



# Single Equality Scheme

**Equality and Diversity Strategy**

**2018-2019**

Ref No:	MRG Single Equality Scheme	Originator:	Angie Boyes
Date:	04/09/2018	Approved:	Paul Gray
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### Annex A

Constitution: Equality and Diversity Committee

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## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT MRG SERVICES UK LTD

MRG Services UK Ltd is fully committed to actively promoting equality, celebrating diversity and eliminating discrimination. We will work with stakeholders and partners, within the framework of this policy, to achieve these aims.

Our Equal Opportunities Statement clearly express a commitment to learners from all backgrounds and to creating accessible, relevant training and education routes for all applicants, within the constraints of our funding.

Our commitment to equality will inform all areas of our programme delivery. We will continue to:

- Comply with the law in promoting equality and, where appropriate, go beyond the legal requirements
- Reach out to potential learners not currently involved in education or training to increase their opportunities and life chances
- Ensure that learners succeed and can progress appropriately regardless of their background
- Apply a zero tolerance approach to any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying
- Take a positive approach to equality and diversity with our staff, learners and stakeholders
- Work with partners in achieving our aims.

The Scheme describes in this document how the Provider will fulfil its statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination with regard to its responsibilities as an employer and as a provider of education and training.

The Scheme is not produced in isolation, being supported by other of policies, procedures and guidelines such as Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults, Bullying and Harassment and the Safe Learner Blueprint.

The Scheme in turn also aims to be a key contributor in the delivery of MRG Services UK Ltd's annual Strategic Plan.

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## LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Provider has chosen to publish a Single Equality Scheme („the Scheme“) which describes how we fulfil our obligations in respect of:

- Promotion of equality of opportunity
- Elimination of unlawful discrimination
- Fostering good relations
- Current Equality legislation
- Equality obligations in contracts

The scheme takes into account the Equality Act 2010. It extends the characteristics for which people are protected from discrimination, and the grounds for positive action on the basis of people being disadvantaged or having different needs due to those characteristics. The characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation.

The Scheme will also have regard to reducing inequality of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage, and we fully recognise that these are barriers to students fulfilling their learning potential at MRG Services UK Ltd.

It takes into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty which came into effect in April 2011 and the specific duties (The Equality Act 2010 (Specific duties) Regulations 2011) which came into effect in September 2011.

These require public authorities to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not
- Set Equality objectives

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## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Equality and Diversity is a key priority for MRG. Equality of opportunity and encouragement and celebration of diversity are woven into the fabric of the Provider's values and activity and are therefore implicit in all sections of our curriculum. We have a very good record of widening participation to groups not traditionally included in education or training, especially through our Study Programme.

Some of our achievements to date include:

- The quality team ensures that Equality and Diversity is judged in every lesson observation
- Equality is embedded in all our lessons.
- The Provider has achieved the Matrix award for its Work Related Learning programme
- The Study Programme Team helps learners with learning disabilities to live and work independently
- The Provider became a CSCS card test centre in order to support Glass Industry workers gain site access cards thereby improving employment choices
- MRG identifies gaps in enrolment and achievement of disadvantaged groups at departmental level and produces plans to address reduce these throughout the year.

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## COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The Provider mainly serves the Glass and Glazing Industry nationally.

- Small/Medium Enterprises make up 90% of all businesses we work with and 65% of these have fewer than 50 employees. There has traditionally been a low level of engagement with training in the Glass and Glazing Sector.
- Labour market statistics published in December 2014 indicate that gross salaries for the Glass Industry are around 29k pa for construction workers and 27k pa for workers in the manufacturing and glass processing areas of the sector. These compare slightly more favourably than the national average of 25.5k pa.
- There is a growing population of migrant workers, mainly from Eastern Europe, who have employment related training needs. 140 in 2010/11 (5%)
- Migrant workers suffer from a variety of disadvantages - working for gangmasters, multiple occupancy housing, and transient work with changing shift patterns - all of which impact on their ability to sustain training.

**Nationally 55% of them leave training courses within the first five weeks; this rises to 62% in SMEs.**

**The Provider was very successful in 2010/11 in raising the success rates of this group very significantly to 88.46% across the industries we serve.**

- Numbers of learners with specific needs are growing.

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## IMPLEMENTING THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME:

### Equality and Diversity Action Plan

Our strategies and vision for Equality and Diversity is implemented and monitored through our Equality and Diversity Committee. Key members of the Provider from all parts of the organisation are members of the group. The group sets an annual action plan and our key priorities for 2015/17 are to:

- Identify and prioritise policies & procedures for Equality Impact Assessment
- Review of support & provision for students with learning disabilities & difficulties
- Promote socio-economic cohesion
- Embed equality and diversity across the Provider
- Manage Relationships.

The actions in the E & D Action Plan are based on:

- The Provider's mission, values and priorities
- The equality and diversity principles the Provider has committed itself to
- Data available to us
- Consultation and involvement of stakeholders.

We review the Action Plan at our quarterly committee meetings and sign it off at the end of the academic year (July).

The Committee receives data and status reports from monthly Performance Manager's meetings throughout the year:

### Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)

The Provider has identified and published a range of Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs), against which we assess ourselves annually.

The Equality and Diversity Committee monitors the impact assessments at quarterly meetings and, at departmental level, the impact of actions taken in response to the EDIMs is reflected in department improvement plans and monthly Performance Manager's reporting cycle to the SMT.

EDIMs will be reviewed annually to ensure they fully reflect the contextual conditions of the Provider and will be included as an appendix to this document.

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## Equality Impact Assessments

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool that helps companies make sure their policies, and the ways they carry out their functions, do what they are intended to do for everybody.

EIAs help us to meet the requirements of the equality duties and identify active steps that we can take to promote equality.

Carrying out an EIA involves systematically assessing the likely (or actual) effects of policies, plans, procedures and practices on colleagues and learners in respect of the characteristics of disability, gender, gender identity, racial equality, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, rurality and socio-economic deprivation. But more importantly, it is an effective way of improving policy development and service delivery, making sure that we consider the needs of our communities, identify potential steps to promote equality and do not discriminate.

Our Equality Impact Assessment Implementation Plan will ensure that all new and existing policies and plans are impact-assessed.

## APPLICATION OF THE SCHEME

The Scheme applies to the Provider's staff, learners, partners and sub-contractors and applies across every aspect of its work.

### Learners:

All aspects of learners' experience are guided by the principles of equality. Statistics relating to learners' success at the Provider, recruitment and support are gathered and used to monitor and plan.

### Staff:

The Provider monitors recruitment and selection activities in relation to equality of opportunity and reports the outcomes through the Equality and Diversity Committee to the Provider's Senior Management Team. It also monitors workforce composition in relation to race, gender, disability and age. Human Resources policies are family-friendly and all are available on the Provider's Intranet. All staff are alerted to policies during induction.

### Employers:

In the case of work placement providers and employers with Apprentices, we set standards and requirements within our workplace Service Level Agreements and Contracts.

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## INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS

We are committed to listening to learners and employers to ensure that we can be as responsive as possible to individual need, and comply with the law and the spirit of the law.

We intend to make legal requirements meaningful and effective in the context of the Provider's work. Our Learner Voice Strategy has been developed through a cross-Provider team approach and approved by the Provider Management Team and its primary purpose is to ensure that all individuals' potential can be fulfilled through the provision of a high quality experience.

Outcomes of consultations are taken seriously and, wherever possible, inform changes in the Provider.

### **Our strategies for employers and businesses are to support business development and improvement through:**

- Enhancing the skills of their workforce
- Providing free H&S consultancy
- Providing management training
- Identifying and providing relevant and high quality training for the workforce at all levels
- Providing networks for the development of enterprise.

### **Our strategies for the range of community groups are:**

- To work directly with the Third Sector to identify learning and training needs and provide support
- Making training and learning available in a range of locations, at a range of times and in a range of ways.

### **Our strategies for the community as a whole are:**

- To make a significant and recognised contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of the area
- To contribute fully to the regeneration of the area through developing skills and working within the enterprise culture.

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**The Provider is already in partnership, formally or informally with:**

- Schools
- HEIs
- Other Providers and training providers
- Local borough Councils
- The Third Sector.

The Provider presently delivers training and education to learners from all regions of the country through Apprenticeship and Work Related Learning programmes.

We plan to:

- Ensure that relationships deliver a high degree of access for learners and good quality provision
- Ensure that we create and nurture relationships which deliver high quality
- Provide support for learners and staff

**MONITORING, REVIEWING AND REPORTING**

We will review and update the Scheme every three years or more frequently if appropriate, e.g. to take account of changes in the law, government priorities or outcomes of impact assessments.

Learners and staff will be involved in review through structured feedback mechanisms. The Provider will practise full transparency in its application and monitoring of the Scheme.

Progress and compliance will be monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee which devises and monitors the E & D Action Plan. Provider managers and teams monitor their own areas of work and responsibility and report into the Committee regularly, according to an annual timetable.

The E & D Action Plan forms a full section of the Provider’s overall Strategic Plan, which is reviewed annually as part of the Provider’s business cycle. Equality & diversity objectives and targets are reflected in the operating plans and Monthly Management Reports of all teams. These are monitored through routine meetings.

**COMPLAINTS**

We want to capture feedback from our learners and employers wherever possible, whether negative or positive in order to share good practise and continually improve our services. To this end we have formal, published procedures for dealing with complaints by internal and external stakeholders. These procedures ensure a fair, proper and constructive response to complaints.

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## STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Equality and Diversity training and development already forms part of the Provider's standard training portfolio for new and existing staff. Training needs are identified through individual performance review, organisational review (self-assessment), client and stakeholder feedback.

The requirements arising from these sources and from monitoring of the E & D action plan are fed into the Self-assessment Report Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to ensure they are addressed as part of training needs analysis.

## DELIVERY

We are committed to providing breadth and depth in our delivery offer. We provide industry approved courses that offer opportunities for both young people and adults from entry level to level 4.

We provide pre-employment training at our Wirral Centre to promote social cohesion. The Provider provides an extremely broad Foundation Learning curriculum offer, with detailed progression routes at level 2 and above into:-

- FE Provision
- Employment with further training
- Independent living
- Voluntary Work
- Apprenticeships
- Foundation Higher Level qualifications

Our delivery strategy is reviewed annually in order to:-

- Ensure availability of access to hard-to-reach learners as far as possible
- Continue to meet the needs of Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
- Review the use of our Virtual Learning Centre as a tool for Widening Participation
- Continue the increasing individualisation of teaching and learning
- Formalise and implement the involvement of learners in lesson observations.

## LEARNER SUPPORT

We are committed to providing effective support to all learners of the Provider that is intended to maximise their opportunity to succeed in their course and where possible, remove any barriers to success whether personal, educational or circumstantial. We understand that some people experience more barriers to learning because of socio-economic circumstances or background, gender, gender identity, race, nationality, age, disability, mental health problems, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

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To this end we commit substantial resources to the support of our learners:

- Administration of and help to access EMA and learner bursary
- Administration of and help to access Hardship and other funds
- Debt Counselling
- Career Guidance
- Signposting to agencies and organisations with specialist facilities
- 1:1 ALS support

In particular, we ensure that learners at all locations and have access to the same services by:

- Full training for all Learning Centre staff
- Monitoring of Learner Support
- Training for partners in Learner Support
- Maintaining the Matrix Excellence Award.

**Our strategies are to:**

- Provide a learning environment which meets the current and future needs of learners and the wider community
- Continue to develop the technological infrastructure and expertise to meet new learning possibilities and demands
- Develop the use of the VLE to promote and support individual and independent learning for our learners
- Provide safe, secure, healthy and attractive facilities for our learners
- Demonstrate environmental responsibility.

**MARKETING**

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity within all aspects of the Marketing mix. Through promotional activities and events we promote awareness of equality and diversity issues targeting both internal and external customers.

We aim to produce effective promotional material which supports equality and diversity issues with images of mixed groups, correct text size, multi-colour graphics, where possible removing references to age, large print versions available, brail version available on request, etc.

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We aim to increase the visual elements of materials and reduce text using easy to understand language and not educational jargon.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

Our strategy for learners and learning resources is:

- To give them the best possible opportunities to succeed, progress and fulfill their potential
- To provide professional, stimulating, high quality learning and training
- To equip them with the means to progress in employment and/or further training or education
- To instill a culture of self-improvement and learning for the future.

Our learners include:

- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Disaffected school learners/school refusers
- Migrant workers
- Adults with basic skills needs
- Learners from low income families
- Employers and owner-managers of SMEs.

## SAFEGUARDING LEARNERS

We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all learners. The Children Act 1989 and DfES Guidance "Safeguarding Children in Education" 2004 place a legal obligation upon all Provider employees to seek to protect young people from harm or risk.

MRG's Safeguarding Strategy and associated action plan is the subject of a separate document.

The Children Act 2004 established the Every Child Matters agenda and the duty of all public services to work together to promote five outcomes for children and young people, of which Staying safe is one.

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The outcomes from the Every Child matters Outcomes Framework are:

- Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
- Safe from accidental injury and death
- Safe from bullying and discrimination
- Safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school.

Therefore our responsibility is not just confined to Child Protection but also Health and Safety, security and discrimination.

We are committed to:

- providing a safe environment for young people to learn in
- identifying young people and vulnerable adults who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm
- taking appropriate action to see that such young people / vulnerable adults are kept safe both at home and at the Provider.

## **LEARNER INVOLVEMENT**

We are committed to collecting and acting on the views of our learners to continually improve their learning experience and maximise their chances of success in their course.

### **Our context**

The Provider take the views of its learners very seriously and considers them to be customers without whom the Provider has no purpose or future. We conduct regular learner views surveys and act upon the suggestions we receive in order to enhance the Provider's services.

### **Our intended impact**

Our Learner Involvement Strategy seeks to allow the free-flow of views and information to ensure the learner voice receives the prominence and volume it deserves. It is accepted that at this point (whilst based on best-practice and informed judgement) the strategy has been very much a top-down creation and that as learners become more involved in the planning and development of the Provider the strategy will evolve and improve.

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## HUMAN RESOURCES

We are committed to:

- Providing a learning and working environment which promotes access and creates opportunities
- Ensuring that the workforce development strategy delivers E&D objectives
- Continuing to promote a culture of equality and celebration of diversity throughout the Provider
- Committed to maintaining a healthy workplace for all staff.

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