

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Intersectionality Strategy

MidKent College and MKC Training

2021-2024

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1. Introduction

About Us

MidKent College aspires to pursuing excellence in the services it provides and recognises that people, both staff and students, are its 'product'.

Therefore external scrutiny of the College's management of people and people-related issues is a significant factor in helping the College to evaluate its practice, and during 2021 it secured re-accreditation for both the Investors in People and Investors in Diversity awards.

Following the 2021 Investors in Diversity assessment, the College was ranked 42nd in the National Centre for Diversity's Top 100 Most Inclusive Workplaces Index.

MKC Training is a wholly owned subsidiary of MidKent College and is a member of the Holdfast consortium serving the Royal Engineers through a 30-year prestigious Public Private Partnership contract. Within the consortium, MKC Training is responsible for delivering trade and professional qualifications in construction and engineering.

For the purposes of this document, where appropriate MidKent College and MKC Training may be collectively referenced as the MidKent College Group or abbreviated to The Group.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the MidKent College Group

It is MidKent College Group's vision to provide a learning and working environment which celebrates diversity and protects students and staff from any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The Group recognises the educational and business benefits of having a diverse community of staff and students.

This Diversity and Inclusion Strategy represents a commitment from the Group to take firm action to redress inequality, to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion in all of our activities. This strategy sets out our core objectives for meeting our public sector equality duties, and provides a detailed plan of the steps we intend to take to advance equality, diversity and inclusion (Annex A: Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan).

This strategy seeks to meet the general duties imposed on the Group by legislation and sector guidance but will go further to include good practice in all areas of equality, diversity and inclusion. The Group aims to go beyond its legal requirements and to optimise the life chances and success of all users of the Groups services. In particular, we will ensure that students are developing in circumstances consistent with the principles of equality and the provision of safe and effective care, regardless of their legally protected characteristic or socio-economic circumstance.

The Group aims to be aware of its conscious and unconscious biases, prejudices and stereotypes, and to mitigate the effect of unconscious or implicit bias on decision making. All staff have a duty to contribute constructively to equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. Vision and Values

MidKent College's Vision, Values and Priorities play a vital role in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion so that it is an essential part of every aspect of college life. Furthermore, they embody the goals and objectives of the organisation and form the foundation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

MidKent College's Vision

"Everyone is proud to recommend MidKent College to family and friends. It is a great place to learn and work, where all students and staff feel part of the College community."

MidKent College's Values

- Passion
- Pride
- Purpose
- Resilience

MKC Training - As with its parent organisation, MKC Training's Values are an essential component in its ongoing and continued success. They are the lifeblood of its approach to equality, diversity and inclusivity. The Values are the basis upon which our Vision will be achieved.

MKC Training's Vision

"To be the UK's most innovative training design and delivery partner, trusted by our customers to prepare them for tomorrow."

MKC Training's Values

- **Commitment** to learner success
- Investment in **People**
- **Collaboration** through partnership to achieve shared goals
- **Innovation** to prepare our customers for tomorrow

3. Strategic Priorities

Equality, diversity and inclusion are about more than just meeting a legal obligation. The Group aspires to make a positive difference to the lives of the people it serves in the way it works each day, treating all people with dignity and respect and recognising the value of each individual as a unique member of the community whether they are students, staff, contractors or visitors. The College has a clear vision and a set of core values which enables it to commit to eliminating inequitable treatment, advancing equality of opportunity for all and fostering good relations between different people throughout the organisation.

MidKent College Strategic Priorities 2020-2030

- **Community** – the College will contribute to the transformation of the communities of Maidstone, Medway and the surrounding areas through working collaboratively to raise aspirations
- **Education** – the College will be the first choice locally for high-quality technical education and training delivered by industry practitioners
- **Economy** – the College will contribute to the prosperity of the local economies of Maidstone, Medway and the surrounding areas, and horizon-scan to ensure it operates in a way that is financially sustainable.

MKC Training Strategic Priorities

The MKC Training strategic priority is a growth agenda focussing on both internal and external growth and expansion. Its growth will not be achievable without creating the environment that maximises the benefits of a highly developed approach to equality, diversity and inclusivity. MKC Training has five target growth areas:

- **Priority #1** – to continue the phenomenal success of the existing contract within the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME).
- **Priority #2** – to develop the range and scale of opportunities with the RSME contract.
- **Priority #3** – to identify and exploit opportunities within the wider Defence Training environment.
- **Priority #4** – to develop a commercial arm to our training offer through our Civil Strategy.
- **Priority #5** – to support and grow through our relationship with MidKent College.

Legislative Context

The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 is the overarching equality legislation in the UK. The Act makes discrimination unlawful across many areas of activity, including employment and the provision of further and higher education. [Technical guidance on the Act](#) for further education providers is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The Act covers nine protected characteristics:

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

We recognise 'intersectionality', in that an individual may identify with a number of these characteristics. The Equality Act 2010 also sets out the framework for the Public Sector Equality Duty. Under the general duty the Group has a legal responsibility to have due regard to the following matters when exercising its functions:

- The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and person who do not share it, and
- The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Under the Specific Public Sector Equality Duty, public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.

Human Rights and PREVENT Duty

The Group aims to protect and preserve the rights and freedoms that belong to everyone regardless of their nationality and citizenship. The Group believes that human rights are fundamentally important in maintaining a fair and civilised society. This is in line with the Human Rights Act 1998, and the 16 rights and freedoms it upholds. We will also fulfil all duties placed on us by the PREVENT Duty (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015).

British Values

The British Government defined its concept of 'British Values' in its 2011 PREVENT Strategy, and since 2014 the Department for Education has required all colleges to "promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs".

The Group recognises that understandings of Britishness should be as inclusive as possible, and care must therefore be taken to challenge and remove negative and demeaning stereotypes of certain groups and communities.

With these values in mind, the Group aims to:

- Help students to become valuable and rounded members of society who treat others with respect and tolerance, regardless of background
- Promote the basic British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different beliefs and faiths to students
- Ensure students progress with an understanding of the importance of respect and are fully prepared for life in modern Britain
- Celebrate difference and promote diversity
- Encourage an understanding of the difficulties other cultures face where such values are not respected

Safeguarding

The Group provides students, staff, contractors and visitors with a safe environment to study, work and visit and is committed to fulfilling its safeguarding duties.

Reporting

The Equality Act general duty is underpinned by specific duties to assist organisations to meet the general duty. To meet all these pieces of legislation, Further and Higher Education Colleges are required to:

- Publish information annually by the 31 January, so others can judge how effective the organisation is in meeting the general duty
- Publish equality objectives at least every four years

- Assess the impact of all policies on staff and students
- Monitor the admission and progression of students and the recruitment and progression of staff
- Publish the results of the monitoring undertaken

4. Equality Objectives

This Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out the Group's overarching objectives for equality, diversity and inclusion. These are:

1. Outstanding teaching and learning provision

- Teaching, learning and assessment meets the needs of each individual student
- Every student is given the support they need in order to succeed
- To continue to narrow any gaps in performance by different groups of students
- To embed the equality, diversity and inclusion into the student journey to ensure that students progress having been fully prepared for the diverse and multicultural world we live in
- Student Voice activities provide opportunities for all students to be heard and kept informed on what is happening in their respective part of the Group.

2. A talented and diverse workforce

- Professional development activities are designed to advance equality, diversity and inclusion for all staff
- Recruitment, selection and professional development activities enable all groups of staff, or potential staff, with an equal opportunity to advance their careers within an inclusive environment.

3. Active engagement with diverse local communities

- The Group engages with local community groups to support and celebrate diversity in all its forms.

Each year in our annual review we will set key (SMART) objectives based upon current baseline data which contribute to achieving these overarching objectives. This will allow us to ensure our actions are targeted and appropriate, reflecting the fast-changing environment in which we operate and to meet our specific duties for staff and students.

5. Who is responsible for the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy?

The **Governing Body** is responsible for ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion plays a fundamental role in the College's strategic plan. Governors have a commitment to the College's statutory responsibilities in relation to equality legislation as an employer and service provider, and will provide leadership in the form of a Lead Governor.

The **Chief Executive Officer and Principal** is accountable for promoting and role modelling the principles behind the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy both inside and outside the organisation and for ensuring that all staff fulfil their role in delivering equality within the Group.

The **Head of Human Resources**, supported by the Principal's Advisory Group for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Intersectionality (PAG EDII), is responsible for the co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

The Executive Group including the Managing Director of MKC Training and Senior Leadership Teams/Heads of Faculty/ and Managers are responsible for putting the strategy into practice and for ensuring that their staff understand and implement the associated actions. They are also responsible for ensuring that action is taken against staff or students who discriminate for reasons of any protected characteristic (or for other factors outlined in the College's policies on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Dignity at Work policy or any other relevant policy).

The Principal's Advisory Group (PAG) is responsible for driving innovative equality, diversity and inclusion strategies and disseminating good practice throughout the Group. They will ensure that the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is closely monitored and that any issues are raised and effectively addressed.

Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that the content of their curriculum, teaching methods and materials, classroom values and assessments promote diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusive practice. Staff will actively promote a harmonious and inclusive environment and will challenge inappropriate behaviour (whether by learners or staff).

All employees are responsible for promoting an inclusive working environment, and for not discriminating against anyone on any basis. This will include taking up training and learning opportunities that further this goal.

All students are expected to ensure that their behaviour promotes positive relationships between people of all groups. Students should also refer to the codes of conduct for students. Support will be provided to those learners with individual support needs to enable them to access the course fully and achieve their potential.

6. Equality and Diversity Annual Reviews

The Group's respective organisations will publish a Diversity and Inclusion Annual Review for every academic year. This will provide equality information as required under the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duties. The annual review will be published to staff, students and the general public on the Group's websites.

The Annual Review will aim to provide information on equality, diversity and inclusion performance from the year. This will include a review of the key objectives and performance in achieving these, monitoring data for staff and students, and wider equality activities and performance including community engagement and staff and student involvement.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

Equality impact assessment (or analysis) is a key tool which helps organisations to embed equality, diversity and inclusion so that it is central to all operations. The purpose of equality impact assessment is to avoid negative impact from decisions or policies and identify positive opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations. Although there is no formal requirement to perform or publish equality analysis, it is a useful tool in advancing equality and diversity and ensuring inclusion and fair practice.

The Group carries out thorough equality analysis through various formats. A formal Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a systematic toolkit used to assess the potential positive and negative impact of a policy or procedure on each protected characteristic. These are reviewed and managed by the Quality department and the PAG. Equality analysis is also carried out by being included in departmental plans, self-assessment reports, and improvement plans. To be effective, an impact assessment must be part of the decision-making process.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan supports the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy by setting out how we intend to fulfil our objectives and legal duties. It provides specific actions covering the broad range of operations of the Group and functions across the protected characteristics. Progress on implementation will be monitored through regular reporting to the Governing Body, the Executive Team and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and will be included within the College's Annual Review.