Executive Summary

<mark>Paper 2.3</mark> – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report
Authors: Arv Kaushal, EDI Manager, Rebecca Myrie, Community Engagement Manager and Annie Allen, CPO.

Purpose of the Report
To provide assurance to the Board that the College is meeting its statutory duty in relation to the Equality Act 2010. To report progress against the key priorities presented to the Board in February 2022 and to present the actions and priorities for 2023. The Gender Pay Gap Report for the year 2022/23 will be submitted to the Board in May 2023.

Context

• Arv has been in post as EDI Manager for just over two years. Sufian Sadiq is our newly appointed EDI Governor.
 	
• Building Fairer Futures is at the heart of the College's Strategic Plan (2021-2026) with a specific aim to ***Promote and live fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion.*** 'Belonging' is our most recent and pertinent addition to our values in respect of EDI.
 	
• The Equality and Diversity Strategy and Equality Strategy Action Plan (ESAP) has three areas of focus:
    • Colleagues (Workforce)
    • Communities (Internal, external, stakeholders)
    • Students (Learners)
 	
• Governors are required to complete mandatory training in EDI on appointment and reappointment. The ETF Governance online programme covers governors' responsibilities for EDI.

Key Issues / Messages
• Good progress has been made against the seven key priorities presented to the Board in February 2022 and MKCG has been reaccredited with Leaders in Diversity in September 2022.
• Student achievement and attainment (and any gaps) will be reported through CQG with the EDI Manager supporting Quality and Curriculum Team activities and challenging as appropriate.
• The Gender Pay Gap Report for the year 2022/23 will be presented at the Board meeting in May 23, a move to more timely reporting against the previous year's activities and outcomes.

Action required of the Board
To receive assurance that the College is meeting its statutory responsibilities and to note progress against previous objectives and the ambition for 2023. Please contact the Head of Governance if you believe that your training is not up to date.

Executive Recommendation
• *Receive assurance that the College is meeting its statutory responsibilities for Equality & Diversity* • *Note progress against the 2022 seven key priorities and other activities as reported* • *Note the recommended actions for 2023*

Risk Analysis	
Failure to deliver the College's vision and values and its ambition for Building Fairer Futures	Quality of Provision Organisational Sustainability Compliance

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) - Annual Board Report 8th February 2023

The past year has again been challenging in many ways. COVID has remained in the background and we saw the steady re-opening of society, the war in Ukraine, the fuel crisis and then at the back end of the year, we started to experience the 'cost of living' crisis. All of these situations have directly and indirectly impacted our workforce, our learners, and the communities we serve.

'Belonging' as the new college value has continued to be explored and discussed but, crucially, the Equality Strategy Review Group (ESRG) has focussed on what the college needs to do to bring EDI to life through day-to-day workforce and learner experiences.

The three main areas of focus continued throughout 2022:

- Our Colleagues (Workforce)
- Our Communities (Internal, external, stakeholders)
- Our Students (Learners)

The last 12 months in review

The primary focus of our EDI Manager, Arv Kaushal, remained with 'Our Colleagues' and to embed and consolidate the learning of 2021 and put in place processes and support to attract and retain colleagues who are more representative of our communities. Recruitment, retention, and progression of our workforce has continued to be a challenge, where most sectors have experienced the 'great resignation'. This, in part, has been attributed to the 'post-pandemic' re-evaluation by employees when considering working conditions, pay and reward. There has been a heightened effort by all our teams to ensure, we create the inclusive cultures and sector relevant experience to mitigate against this sector-wide situation. We have made continual reference to our value of 'Belonging' in terms of recruitment and communication especially.

Building on the work carried out in 2021 when seven key priorities were identified and shared with the Governing Body and Leadership Teams, 2022's activities were continuations of the following

1. Development and understanding of workforce data and the Employee Life Cycle (particularly in relation to EDI)
2. Development of Employee Networks
3. Continued learning and development of Employees, Managers and Leaders
4. Continued development of our Friends and Allies' Network (FAN) and work with our Communities, Employers, Partners and stakeholders
5. Provision of enriched learning experiences for our students
6. Development of cross-college relationships
7. Continuation of accountability and oversight through the Equality Strategy Review Group (ESRG)

Below details the progress made in each area in 2022.

1. **Development and understanding of data and the Employee Life Cycle**

- Peakon metrics and HRIS data are developing and we are continuing to make this data available to decision-makers to help inform them about the impact on equality and inclusion in regard to their operations. Our data continues to tell us that our workforce and leadership is not representative of the communities we serve and we must do better in terms of our inclusive practices and positive action at all stages of the employee life cycle. Achieving better representation in our workforce will take time, effort, energy, resource and budget but we are committed to this fundamental requirement of EDI.
- As part of our commitment to The Race at Work Charter, MK College Group voluntarily published its first Ethnicity Pay Gap data alongside the mandatory Gender Pay Gap Report for the period of 2020-21 in March 2022. Since that inaugural report, the 2021-22 report was also published in October 2022 ([Gender and Ethnicity pay Gap 21/22](#)) with an aim to bring the report as close to the reporting period as possible ie next report to be produced April/May 2023 for the immediate 12 months preceding.
- Our gender pay gap continues to narrow driven by improved representation of women in senior positions and expansion of our Strategic Leadership Team.
- Ethnicity pay gaps continue to be marginal however, representation continues to below regional and national population data. (At the time of writing, the Census 2021 data was not available but is likely to have widened the representation gap.)
- Whilst gender representation at senior levels continues to improve, ethnicity representation is diminishing where there is little representation above job grade C.
- Data sharing underpins some of the evidence needed to drive our approach to a more inclusive actions across the group. Ethnicity data sharing has dropped from 90% in 2021 to 85% in 2022. This is still considered good from a statistical perspective, but we need to be mindful that with an increase of new staff in 2023 this could drop to a level below 80% which weakens the evidence base. People Services are actively working with managers to encourage colleagues to share their personal data where it is missing and a group wide campaign will launch in January to improve data capture from all protected groups.
- Our representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities is around 13%.

Further HRIS data for the month of December and month- by-month trends can be found in Appendix 1.

2. **Development of Employee Networks**
Five employee networks launched in 2021: Cultural Diversity, LGBTQ, Disability, Women's, and Men's. During 2022, some of the networks have grown at a faster pace than others. Although there has been executive support through sponsors, due to role changes, this needs to be reviewed.

- **Women's Employee Network** – This network has progressed the most as this represents the largest group (approximately 70% of the workforce).   The chair,

Bianca Luttman has grown a small team of people who have set the following priorities:

- o Menopause awareness – this work has involved looking at policies, raising awareness, creating the Menopause Café, and collecting resources for the WellBee SharePoint Page.
- o Imposter Syndrome – as part of building confidence, initial sessions have been delivered exploring the real and perceived barriers that women face in the workplace.
- **Men's Employee Network –** Chaired by Jack Maude, Nathan Flynn, and supported by a small group have prioritised Men's mental health and wellbeing:
  - o Awareness has consistently been raised around men and how they share their emotions. In part, this has been driven through the work of The Lions Barber Collective and Movember.
  - o Suicide prevention awareness.
  - o Prostate and testicular cancer awareness.
- **LGBTQ Employee Network** – Chaired by Aly Luxon
  - o The main activity for 2021 and also for 2023 is to actively promote, engage and raise awareness through platform of MK Pride.
  - o Pronouns in email signatures was introduced in the second half of the year, where staff were able to send requests to IT to include this aspect. This is not an embedded process yet and will be explored further in 2023.
- **Disability Employee Network** – Chaired by Victoria Curtis
  - o The group's Disability Confident Employer status (level 2) was reviewed and our practices still meet its criteria and is in place until 2024.
  - o An external group of disability experts has been created and have had initial meetings to explore a working definition for disability and to explore moving the college group to Disability Confident level 3.
  - o British Sign Language (BSL) – learner led BSL working groups have been created to help create resources for learners and staff across the group.
- **Cultural Diversity Network** – Chaired by Yasmin Razak and Sam Abiola stepped into the chair roles as the existing chair is on maternity leave. The activities that have been initiated this year and will continue into 2023 are:
  - o Faith Room provision has been a challenge especially for those that follow Islam. Currently we do not have data on how many learners or staff need this space, especially during the pinch points during winter months when the prayer times are shorter and during Ramadan. In 2022 extra provision was made to accommodate this need and a more sustainable model is being developed during 2023.
  - o Food provision in the refectories was addressed regarding cultural needs. An example of this that the group does use a halal provider but lacked the communication of this to the learners and staff. The catering team are actively working on ways to communicate a more inclusive range of needs that are already catered for.
  - o Priorities for 2023 include cultural awareness meetings for key events on a regular basis.
- SharePoint Pages – Each employee network now has its own SharePoint page to showcase their priorities and activities.

- All employee networks include mental health awareness and will be exploring the climate agenda from the perspective of their members.
- Strategic level conversations have started with respect to how we recognise the role of employee network chair and the progress will feature in next year's report.

3. Learning and Development of Employees, Managers and Leaders

- Values based sessions are now embedded in the Transform programme to ensure emerging leaders grow holistically and understand our values in practice. This is being further improved for the next group of cohorts to align with the group's fairer futures strategy. The first of the new session will be in March 2023.
- A second Transform initiative was also launched in 2022 for aspiring leaders and are actively encouraging staff from under-represented groups to start their leadership journey.
- The Group Inductions include a session on EDI which is attended by all new joiners to the group on a monthly basis. The focus is on how we align the group's strategy to the value of belonging.
- Leading in EDI and Inclusive Curriculum Leadership ILM were started in March 2022 with 12 members of the Strategic Leadership Group. Due to changes in roles and structures 10 completed the formal sessions which takes them to at least Associate level. Case studies are currently being completed with a final deadline at the end of March 2023 to achieve either Member or Fellow level.
- There are plans to run this program again in 2023 with a focus on the Inclusive Curriculum pathway.
- The Strategic Leadership Group also had some initial training on allyship facilitated by Women Leaders UK. Board members were also invited.

4. Continued development of our Friends and Allies' Network (FAN) and work with our Communities, Employers and Partners

Our vision for community engagement is to create an authentic relationship between MKCG and the communities we serve, bringing in diverse expertise and affecting change through influence and action.

In September 2021, the Friends and Allies' Network (FAN) discussed how local career opportunities could be highlighted to people in the area – the outcome of this session was successfully delivered in March 2022. 25 employers had stands at our careers fair that took place during National Careers Week. The purpose of the day was to showcase the career opportunities in MK from employers who are willing to give people a step onto the career ladder. We know that employers are keen to increase the diversity of their workforce and build their talent pipeline. Bringing together motivated and talented people with employers who have roles that they could apply for, tangibly delivers on our aims of [Building Fairer Futures](#).

College students, Y11-Y13 students from seven local schools, MK YMCA residents and the general public referred via The Job Centre all attended. Feedback from employers and visitors was excellent however it was a surprisingly resource-intensive event to deliver from the College's perspective. In order to reduce our ask of employers as well as staff

workload whilst increasing footfall and wider awareness of the event, we have incorporated this careers fair element into our Open Event in March 2023.

The FAN focused on two new themes during 2022 that support the Building Fairer Futures strategy: **climate action and mental health resilience**. At the meeting in March 2022 we were joined by William Baldwin, Principal of [Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College](#) (BHASVIC) who shared BHASVIC's first steps and learnings from their own sector-leading sustainability journey. This session kick-started our own climate actions in earnest, including a sustainability working group using the action plan from the [Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges](#), an all-staff sustainability CPD session on Mon 31st October with a month of climate action for students and staff during November.

In May the FAN explored ways to build mental health resilience in our students so that they don't reach crisis point as support services are so stretched. A working group has been established to signpost resources, share best practice as well as develop understanding and networks across departments, identify themes and common issues. We are working with [Arthur Ellis Mental Health Support](#) to work with our students and develop resources.

May was also when we launched our first **[Community Impact Report](#)** at a breakfast for colleagues and community partners – the report highlights how in the preceding academic year, **MKCG taught 18,206 learners** and worked with our community to deliver Fairer Futures. Our first annual report acts as a springboard to further influence positive change and sets benchmarks for us to achieve – we look forward to sharing our next Community Impact Report with stakeholders.

MKCG has continued to collaborate with community partners on new and established fundraising, awareness and celebration events. Support has included financial and in-kind donations, staff volunteers and professional expertise. Staff and students donated food and raised over £1,300 for our chosen charity, [St Marks Meals](#), during the year. In 2022 events supported by MKCG included [Willen Hospice](#)'s Moo Weekender, [Milton Keynes Pride Festival](#), the [Great Get Together Community Iftar](#) and [MKIAC City of Light](#).

Community Priorities for 2023

Our first virtual FAN meeting of 2023 takes place on Tuesday 28th February and will be focusing on supporting the aims of [Milton Keynes Child Poverty Partnership](#) (MKCPP). MKCPP was created in response to the staggering number of children across MK whose life is impacted by poverty. Its mission is to make MK a city where it is impossible for a child to spend their entire childhood in poverty and where inherited poverty is halved.

The action that **the FAN will be focusing on is what MKCG can do to minimise the non-educational barriers for learners in order that they can fully engage with their College studies.** Practical barriers ranging from access to personal hygiene products or IT equipment all have a negative affect on learners' ability and enthusiasm for learning so what can be done to reduce these?

February also sees our first **College in the Community Day on Tuesday 21/02/23** where as many students and staff as possible volunteer their time to support community projects. A

whole-college approach will not only maximise participation, but ensure meaningful engagement of our students and the maximise the impact of the day. Data including number of projects supported, number of volunteer hours donated, number of learners and staff volunteering will be collated to show impact and also provide a benchmark for future years.

During Personal Development tutorial sessions in the term prior to this event, Progress Mentors will work with their groups toward a project brief that prepares learners for their day of volunteering. This will include exploring social action and its relationship to the five steps to wellbeing (specifically giving and connecting with others). The project will also pull in resources around planning for active citizenship (the nuts and bolts of delivering meaningful and impactful social action) and skills building in communication, teamwork, aiming high, creativity and problem solving.

Spring 2023 sees the publication of our **second Community Impact Report** aligned to Building Fairer Futures that will focus on 'Impact that Matters' to our community.

<mark>More in-depth detail can be found in **[Appendix 2](#)**</mark>

5. **Enriched learning experiences for our students**

Information regarding learner progress and outcomes from our Quality Team is supplied to the Board through CQG. However, the primary focus will be shifted to supporting our Quality and curriculum teams to provide the Board with more focused and inclusive detail which will help to embed a more systemic approach to reporting beyond the compliance requirements.

In essence two priorities will drive this approach moving from 2023 and beyond:

1. Support CQG to improve their inclusive approach to challenge and reporting criteria and support curriculum areas to continue to implement a more inclusive approach to identifying gaps and action planning

2. Continue to develop the learner experience. For example, MKCG has committed to supporting the Student Commission on Racial Justice facilitated by Leaders Unlocked. Along with 12 other colleges in England, we have recruited 5 Student Commissioners who are working on a local and national level to create a set of recommendations on racial justice. Workshops were delivered through the Personal Development programme in November with an online learner survey. Over 330 learners responded to the survey which will be used to provide these recommendations to the college in February 2023.

6. **Cross-college Relationships**

- Relationships continue to be strengthened with the following focus:
  - Between the key parts of the group: Campus, Prison Services, and Commercial.
  - Between business partners.
  - Between leadership structures.

- Links between external stakeholders and internal teams.

- Key achievements include:
  - Work with the catering apprentices to improve their understanding of different cuisines; First event was under the banner of Movember where the EDI Manager delivered a 3-hour session on Punjabi dishes which were then served in The Brasserie. Profits were donated to The Lions Barber Collective, a charity supported by the Men's Network.
  - The next event will be in January 2023 working with another group of apprentices and profits will be donated to St Marks Meals. This is now going to a half-termly event supporting our networks and a local charity.
  - Eid Celebration menu in Chaffron Way and Bletchley.
  - A Prison Services EDI group was formed with 6 prisons and meet on a monthly basis to discuss good practice and sharing of expertise.
  - The EDI manager visited 3 prisons to deliver informal sessions with staff. This will continue into 2023.

7. **Equality Strategy Review Group (ESRG)**

The ESRG has gone through a further iteration with the chair being occupied by our new CEO with an effort to clarify its role in strategic decision-making. The development includes:
- Review of membership to ensure all parts of the group are represented where possible.
- Frequency – Termly meetings to continue.
- Content – A more action-focused approach with discussion time on a specific topic.
- Review EDI activities as a whole. MKCG's progress was recognised by the National Centre for Diversity by achieving Leaders in Diversity in September 2022. This was not only a validation of the immense amount of work that has happened since 2018 (when the College received its award), but also of the Group's approach moving forward. There are actions and recommendations from Leaders in Diversity which ESRG will continue to review and reference as it considers all EDI activities at MKCG.

Additional activities beyond the seven priorities of 2022

Governance
- Board appointed Sufian Sadiq as EDI Link Governor.
- Governors invited to internal training and events.
- The board diversity project has been on hold and will re-start in 2023 with a focus on its online visibility, role awareness and succession planning.
- The group's Equality & Diversity Policy, and the Equality & Diversity Strategy has now been combined into one document. There are no substantive changes from the previous two documents. The amalgamated document now includes references current strategies, terminology, and affiliations. The review for this will be in 2025 where more substantive changes are likely. The link is MKCG-Equality-Diversity-Inclusion-Policy-and-Strategy-Review-September-2025-.pdf (mkcollege.ac.uk)

FE Voices

The third series of #FEVoices will launch on the 21st March 2023, UN's International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This series is in a podcast format and features 5 episodes focussing on Racial Justice.

The 5 episodes feature a range of guests:
- Three Student Commissioners on Racial Justice
- Shalom Lloyd, business leader and college governor
- Precious Zumbika-Lwanga, business leader in construction
- Gamiel Yafai, diversity expert and college fellow
- Shelagh Legrave, FE Commissioner.

There are plans to deliver a new sub-brand #FEVoices: Think Different, which has an ambition to bring diverse voices from a range of sectors for our learners and staff. These will be live events.
- The first event was held in January 2023, themed 'Own Your Superpower' and featured 5 black women business leaders from a range of sectors; Beauty, Pharmaceutical, Construction, Technology, Media, and Talent Acquisition.

EDI Priorities for 2023

Embedded existing priorities/activities:
- Continue to develop Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting and responses
- Produce and respond to the forthcoming Community Impact Report and MK Community Foundation's Vital Signs Report.
- Employee Networks to be continued to be sponsored and supported
- Review and update the Inclusive Language Guide
- Produce an Interactive EDI Calendar (Academic Year)
- **For our community:** #FEVoices, Series 3 campaign involving articles and recommendations to the sector.
- **For our Group:** Risk management and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) – continue to refine our inclusive approach to risk and to launch the new EIA process
- **For our learners:** Complete the Student Commission on Racial Justice programme and start the process of implementing the recommendations from the report produced.

Recommendations for Board activity in 2023

1. **CQG** – The EDI Link Governor (with the support of the EDI Manager) will develop a mechanism for improved EDI scrutiny at board level.
2. To receive a **Student Commission on Racial Justice Report** presentation – representation to the Board of a 60-minute workshop. Date to be confirmed.
3. The board member to actively support and promote **#FEVoices: PODCAST** to their networks.

4. **Recruitment** – The board to actively support group recruitment activities by seeking out diverse talent in their own networks. This is at all levels and, especially at Board and for senior levels of management.
5. The Board to commit to annual **EDI training** beyond the mandatory requirement. The EDI and L&D Managers and Head of Governance can help facilitate this process.

Appendices

Appendix 1

People Data appended CEO Report.

Community strategy 2022-2026

Milton Keynes College has a great legacy of engaging with our local community but this is often at SLT level. We are now in a position to strengthen these relationships through a broader range of staff and learner interactions. These engagement activities will benefit MKCG by delivering on the aims of the Building Fairer Futures strategy.

Our overall vision for community engagement is as follows:

Our vision is to create an authentic relationship between the College Group and the communities we serve, bringing in diverse expertise and affecting change through influence and action.

In developing this plan we have considered our community mix as follows:

Internal: learners, staff
External: alumni, prospects, parents, schools, community groups, not-for-profit organisations, employers, local government and influencers

We will consider each of these audiences within the following aims:

Bring in diverse expertise and thinking
Aim: Targeted community engagement allows us to expand the FAN network to include a broader pool of experts. This knowledge and expertise will influence more decisions across the Group.

Change perceptions and raise awareness
Aim: Marketing communications will influence our key audiences to have a greater understanding of our aspiration to Build Fairer Futures. Stakeholders will see the College as a high-quality learning institution and educational partner.

Enhance student and staff experiences
Aim: Relevant leads will be developed to enrich College-life through engagement with community groups and activities.

Working in partnership to inspire and inform learners, increasing careers knowledge and aspiration
Aim: MK College Group acts as a single point of contact for employers to engage with schools and young people. We support careers inspiration, increasing learners' awareness of the pathways available via the College.

Leadership and collaboration to influence change in our communities
Aim: MK College Group will build our credibility and influence to inspire people and organisations to deliver Fairer Futures. We will be an active partner to drive change through collaboration.
Link to overarching marketing and comms strategy:

Community aim	Connection to overall Marcomms plan
Bring in diverse expertise and thinking	Engage community; Grow influence; Grow insights
Change perceptions and raise awareness	Acquire customers; Engage community;
Enhance student and staff experiences	Engage community; Brand advocacy
Working in partnership to inspire and inform learners, increasing careers knowledge and aspiration	Acquire customers; Engage community; Brand advocacy; Grow insights
Leadership and collaboration to influence change in our communities	Engage community; Brand advocacy

KPIs

KPI	Connected aims				
	Diverse thinking	Perception change	Enhanced experiences	Partnership working	Influence change
Three-yearly perception survey • Increase in familiarity and awareness scores*		✓		✓	✓
Friends and Allies' Network • Increase in FAN engagement by internal & external stakeholders • Input into EIA's • Input into MKCG projects and actions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community contacts • Increase in quality and quantity of community contacts • Increase in engagement in community activities by staff and students • Develop network of local CSR professionals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PR • Growth in coverage relating to community		✓			✓
Schools' engagement • Increase in interactions with school Heads, Careers Advisers and staff		✓	✓	✓	

*based on Feb 2020 report

An operational plan will be produced ahead of the academic year with SMART objectives under each of the community aims.