

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023

Approved by NCG Corporation on: 7th May
2019

Executive Summary

This document applies to the colleges operated by NCG Corporation and its subsidiary companies. The colleges and companies are referred to as “Colleges” and the whole organisation is referred to as “NCG”.

Our strategy is aligned with our purpose “to unlock potential through learning” and aims to create inclusive environments which allow people to thrive and develop regardless of their legally protected or socio-economic characteristics. We are a values led organisation and it is our values which drive how we behave towards our colleagues, customers, students, learners and external stakeholders. By **valuing our people** we celebrate our diversity and have zero tolerance towards bullying and harassment. By **taking ownership** we challenge discriminatory practises, inequalities and stereotypes. By **being open and honest** we are tolerant of and respect the views of others.

Through implementation of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy we aim to;

- increase the satisfaction of customers, students and learners
- enhance NCG’s reputation
- strengthen our roots within communities
- meet the wider needs of customers, students and learners
- become an employer of choice
- enhance partnerships
- match or exceed the requirements of legislation and external funding agencies.

Our strategy aims to build on the improvements made in recent years across the Group and sets out the high level aspirations of NCG and is underpinned by localised action plans developed at a College level to reflect local priorities.

NCG’s commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

NCG is committed to meeting its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, advancing equality in our provision for colleagues, customers, students and learners and co-operating with related requirements of funding bodies.

NCG aspires to excellent and is committed to ensuring that all colleagues integrate and embed equality, diversity and inclusion in processes and practices across all divisions.

NCG will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation. All colleagues, customers, students and learners of NCG have a personal responsibility to avoid any such behaviour. NCG has policies and procedures in place regarding treatment of others and will remind colleagues, customers, students and learners that we do not tolerate bullying and harassment.

NCG is committed to creating a fully inclusive environment by:

- Ensuring equality of opportunity for all colleagues, customers, students and learners, including those from protected groups and disadvantaged backgrounds
- Celebrating the diversity of our colleagues, customers, students and learners and protecting them from any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Promoting inclusion in all of our activities to redress inequality and promote social mobility

As a Group of colleges and training providers we are committed to meeting the general duties imposed by legislation and sector specific guidance but aim to go further by developing improving practice in equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of the business. Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2023, combined with our purpose and values, allows us to:

- Mitigate inequality of access and advance equality for all
- Celebrate diversity and foster good relationships throughout the organisation and beyond
- Adapt our activities to the changing needs of learners and customers in order to remove barriers to learning
- Leverage the benefits of diversity in building a great place to work and teach

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is underpinned by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. This policy and associated divisional action plans are produced with due regard to the legal requirements and our commitment to developing outstanding practices in relation to:

- The protected characteristics (extended to those who associate with those who have a protected characteristic)
- Protection for all colleagues, customers, students and learners against direct discrimination, discrimination based on association and perception, indirect discrimination, victimization and harassment on one or more of the protected characteristics
- Fostering good relationships in order to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity
- The reasonable adjustments made to accommodate colleagues and students with protected characteristics and any other additional needs
- Employ voluntary positive action appropriately should any student or staff group be identified as needing particular support
- EHRC guidelines relating to employment and education

Each NCG College is responsible for taking action to support progress towards meeting the aims outlined above, ensuring compliance with legislation, relevant quality standards and funding body requirements.

NCG also have set specific and measurable equality objectives in relation to colleagues across the organisation and for each division.

Progress will be monitored and published on an annual basis.

Legal and Regulatory Context

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and related Policy, have been developed to ensure compliance with requirements of law, quality standards and funding bodies:

- *Equality Act 2010*
- *Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Requirements*
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) requirements
- *Skills Development Scotland requirements*
- *Welsh Government Requirements*
- Ofsted Expectations
- *Estyn Expectations*
- *Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) expectations*
- *Merlin Standard*
- *Matrix Standard*

NCG's Equality Aims

The aims set out in NCG's 2014-18 strategy remain viable, in terms of describing NCG's approach to meeting the General Duty placed on public authorities by the Equality Act 2010, and should be adapted to meet local requirements.

NCG's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion aims provide a framework for the whole organisation in valuing diversity, advancing equality and promoting inclusion. The framework provides flexibility for each division to consider its particular circumstances and operational environment.

Equality Aims:

- (a)** Raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and good relations
- (b)** Embed Equality and Diversity in Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- (c)** Raise the awareness of learners and customers to promote understanding and good relations between diverse groups
- (d)** Provide a hospitable and multi-cultural environment that welcomes, respects and protects diverse people
- (e)** Monitor learner representation and success and take action to promote equality.

- (f)** Ensure that all learners and customers achieve good outcomes, whatever their background
- (g)** Monitor representation amongst all staff types and take action to promote equality
- (h)** Consult and involve representative staff, learners, customers and outside organisations
- (i)** Embed the evaluation of equality impact evidence into policy development, business planning and quality assurance processes
- (j)** Ensure that partner organisations meet NCG's standards and requirements for equality

NCG's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Objectives for 2019-2023

In recognition of the geographical spread of NCG and the diverse nature of our student and learner demographic this strategy aims to provide Group wide direction; providing equality, diversity and inclusion themes around which local Action Plans have been developed. Local actions will be prioritised and targeted based on current local performance, and phased over a four year period.

Roles and responsibilities

- All individuals within NCG, including colleagues, learners, customers and governors are responsible to ensure the proper observation of the principles of this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy. In particular, this relates to the treatment of others so that the environment in which we operate is, as much as possible, free from prejudice and discrimination;
- The NCG Board of Governors is responsible for: compliance with equality legislation in its own processes; overseeing the response by the Executive to equality legislation; approving this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and overseeing progress;
- College Boards of Governors are responsible for the monitoring and performance of College Action Plans
- The Chief Executive of NCG, supported by the Executive Board, is responsible for ensuring the organisation and its Colleges take action to comply with equality legislation.
- The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for Policy development, implementation and monitoring to ensure compliance with equal opportunities legislation
 - ensuring the formal monitoring and review of this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy in line with relevant research, legislation, Codes of Practice and good practice
 - monitoring to ensure progress in meeting the equality objectives
- College Heads, supported by their staff, are responsible for development and implementation of NCG's equality aims and objectives at the operational level.
- The responsibility of College Heads includes maintaining, implementing and communicating policies for the use of any prayer rooms or other faith-related activities. Such policies should outline structures in place for managing prayer and faith facilities and mechanisms for managing any issues arising from use of the facilities.
- All managers are responsible to ensure the effectiveness of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy by giving their support and ensuring that staff, learners and customers in their area understand NCG's expectations for each person under the

strategy. Human Resources will advise managers on their responsibilities under this strategy, particularly regarding employment matters.

Monitoring and publication of outcomes

Monitoring in relation to the equality aims and objectives will continue to be aligned with the annual business cycle to ensure progress.

In order to exercise responsibility under this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, governors and senior managers will be provided with a range of monitoring information. This will include data on the protected characteristics and other relevant information about colleagues, learners and customers. This is purely for the purpose of ensuring the maximum effect of this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy; personal data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and security over data will be adhered to at all times.

Each part of NCG will take action locally to support progress towards meeting the equality aims and objectives, ensuring compliance with legislation, relevant quality standards and funding body requirements.

Progress will continue to be reported annually to NCG Corporation. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and these annual reports are made available under NCG's publication scheme and are accessible on-line in electronic form and are also available in hard copy.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy will be reviewed on a four year cycle.