of particular student groups in order to:

- Continuously develop best practice to continually improve access, retention and progression for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those coming from non-traditional routes into higher education
- Continuously develop best practice to improve our focus on the employability skills by working with employers and students

An annual evaluation will be carried out and presented to the College's Board of Governors for scrutiny with action identified taken forward in the HE Self-Assessment Improvement Action Plan.

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<sup>5</sup> HE Quality Cycle Document and HE SAR

<sup>6</sup> HE Steering Group Terms of Reference

<sup>7</sup> Admissions Policy

<sup>8</sup> Equality and Diversity Policy