Leaders in Diversity 2022

Executive Summary

Milton Keynes College Group (MKCG or the Group) has been established since 1982 and is based over two main campuses in Milton Keynes and Bletchley, with approximately over 1000 members of staff. The Group offers a broad variety of qualifications, including vocational courses, apprenticeships, higher education, professional certificates as well as employability skills and community training. It is unusual in that it is also a national provider of education services in prisons across the country. There are roughly 8,000 students at any one time studying across the College Group. The Group has a strategic leadership team of 27 individuals, which includes 5 executive leaders.

The Group completed Leaders in Diversity (LiD) in June 2018 for the first time and has since (much like most organisations) coped with the pandemic, changes in leadership and has also very positively recruited a lead Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager – Arv Kaushal. Due to the time gap since 2018 to 2022 – it was decided that this Leaders in Diversity reassessment process should be seen as a fresh start, with some reference to the previous assessment but mainly focusing on the changes that have resulted in several areas being refreshed more recently.

The Group started its recent LiD reassessment journey in February 2022. The process consisted of regular updates and planning meetings with the leads Arv Kaushal and Annie Allen, surveys to staff, leaders, students and external stakeholders, assessment interviews followed by the production of this report. The Group has worked on its EDI action plan and notably undertaken a reflective approach to refocus FREDIE priorities. Encouragingly, the College Group is demonstrating a strategic and operational approach to strengthening FREDIE internally – while recognising there is more to do to move forward, and it is aware of some of the bigger challenges it faces as an organisation – particularly in relation to the provision on campus and in the prison services. This report highlights the positive practice areas described by staff and students and evidenced during the last 6 months alongside making recommendations where further work could be undertaken.

Recommendation

Milton Keynes College Group is developing a positive, collaborative and inclusive culture by working towards embedding FREDIE across its work areas. I recommend MKCG be awarded Leaders in Diversity Accreditation with the caveat that recommendations from this report and the action plan continue to be implemented and progress demonstrated at the next re-assessment stage.

At a glance - Destinations

Of the thirteen destinations, **eight were categorised as 'Achieved'** and **five were deemed as 'Partially achieved'**. The first ten destinations fall under the Investors in Diversity accreditation and the last three are used to determine progress against Leaders in Diversity.

5/10

*Five out of the ten **Investors** destinations were fully achieved, with the remaining partially achieved.*

3/3

*All three of **Leaders** destinations were fully achieved.*

This outcome is a strong endorsement of the MK College Group's fairer future strategy which launched in July 2021. The group is *'developing a positive, collaborative and inclusive culture by working towards embedding FREDIE across its work areas.'* There are many successes across all the destinations assessed and achieving all three of the leadership aspects is a positive signal that consistency of approach and shared understanding is developing well.

Although only five of the Investor's destinations were deemed to be fully achieved, the shared understanding and consistent approaches are starting to filter through. The recommendations lay out the specifics of where and how the group could accelerate and target interventions.

The five destinations that were 'partially achieved':

Destination 1   Your organisation is effective in advancing FREDIE

Destination 2   Your culture makes people of any background feel safe, valued, and included

Destination 6   You are able to demonstrate that your selection and recruitment practices are fair and seek to address under-representation of people with different protected characteristics in your workforce at all levels

Destination 8   You are using your performance management systems to improve inclusion, engagement, and productivity

Destination 10   Effective communications

Recommendations

There are forty recommendations highlighted as a result of the assessment; nine of which are specific to leadership.

The next step will be to identify where we are already acting and those aspects where we need to start the process.

In detail - *Destinations*

Destination 1 - *Partially Achieved*

Your organisation is effective in advancing FREDIE

Destination 2 - *Partially Achieved*

Your culture makes people of any background feel safe, valued, and included

✓ **Destination 3 –** *Achieved*

FREDIE is core to your organisation's strategy or business plan

✓ **Destination 4 -** *Achieved*

Good mental health and well-being are regarded as important in your organisation

✓ **Destination 5 -** *Achieved*

Effective operational and line management of FREDIE

Destination 6 - *Partially Achieved*

You are able to demonstrate that your selection and recruitment practices are fair and seek to address under-representation of people with different protected characteristics in your workforce at all levels

✓ **Destination 7 -** *Achieved*

Retention, reward and progression processes are fair and where required, you are working towards eliminating any unfair pay gaps

Destination 8 - *Partially Achieved*

You are using your performance management systems to improve inclusion, engagement, and productivity

✓ **Destination 9 -** *Achieved*

Your organisation has fair and inclusive procurement practices

Destination 10 - *Partially Achieved*

Effective communications

✓ **Destination 11 -** *Achieved*

Effective Leadership

✓ **Destination 12 -** *Achieved*

Conscious competence

✓ **Destination 13 –** *Achieved*

'Partially achieved' destinations

Destination 1 - *Your organisation is effective in advancing FREDIE*
Overall result for Destination 1 Partially Achieved

Summary of Impact
- 92% of staff respondents – in the context of their workplace understand what protected characteristics means. 98.8-99.4% of staff respondents – in the context of their workplace, understand what fairness, respect, equality, diversity and inclusion mean.
- 96% of staff respondents – thought about how inclusive their behaviour is towards people of a different personality to their own
- 91% of staff respondents – indicated they have had diversity training in the last 2 years

Recommendations
1. Communicate what FREDIE is to staff and learners and enable all staff (including leaders and managers) to discuss and define what FREDIE means to them – to increase awareness, understanding and engagement.
2. Communicate the role, work, and outcomes from the ESRG, FAN, staff networks and how to get involved more widely across MKCG to staff and students.
3. Continue providing effective training in FREDIE/EDI for all staff annually building on what has been established and reviewing its effectiveness – ensure unconscious bias is addressed.
4. Consider providing the training/information/support indicated by survey respondents – Neuro-equality, Unconscious Bias, Cultural Awareness, Promoting Good Mental Health at Work, Transgender and Gypsies & Travellers

Destination 2 - *Your culture makes people of any background feel safe, valued, and included*
Overall result for Destination 2 Partially Achieved

Summary of Impact
- 9.4% of staff respondents – feel their line managers take FREDIE seriously in the way that they behave. 87.5% of staff respondents – feel their colleagues take FREDIE seriously in the way that they behave.
- 96.3% of staff respondents – have thought about how inclusive their behaviour is towards people who have a different personality to their own
- 96.2% of staff respondents – indicated their line managers are accepting of people from diverse backgrounds

Recommendations
1. Explore why some individuals feel they have been treated unfavourably, bullied, or harassed and witnessed inappropriate behaviour in the last 12 months – examine the comments in the surveys and take appropriate actions to decrease these numbers.
2. Highlight regularly what support is in place to help staff and managers deal with any inappropriate or challenging incidents fairly and effectively in the moment.
3. Highlight informal and formal measures to prevent and deal with bullying/harassment and discrimination to all staff and students regularly.

4. Consider how the MKCG and senior leaders can ensure all staff feel part of a culture that is fair, inclusive, consistent and communicate these messages and actions in a variety of ways to all parts of MKCG.

Destination 6 - *You are able to demonstrate that your selection and recruitment practices are fair and seek to address under-representation of people with different protected characteristics in your workforce at all levels*
Overall result for Destination 6 Partially Achieved

Summary of Impact
- 77.5% of staff feel that they have an equal opportunity to succeed in MKCG (Lower quartile of benchmarking)
- 69.5% of staff respondents feel that there is fairness for all within MKCG (Lower quartile of benchmarking)

Recommendations
1. Continue embedding and expanding inclusive recruitment practices – to attract, retain and develop diverse talent
2. Continue monitoring EDI data for staff – look at how diversity in managers and leaders can be increased and identify and address any barriers to progression for any groups of people
3. Ensure work being carried out in this area is communicated and transparent to staff more widely
4. Investigate comments in the LiD internal stakeholder survey to understand what staff need, want, have experienced and take actions where required

Destination 8 - *You are using your performance management systems to improve inclusion, engagement, and productivity*
Overall result for Destination 8 Partially Achieved

Summary of Impact
- Overall, percentages of staff respondents indicating FREDIE was included in their appraisal process, and their teams discussed FREDIE and its benefits – were quite low compared to other organisations – sitting towards the bottom of the median quartile. Improving the numbers of survey participants and encouraging FREDIE related discussions and objectives/actions regularly would help improve this in the future.

Recommendations
1. Continue to build FREDIE into performance management, appraisal processes and continue to support managers to conduct and participate in them effectively.
2. Ensure FREDIE is included in team meetings/briefings/updates and one-to-ones to ensure there are regular opportunities to discuss, raise questions/concerns, get updates, embed/share any learning and celebrate and promote diversity.

Destination 10 - *Effective communications*
Overall result for Destination 10 Partially Achieved

Summary of Impact

- Not all learners and staff are aware of what MKCG is doing to further embed EDI and FREDIE within the group, not all staff feel they are treated fairly, not all students feel EDI is included in their lessons – indicating there is more to do to help individuals understand when anything is linked to EDI explicitly and to create more opportunities to both discuss and progress it.

Recommendations

1. Continue to develop and use strong FREDIE related comms internally and externally – using a variety of accessible channels, regularly.

2. Ensure there are mechanisms within communication to engage with the whole group consistently about FREDIE.

3. Share the outcomes and planned actions from the LiD process with Governors, all staff, students and external stakeholders.

4. Include FREDIE in team meetings/briefings/updates and one-to-ones to ensure there are regular opportunities to discuss, raise questions/concerns, get updates, embed/share any learning, celebrate and promote diversity.

'Achieved' destinations

✓ Destination 3 – *FREDIE is core to your organisation's strategy or business plan*
Overall result for Destination 3 Achieved

Summary of Impact
- 75% of learner respondents indicated the MKCG should be awarded the LiD Standard.
- 54% of learner respondents indicated yes/yes, I think so – equality and diversity are discussed in their lessons.

Recommendations
1. Continue supporting managers and tutors to highlight and provide opportunities for staff and students to get involved with FREDIE related activities daily
2. Senior leaders to continue to regularly communicate their commitment to and benefits of FREDIE – linking to wider strategic objectives and plans (as in Destination 2)

✓ Destination 4 - *Good mental health and well-being are regarded as important in your organisation*
Overall result for Destination 4 Achieved

Summary of Impact
- 26% of staff respondents indicated they have / have had a longstanding physical or mental health condition or disability.
- 46% (6 of 13) learner respondents indicated – the buildings & facilities of the college are accessible to people whatever their background, age, disability, ethnicity or religion. (Examples might include wheelchair access, a prayer room, information available in different languages etc.)

Recommendations
1. Continue providing more mental health and well-being training for managers and all staff. Gather regular feedback to monitor impact of the training.
2. Continue promoting good practices, reasonable adjustments possible, events and services to manage mental health and well-being positively for all.

✓ Destination 5 - *Effective operational and line management of FREDIE*
Overall result for Destination 5 Achieved

Summary of Impact
- 96.2% of staff respondents think their manager is accepting of people from diverse backgrounds
- 89.4% of staff respondents feel their manager takes FREDIE seriously in the way that they behave

- 88.7% of staff respondents indicated their manager is competent in managing practices around FREDIE
- 85.8% of staff respondents feel valued and respected by their manager
- 82.9% of staff respondents feel included by their manager
- 75.7% of staff respondents trust their manager

Recommendations
1. Ensure all managers and team leaders develop their understanding and competence in FREDIE
2. Ensure all leaders and managers regularly communicate their commitment and take actions to embed FREDIE in their areas of work.
3. Ensure managers listen to staff, gather feedback, promote positive practices and celebrate diversity in their teams and responsibilities.

✓ **Destination 7 -** *Retention, reward and progression processes are fair and where required, you are working towards eliminating any unfair pay gaps*
Overall result for Destination 7 Achieved

Recommendations
1. Continue unconscious bias & FREDIE training for those involved in recruitment, selection, promotion, reward & remuneration processes.
2. Continue with the work and actions identified to reduce any pay gaps and increase diversity at all levels.
3. Undertake consultations/staff surveys to better understand how remuneration, reward, recognition, promotion, recruitment, and training & development responses can be further improved and communicate what work is being undertaken to address these areas.
4. Continue to monitor recruitment, promotion, remuneration and training opportunities by all protected characteristics to identify any actions needed.

✓ **Destination 9 -** *Your organisation has fair and inclusive procurement practices*
Overall result for Destination 9 Achieved

Summary of Impact
- With only six survey respondents for external stakeholders, it is challenging to understand the impact of any FREDIE related actions in the procurement and external facing environment. However, a continued focus on ensuring partners, suppliers, contractors and other stakeholders are committed to MKCG's strategy and EDI work, regular communication with external stakeholders, collating feedback, encouraging codes of conduct or the equivalent and engaging in meaningful reviews of EDI within all their work, contracts and interaction will help towards the Groups objective *to develop meaningful partnerships to grow influence and create opportunities*.

Recommendations

1. Continue setting a positive example by leading in FREDIE with external stakeholders, share your vision and practice with others who are further behind in their journey with FREDIE.

2. Ensure FREDIE is part of any tendering, reviewing and procurement processes. Offer FREDIE resources and related training to external stakeholders, suppliers and contractors (where appropriate) to build their capacity and competence in this area – demonstrating MKCG's external leadership in this area.

Leadership destinations

✓ Destination 11 - *Effective Leadership*
Overall result for Destination 11 Achieved

Summary of Impact
- Through interviews and survey comments, its clear leaders understand a lot about FREDIE, are very committed to it and want to embed it within the organisation through a variety of strategic and operational avenues. However, there perhaps is a need to feel more confident in themselves to be able to fully lead, own and progress FREDIE within their own areas and to recognise that explicitly or implicitly every interaction, work, and their whole day in some way impacts on the progress of FREDIE and the inclusivity of the culture at MKCG. From interviews and the survey comments there are strong indications that continued investment, development, actions, and discussions are helping with confidence, commitment, and competence in this area for all the leaders and this can be made more explicit in daily tasks and interactions.

Recommendations
The following suggested recommendations have been made to support your ongoing FREDIE journey:
1. Leaders to continue regularly communicating their commitment to and benefits of FREDIE – linking to wider strategic objectives, plans and daily operations. Demonstrating their understanding and commitment.
2. Leaders to have FREDIE related objectives included in their own appraisals/PDP's and support their staff and colleagues to do the same – to help the organisation model and embed this approach.
3. Continue connecting the campus and prison services leaders and staff – to ensure the same approach to FREDIE across the group, including resources, action plans, roles, rewards and training access.

✓ Destination 12 - *Conscious competence*
Overall result for Destination 12 Achieved

Summary of Impact
- The culture at MKCG is working towards becoming more inclusive, fairer, and equitable for its people – staff, students, leaders, community, and stakeholders through strategic and operational activities and positive role model behaviours. However, with the continuing growth of the important role MKCG plays, the challenges it faces, and a new CEO being appointed – it is even more important to maintain and build on the positive progress achieved by focusing on FREDIE.

Recommendations
The following suggested recommendations have been made to support your ongoing FREDIE journey:
1. Leaders continue with own personal development in FREDIE and leading in FREDIE visibly and with personal commitment.

2. Continue resourcing and supporting initiatives, monitoring and actioning any gaps identified re FREDIE through data analysis, self-awareness and regular qualitative feedback.
3. Build on the understanding and familiarity with the core elements of the Equality Act 2010, the General Duty, its 3 aims and the implications for MKCG and examples of where it can be demonstrated in day-to-day work.
4. Continue the excellent leadership, self-reflection and role modelling currently in place to empower all staff to participate in and understand FREDIE.

✓ **Destination 13 -** *External leadership*
   Overall result for Destination 13 Achieved

Summary of Impact
- Communication can still be improved based on the external and leaders survey results, however, the achievement outlined by the current CEO could potentially have a very big impact on skills, employment, the community and inclusion.

Recommendations
The following suggested recommendations have been made to support your ongoing FREDIE journey:
1. Monitor and action to improve diversity performance of suppliers.
2. Review and continue to include FREDIE in current and any planned processes for procurement/tendering.
3. Continue sharing MKCG's commitment to, progress in and development of inclusive leadership in FREDIE externally and communicate your expectations of stakeholders in this area.