



Strategic Plan 2020-23

Growth

Quality

Inclusion

Context

We are Bristol's College.

We educate nearly a third of Bristol's 16-18 year olds, and a large proportion of school leavers from Bristol's most disadvantaged communities. We enrol the great majority of school leavers with High Needs and offer routes back into education for young people who have dropped out of school. With five major campuses spread out across the city we are able to provide courses within reach of most local people, where possible no more than one bus ride away.

We are Bristol's biggest provider of adult education at all levels and in partnership with local universities we run Access to Higher Education courses and university-level courses in selected vocational areas.

We offer a huge range of apprenticeships for young people and adults, working with hundreds of employers of all shapes and sizes. We deliver apprenticeship training with large national companies such as DAF trucks, with Bristol City Council and Bristol Airport, and with over 400 small local employers, from hairdressers to care homes, from hotels to law firms.

We work closely with Bristol City Council to support their ambitious agenda of social and economic development. We are an active participant and contributor to local initiatives such as:

- **The One City Plan**
- **The Learning City**
- **The Climate Emergency**
- **The Channel 4 Creative Hub**
- **The South Bristol Sustainable Urban Development Strategy**
- **City of Sanctuary**
- **South West Careers Hub**

We also work with wider regional partnerships, including the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) who fund our adult education, and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

We specialise in delivering technical, professional and vocational education. Most of our courses and all of our apprenticeship programmes are designed to offer a route directly into employment and include training in key employability skills, such as communication, team work, and self-presentation. Our focus is on careers, not just courses, and our aim is to secure our students qualifications which will help them get a good quality first job and make progress in their lives.

We have also signed a partnership agreement with the University of the West of England (UWE) that aims to help South Bristol residents get into university. This partnership is seen as an opportunity for the city's communities to access university-level education through a local further education college – supporting local economic growth and helping to regenerate South Bristol.

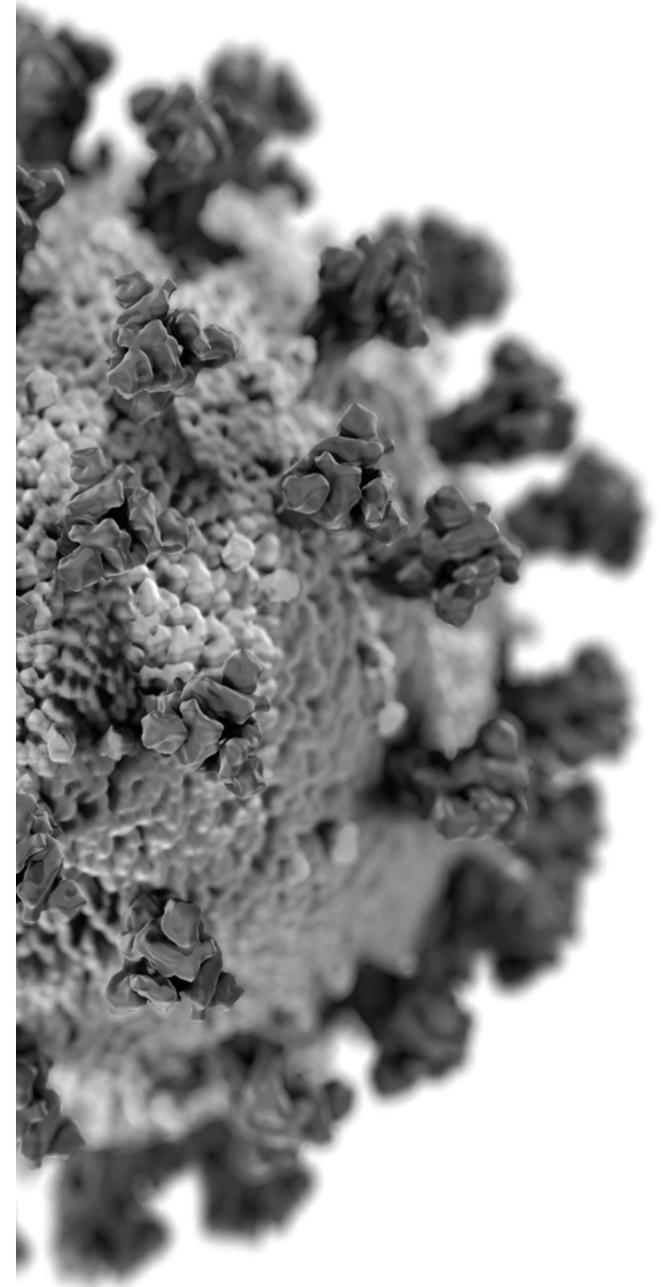
The Coronavirus Crisis

The Covid-19 health emergency which has erupted in 2020 has already had a huge impact and its after-effects will linger on throughout the period of this plan. Changes to the way we deliver classroom education to ensure safe practices such as social distancing will continue for the foreseeable future and will mean changes to our business model. The impact on our apprenticeship provision is uncertain and this part of our strategy will need to be kept under continuous review.

The two aspects of our strategy clearly most affected will be:

The sharp rise in unemployment, coupled with likely changes in the numbers and types of job roles available in the local economy, will mean that there will be a much bigger focus on training to support adults back into the job market and re-training to help people switch to new career pathways. This will be both a challenge and an opportunity for our adult education provision.

The rapid switch to delivering most of our teaching online during the health crisis has been remarkably successful. There will be a need to continue to offer online and blended learning options for most, if not all of our courses during 2020/21 and onwards. Even if all social distancing measures are relaxed in future, the likelihood is that the “new normal” for all colleges and providers will be to offer a much higher proportion of online learning as part of the general college offer.



Our Achievements

from 2016-20

The College has made great progress during the previous Strategic Plan period.

We have:

Greatly enhanced our reputation as an effective partner with local councils, schools, employers, the business community and Bristol's voluntary and community sector.

Strengthened our financial position which has enabled investment in new facilities and initiatives.

Improved our educational standards with a Silver rating for Higher Education Teaching and Learning and a much improved Ofsted inspection report.

Created a stable and resilient platform from which to grow and develop our educational offer.

Instilled confidence that we are getting better all the time and aspire to soon be rated as a good college with outstanding features.



Our Role

To enable access to higher learning, employment and career progression through the development of technical and vocational skills and professional behaviours.

Our Values

Integrity
Respect
Ambition
Pride

These four values permeate all we do, and provide all staff and students with a firm basis for developing professional behaviours.



The Strategy

for 2020-23

For the next three academic years our strategy will be focused on three key themes:

Growth



Quality



Inclusion



Under each of these themes there are three Strategic Aims to which we are committed.

Growth

Aim 1

Steady growth in the numbers of 16-18 year olds we enrol.

Our aim is to continue to offer as comprehensive a range of courses as possible, including an expanded A Level offer, and a growing range of specialist technical and professional courses. During the next three years there will be an increase in the number of school leavers coming through the school system, and we will ensure we have places for as many young people as need them, whatever their interests and whatever their level of prior attainment. We are committed to working together with secondary schools through the Post-16 forum to coordinate our efforts and avoid unnecessary duplication.

Aim 2

To rapidly expand our employer-facing work, including apprenticeships.

We have a strong profile with local employers and we are now offering high quality apprenticeship training in key skills areas such as Advanced Engineering, Digital Skills, Construction Technology, Health and Care, and Financial Services. Our aim is to significantly grow our employer-facing work. We'll do this by making our apprenticeship and other training services more flexible, more responsive and better tailored to individual employer needs. We will provide training solutions which enhance productivity and help businesses grow, and we will also work closely with trade unions and the Department for Work and Pensions to help unemployed people get back into employment and those in low-skill jobs to improve their prospects. For students from Bristol's low income families, the opportunity to earn while being trained is vital, and with apprenticeships now available right up to degree level, there is no limit on how far an ambitious apprentice can go.

Aim 3

To develop our Higher Education and adult courses in selected vocational areas .

Working with WECA, employers and our University partners, our priority will be to develop innovative new courses in selected areas where there is an identified need. This might involve designing shorter, more flexible courses, using online learning platforms and running "pop-up" courses in community venues. We will also develop higher level courses and apprenticeships in occupational areas linked to local employment opportunities. Here, our partnership in South Bristol with the University of West England and with local employers has the potential to open up new opportunities for local communities and provide better access to Bristol's thriving employment sectors, such as Creative and Digital Arts, Events Management and Green Technology.

Quality

Aim 4

To raise academic standards and improve student outcomes.

While our adult education and provision for high needs students is rated Good by Ofsted, our courses for young people and our apprenticeships still require further improvement. We aim to reach or exceed national averages for learner outcomes in both these areas and to achieve a judgment of at least "Good" in all aspects by the time of our next Ofsted inspection. This means maintaining and where possible accelerating our current rate of improvement and ensuring consistent standards across all areas of our work. For our Higher Education courses it means retaining our current Silver TEF Award at the next institutional review. For all our courses it means getting more and more positive feedback from students, apprentices and employers. It also means ensuring that all our learners go on to positive destinations, either further learning, university, employment or promotion.

Aim 5

To invest in our staff, facilities and buildings.

Our growth strategy will provide us the additional income to enable us to invest in improving all aspects of our offer. We have already completed the extension to Project Rainbow, which provides facilities for training students with special needs in independent living skills at our Brislington Centre, and we are on target to complete the new Advanced Construction Skills Centre at our South Bristol Academy campus in 2021. We aim to make further improvements to our IT infrastructure, our science laboratories and our green technology facilities over the next three years. We will also invest more in the pay, wellbeing and professional development of our staff.

Aim 6

To enhance our digital capability and environmental sustainability.

The coronavirus health crisis has made it essential to rapidly increase the amount of e-learning we can deliver and to ensure the quality is consistently high. We will be launching a greatly enhanced digital strategy to ensure that all staff are trained to make full use of new technologies in the classroom and that we develop our online and virtual learning capabilities. Wherever practical, college systems and procedures will be automated using electronic systems and digitally enabled platforms. Alongside this we will develop a college-wide strategy to enhance our environmental policy and strategy, in response to the climate emergency declared by Bristol city. This will involve increasing our efforts to recycle all materials, be carbon neutral and encourage greater use of public transport by students and staff. We will also develop our curriculum response to the environmental crisis, through developing courses in areas such as sustainable construction and engineering techniques, and in ecology and conservation as part of our animal care and science curriculum.

Inclusion

Aim 7

To remain as accessible and inclusive as possible.

We are proud of our record in welcoming high needs learners and students from disadvantaged and socially excluded families and providing a wide range of opportunities for them to engage and re-engage. Our Post 18 provision for students with special educational needs will continue to develop and expand in partnership with Bristol Council. Here, our network of links with schools, voluntary organisations and agencies across Bristol is crucial, and we will work to deepen and extend our partnership work. We will also aim to strengthen our student welfare and support services and to increase access to Additional Learning Support for apprentices, amongst other groups of learners. Apart from better meeting the needs of students with learning difficulties, we will also develop specialist support services for neuro-diverse learners, and for those with mental health needs.

Aim 8

To enhance social mobility through improving access to our courses.

We are aware that Bristol still has significant barriers to social mobility and that some local communities in Bristol struggle to gain access to basic qualifications, higher education, skills training and job opportunities. We will aim to tackle this issue in two ways. Firstly, by adding our voice to calls for free public transport in Bristol for all young people in education or training up to the age of 19. At the same time we will explore the possibility of providing college transport where travel is identified as a key barrier to access. Secondly, we will work to improve our delivery of good quality, independent careers advice and guidance, in accordance with the Gatsby benchmarks for good practice, and work with partners across Bristol to increase the availability of independent careers information, advice and guidance.

Aim 9

To enhance our equality and diversity profile.

Bristol has a rapidly growing black and minority ethnic population and is increasingly diverse in religion and culture. The Black Lives Matter movement has thrown into sharp focus the continuing legacy of inequality and cultural division which the city is still grappling with. We are very aware of our position as one of the key local institutions which serves all parts of Bristol's community, including those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. We will continue to provide English for speakers of other languages (ESOL courses) in response to the arrival of new students from all over the world and as our contribution to Bristol's status as a City of Sanctuary. We will also work hard to ensure gender equality, provide good services for those with disabilities and support LGBT students and other groups liable to discrimination. As part of this we will continue to work to close the gender pay gap for all levels of staff at the college and ensure the diversity of our workforce better reflects the diversity of the population it serves.

Turning Plan into Reality

We will review our progress against the aims in this plan annually and where necessary modify and update the targets we set ourselves.

Where appropriate we will consult with key partners on the progress of our strategy and its effectiveness.

We are determined to grow and improve, while remaining open and inclusive, in keeping with our organisational values.

We are determined to provide the best possible further and higher education and skills training we can.

Because we are Bristol's college.





Strategic Plan 2020-23

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