

Introduction

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is at the heart of EKC Group's culture: we are fully committed to creating a fair and supportive working and learning environment for all which has respect, tolerance, understanding and a sense of belonging at its core. Wherever possible we will identify and remove barriers to inclusion and achievement. We will treat everyone with respect and dignity and will be positive and proactive about people's differences.

Whilst we have high equality standards, we recognise that we need to challenge and improve what we do so that EDI continues to be at the forefront of our offer. Our 4 year equality action plan for staff therefore identifies and puts in place the measures that we will take to do this. The plan is informed by:

- the Group's People Strategy and Inclusion Strategy and its EDI policies and procedures
- data trend analyses
- stakeholder feedback mechanisms e.g. Staff survey and outcomes from the People and Culture Development Group
- self-assessment/quality improvement cycle outcomes
- best practice
- legal requirements
- local, regional and national priorities and initiatives

The plan covers Group actions i.e. those that are applicable to all Colleges and business units within EKC Group. Actions which are only applicable at a local level will be covered in annual College/business unit Quality Improvement Plans for the respective College/unit. This includes:

- Addressing underrepresentation and actions for certain protected characteristics (sex, gender, race, disability).
- Specific actions to improve and foster good relations between groups of people with certain protected characteristics.

The plan will be reviewed and approved twice a year by the Group Leadership Board and its oversight will be managed by the People and Culture Development Group. The Group's Staff Equality Action Plan will be published annually on the Group's website along with the Student Equality Action Plan.

Each action plan objective is related to at least one of the Equality Act protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The objectives also support the Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

| 1. Work towards EKC Group's workforce being reflective of its community and students | | |
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| Key actions to achieve | Progress | Impact by 2026 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a welcoming, accessible and efficient recruitment process which incorporates positive actions to recruit where certain cohorts are underrepresented or may encounter barriers to employment, for example on the basis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disability ○ Race ○ Gender ○ Being a care giver/leaver ○ Being an ex-member of the armed forces • Encourage staff to complete details about their protected characteristics. Reduce the proportion of 'unknown' equality data we hold on our employees. • Review the diversity at all levels of our workforce to help identify areas for improvement. • Implement elements of the <u>Race Code</u> and monitor progress. Explore similar codes and standards for other protected characteristics and implement good practice. | <p>Data collection tool for protected characteristics available in MyWorkLife</p> <p>Clear messages on recruitment system about welcoming applications from all members of the community</p> | <p>Staff workforce is representative of students and the community</p> <p>95% of staff report via staff induction surveys their application/recruitment experience as good or better.</p> <p>95% of staff have fully completed their protected characteristics data.</p> |
| 2. Ensure that staff feel they are treated fairly and with respect | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a suite of training and awareness on EDI themes • Use a variety of tools (People and Culture Development Group, staff survey, focus groups etc) for staff to feedback on their experiences. Identify and address areas for attention. • Develop and implement tools and resources to support Managers with advice on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting and managing their staff (induction, absence, capability, grievance, development etc) ○ Gender identity/transgender ○ Religious observance | <p>Equality and Diversity mandatory training in place</p> <p>Menopause Policy has been launched</p> <p>Themes identified in staff survey and feedback sessions being addressed</p> | <p>Voluntary turnover of staff is no more than 10%</p> <p>At least 95% of staff report via the staff survey that they are treated fairly and with respect.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sexual orientation ○ Menopause ● Reinforce awareness of the Group’s wellbeing policy and strategies to all staff ● Monitor gender pay gap and address any imbalances ● Develop and implement ethnicity pay gap monitoring ● Consult with staff to determine whether network/support groups for certain protected characteristics would be beneficial in breaking down barriers and advancing equality of opportunity. ● Devise and implement and EDI calendar across the Group so that a focus can be given to EDI themes at specific times throughout the year. | <p>Wellbeing policy has been reviewed and about to be relaunched</p> <p>Mental health support site being established</p> | |
| <p>3. Ensure that staff have equality of opportunity to reach their potential</p> | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and implement a suite of training and awareness on EDI themes ● Provide meaningful learning and development opportunities for staff via a variety of different mechanisms ● Develop and implement a process to enable staff to have meaningful career plans ● Complete harmonisation processes for pay, terms and conditions for all roles | <p>CPD Hub in place for staff development</p> <p>First wave of harmonisation complete</p> <p>MyProgress app being developed to include focus on career planning</p> | <p>At least 95% of staff report via the staff survey that equality of opportunity is embedded within the culture of EKC Group</p> <p>At least 95% of staff report via the annual survey that they are proud to be a member of staff at EKC Group</p> |