



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



<b>School</b>	Mulberry Academy Shoreditch Gosset Street Bethnal Green London E2 6NW
<b>Head/Principal</b>	Mrs Ruth Holden (Executive Principal)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Melissa Gibson
<b>IQM Lead</b>	Ms Jennie Montgomerie
<b>Date of Review</b>	23rd September 2024
<b>Assessor</b>	Dr Kenny Frederick

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

<b>Cluster Group</b>	Quality First Network
<b>Ambassador</b>	Ms Debbie Shirley
<b>Next Meeting</b>	5th November 2024
<b>Meeting Focus</b>	TBC

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Autumn 2022</b>	8th November 2022	Yes
<b>Spring 2023</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Yes
<b>Summer 2023</b>	22nd May 2024	Yes
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	8th November 2023	Yes
<b>Spring 2024</b>	28th February 2024	Yes
<b>Summer 2024</b>	22nd May2024	No

### **The Impact of the Cluster Group**

The school has attended a total of four cluster away days during the last academic year. They presented at the special London Secondary Schools Away Day in the summer term, and they exchanged good practices with several other London secondary schools and were able to meet and network with colleagues in other schools.

The school has outlined all the topics covered in different away days. These have proved to be an excellent form of CPD and the individuals attending have learned a great deal, which



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they shared with colleagues when they returned to school. They also caused staff concerned to reflect on their practice following the away days. The behaviour policy has been reviewed and amended as a result of some of the visits to other schools, and a further review is planned this year.

The school has offered to host a future away day and certainly the next IQM secondary school away day. They are very interested in hosting and contributing to an IQM Secondary School Conference this year.

### **Evidence**

#### **Meetings with:**

- The IQM Coordinator
- The Headteacher
- The Executive Headteacher
- The Deputy Headteacher (Wellbeing Lead)
- The Executive Headteacher
- Assistant Headteacher (Attendance & Behaviour)
- Assistant Headteacher (Wellbeing)
- The SENCo and Senior SENCo
- Careers and Work Related Coordinator
- Head of Specialist Provision
- A group of four vulnerable (in different ways) students

#### **Paperwork evidence:**

- Careers Programme – 2024/25
- Work Experience Impact Report 2023/24
- Sculpt – Learning2Work – activities for students
- Think Forward – Making Strides Document
- Unity Work Documents
- Various Whole School Weekly Newsletters

#### **Additional Activities**

We went to visit the Learning Support area and the specialist classroom to see the students and staff at work.



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### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

**Project Title:** Mulberry Academy Shoreditch London: Fostering Inclusion and Reducing Exclusion of Vulnerable Students.

### Outline of Project: Trauma-informed evidence-based practice

The project had four main strands, and the school had provided a detailed action plan, which they have worked their way steadily through. The four strands were:

- Audit current provisions and continue to promote, disseminate, and develop inclusion within the Trust and in other schools in the country.
- Further, develop a trauma-based approach in the classroom and school to support young people.
- To engage in classroom-based research and to produce case studies of the key findings on using and implementing Trauma-Informed strategies.
- To work with the Anna Freud Centre to provide training for staff directly involved in the project.

### **Assess current inclusion practices and policies and share best practices within the Trust's network and further afield by facilitating workshops and training sessions.**

As part of the DFE Attendance Hub project, the academy has shared best practices with more than 50 schools. All resources produced by the school were available on the school website. These resources have been used by the DFE to create a handbook for schools and these will be shared nationwide.

The academy has provided numerous training sessions for schools. They hosted three days of school visits and three online sessions. They hosted an Attendance Summit at the school with Re-connect London. The school is also part of a DFE Attendance Task Force.

Furthermore, the academy has contributed to the IQM London Secondary Schools Workshop at Holland Park School in the summer of 2024.

The DFE have asked for the school's resources to use for a DFE toolkit to be shared with all schools in the UK.

The academy is supporting two other schools in neighbouring Boroughs. In addition, there are regular visits to Mulberry Academy Shoreditch.

The senior SENDCo is now the lead SENDCo for the Mulberry Trust.

**This target has been achieved.**



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### **Enhance teacher and staff training.**

The school has provided ongoing training and development on Trauma-Informed strategies through whole school INSET (September 2023), professional learning briefings, and INSET.

**Target achieved:** Whole School INSET was delivered by the Family Pears School. Following this, invite staff to join a working group to further develop Trauma-Informed practices in the classroom.

**Target achieved:** as part of the teaching and learning group, a working group has been created that will attend sessions run by the Pears Family School on Trauma-Informed practice.

**Implement Trauma-Informed practices:** The academy continues to establish trauma-sensitive disciplinary systems based on restorative approaches and ensure this is reflected in the school behaviour policy. This means the policy is not black and white but is based on the individual student. This is particularly important for vulnerable students. The behaviour policy has been revisited to reflect the need to meet the needs of different students.

**This target has been achieved and is ongoing.**

### **Research design and implementation of the case studies – much work has been done on developing research and case studies.**

Staff are asked to:

- Work in pairs or trios.
- Peer-to-peer observations.
- Sharing findings with others in the pilot project.

The staff collaborate with experts to ensure rigorous research practices. They have engaged in reflection and discussions from varied perspectives. They continue to work towards creating comprehensive case studies on Trauma-Informed strategies. Findings from this work were presented to colleagues in concise, engaging formats. Case studies were shared with the school and with IQM Cluster members.

**Targets achieved in full.**



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### Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

I met with the Executive Head, the Inclusion Coordinator, and the Behaviour/Attendance Leader to look at the details of the new Flagship Action Plan.

### Project Title: Working together, developing partnerships, and sharing best practices

The Aims of the project are:

- To develop more partnerships where best practices are shared.
- To build upon and continue to develop the work of the Attendance Hub.
- To work with the Trust, the Local Authority, and others in developing the curriculum for the Mulberry Learning Village.
- To continue to support other schools with regard to best practices about attendance, behaviour, and inclusion.
- To continue to develop the work with the Family Pears School trauma-informed practice.

As usual, the school has laid out their plans in considerable detail. Their plans are carefully worked through. The plans are ambitious, but I am in no doubt that they will achieve their targets.

The Attendance Hub is now well established and the school has worked with a huge number of schools (far more than expected by the DFE) and has shared their good practices freely. They have done numerous presentations for different schools, for IQM Cluster schools, and at the IQM Secondary Schools Away Day in July 2024. This presentation was very well received, and all the schools took away a lot to introduce in their schools. The academy will continue to develop this area of work and aim to bring the attendance and behaviour aspects together to try to develop a different approach that may be useful to schools in general. An integral part of this work will involve developing strategies for parent involvement and participation.

The Mulberry Learning Village is agreed. This will be an Alternative Provision (AP) for pupils aged between 5 and 19, and it will be based on the Isle of Dogs. There will be places for 100 children or students; a small number that will come from Greenwich. The provision is going to be fully funded by the LA in partnership with the DFE.

The academy already supports other schools – currently, two local secondary schools and the Executive Head is supporting another school in Essex. Partnership and collaboration are integral to the work of Mulberry Academy Shoreditch and indeed to the Mulberry Trust.



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As opportunities arise there will be more of this work. Capacity for more partnership work is built into the staffing and leadership structure at least for the next year.

The ASD Unit (specialist classroom) is now up and running very successfully and is funded for at least another year. The school is working in partnership with Phoenix Specialist School to further that work.

The work with the Family Pears School has been powerful in helping the school address the way trauma affects student and staff behaviours, and this is a learning process in the school's bid to develop trauma-informed practice throughout the school. This will continue to be drip-fed across the school and will, in time, inform many of the school policies and ethos. Indeed, this is already starting to happen.



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### Overview

I was warmly greeted by the newly qualified SENCo who had planned my schedule for the day. We met last year, and she is an Associate Assistant Headteacher who has several other responsibilities. He started his SENCo qualification last year and is delighted to have got this under his belt. He has been well supported by the senior SENDCo, and the two work closely together, although she is now the lead SENDCo across the Trust. He told me that the school has invested in his training and development and has allowed him time to get to grips with his new role. Talent spotting and succession planning are a big part of the academy's success story. Valuing and supporting staff at all levels emerged as a theme during my visit.

The senior SENCo joined us for part of this meeting and they explained how they work in partnership. The SENCo told me that staff feel trusted to do their jobs. He was very grateful to the senior SENDCo who has trained him and who also trains and supports other SENCos across the Trust. This extension of her role has given her new opportunities to work alongside other schools and professionals and improve her learning and experience. She advises on all sorts of SEND issues across the Trust and she chairs and organises SENCo meetings within the Trust. She also attends regular Local Authority SENCo meetings. She is also supporting the SENCo at the new Mulberry Academy in Wapping as well as other secondary and primary schools in the local area. The senior SENDCo has long-established relationships with numerous support agencies and charities and the Local Authority and she has been able to share her contacts with new SENCos in other schools.

The current Specialist Classroom Lead (whom I met last year) has since completed her teacher training and is now running the classroom and teaching in the mainstream school. She started as a Teaching Assistant and as she grew in experience she was put in charge of the specialised (Autism/ADHD) provision which has been a great success. She is the third member of the SEND Team, and the rest are made up of HLTAS (x 2) and Teaching Assistants and Learning Mentors. This development of staff is another indication of the sustainability and succession planning that are integral to the school ethos.

I asked how the SEND Team works with teachers and helps them develop appropriate strategies and adaptations to support them in meeting the needs of all the pupils in their classes. We agreed that most of the support for SEND children happens in the classroom. The newest SENCo is part of the Teaching and Learning Team and can work with others in helping to develop teachers' skills and expertise. Therefore, SEND is at the heart of the T&L developments. I was told that experts are brought in to deliver specific training as required (e.g. Autism or ADHD). Quality First Teaching is built to the T&L principles underpinning classroom practice.

The SEND department provides every teacher with all the information about individual students who need support. They also provide a range of strategies that they might use with individuals or even with all students. There is an understanding that good SEND teaching strategies are good for all students. All the information is uploaded on SIMs and is easy to access.



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70% of students are classified as EAL but are all at different stages of language acquisition. There is an EAL Coordinator who is also the Literacy Lead. She has conducted training for Teaching Assistants recently and she works closely with the SEND department.

There are an increasing number of students identified as asylum seekers who require particular support. This is provided and is of a high quality.

There has been recent PREVENT training for staff and the school has been addressing what has happened during the summer riots. I was assured that the school is constantly addressing issues of inequality and diversity and does not wait until there is a similar riot to have a one-off assembly.

The Teaching and Learning Team asks for and receives feedback from teachers to establish what training they need and want. They listen to teachers. They also look at outcomes from observations and performance management reviews to plan the professional learning programme. The ethos of the school is very supportive and teachers and support staff do not have a problem asking for help.

The six principles for Teaching and Learning have been adapted for Teaching Assistants and they concentrate on one of these principles every half term. Staff are asked to self-assess their skills and expertise, and the outcomes are discussed in Teaching and Learning group meetings to decide what is included in the professional learning programme. The Teaching and Learning Team does drop-ins, and these are 'developmental' rather than judgemental. They are designed to be a form of coaching.

The Teaching and Learning Team is chaired by the Headteacher, and SLT and Middle Leaders are also included; there are about 15 on the team. I suggested that it might be a good idea to include some main-scale teachers in the team.

The academy currently has 61 students with EHCPs on roll. The biggest area of need at the moment is Autism and this is increasing. However, the school acknowledges that this means there is a wide range of needs amongst this group of students. Speech and language issues are probably the second highest number of EHCPs. The academy has an excellent reputation for meeting the needs of SEND students and they receive a large number of consultations every year and sometimes have to turn some away when they feel they cannot meet their individual needs. This is painful for all concerned but I was told the school must act with integrity and not admit students they cannot properly support.

The specialist classroom is in place. The provision has been growing steadily. This classroom has five full-time students at the moment from Years 7 to 10. It is generously staffed, and the SENDCo and room lead designed the curriculum. There are opportunities for different subject staff to teach one-off lessons in the specialist classroom and the team encourages visits to see how the team teaches the students in this classroom.



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Speech and Language concerns are the second biggest area of concern in the academy. There are fewer students with social and emotional needs this year. The SENCo S told me this was because the culture of the school is so nurturing and there are not many emotional outbursts. This culture and ethos are tied in with the behaviour policy which has been revisited and is now more flexible so it can meet the wide range of needs of the students. There is an understanding that things are not always black and white and they need to consider the individual student before introducing sanctions.

The behaviour policy needed to be revised when the academy took children from the Pears Family School (Anna Freud influence) where children have suffered extreme trauma in their short lives and so need to be carefully nurtured. The school admitted two students who had attended this school and have had to make reasonable adjustments to include them. This made them think about other students who might benefit from a more flexible approach, and teachers are asked to adjust such as incorporating movement breaks into lessons for some students. Staff now have a good understanding of this flexible approach to behaviour. The inclusion and pastoral staff in particular develop close relationships with vulnerable students and the SEND area provides a safe space for them.

There is a weekly Safeguarding/Inclusion Panel meeting where a large team looks carefully at all the identified vulnerable students. They look at their academic and social progress and plan the next steps for them. They make sure that none of these children falls through the gaps.

The outcomes for students classified as SEN K made better progress than other students last year. Those with EHCPs did not do as well and there is a gap between those without plans. However, the cohort of students varies every year so it is not right to make a straight comparison year on year.

The academy continues to research what works well for SEN students and has developed a sort of script as to what works well and they share this with staff, although they are not under any obligation to use it. It is just a toolkit that can help in the classroom. Parental contact has emerged (unsurprisingly) as an important aspect and the staff in the academy make great efforts to engage parents and carers. The SEND Team has developed a series of case studies, and issues and possible solutions are highlighted and shared with staff.

We conclude this session when the two SENCos remind me, "Inclusion is a whole school issue; not a one-man band." This is certainly the case in Mulberry Academy Shoreditch.

I was taken for a walk around the SEND department and had the opportunity to spend time in the specialist classroom and to meet students and staff. All the students were engaged in a phonics activity designed for each student. The atmosphere was positive and warm and was conducive to learning. There were high expectations of the students in terms of behaviour. Some have more difficulty with this than others, but they were encouraged to do the right thing and to follow the rules in the classroom. The staff know each student well, and there are very positive relationships.

I was then able to meet several students who had or continued to be supported by the SEND and pastoral staff. Most had an EHCP and two who are now in Year 12 told me about



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the support they had received throughout their years in the school. They continue to get support in the Sixth Form in one way or another. One student told me that the transition into Mulberry Academy Shoreditch was really good and very different from other schools. There was another boy who was diagnosed with ADHD and was supported by a TA Mentor who helped to keep him focused and on track. All those in the group were vulnerable in one way or another. They spoke very positively about the school and the support they received. They could not think of anything they wanted changed (except maybe more and better food!). However, they told me their biggest wish was to have fewer supply teachers, just because they are not their “real” teachers whom they know and trust. They understand the difficulty the school has when teachers leave and know how hard it is to replace them; they just wish staff did not leave, especially mid-year.

All the students I spoke to would recommend Mulberry Academy Shoreditch to others as a school of choice. They feel lucky to be students here.

I met with the Headteacher (previously the Head of School). I asked her what the difference between the two roles was and she said it was now more strategic and not just the day-to-day management of the school. The Executive Headteacher is still there but leaves her to run the school and make decisions, but she is still there to advise and guide her if needed. She remains her line manager, and the two have a very good relationship.

Being part of the Mulberry Trust has been positive, and she likes the fact that they can support other schools if needed. She told me the academy knows its strengths and they are developing a sustainable model that will benefit all. She said the school is solution-focused and creative in its approach. They make things work and staff are trusted to do their jobs. Collaboration and partnership are integral to the academy, and the low staff turnover is an indication of their job satisfaction and commitment.

The school had a huge number (31) of first-year ECTs last year and has retained most of them. The mentoring load and mentoring training requirements are very heavy but they have made it work. This year there is a big group of second-year ECTs who do not need quite so much support. There is only one first-year ECT and one Teach First teacher this year.

Few talked about staff wellbeing and the retention figures indicate that generally teachers are happy in the school and much has been done to address the issue of flexibility. Recent press reports of the new Labour Government's proposals for teachers being able to have a four-day working week have been noted by teachers and senior leaders in the academy and some are quite excited by the prospect. The Headteacher and the Executive Headteacher have had discussions on how this might be achieved. It's complex and there are no easy solutions. I suggested they ask the staff to discuss and come up with possible ways forward. If nothing else, it would help them understand the difficulties of introducing something of this nature into a large secondary school. They could also be asked what else the academy could be doing to improve their working experience. Setting up a focus group of staff during one of the meeting slots could kick this off and then of those who are interested in working on this further to form a working group to come up with ideas and possible proposals.



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Another big worry for the headteacher and the Trust numbers is the falling roll in Year 7. They are down one whole class. This is due, in some part, to the new Mulberry Academy opened in Wapping which has attracted many students who would have otherwise chosen Mulberry Shoreditch Academy. However, it is not down to this fact alone. The number of children in London, particularly in inner London, is dropping, and although this is most noticeable in primary schools, it is also affecting secondary schools. Many families have moved out of London to find cheaper areas to live. Many have been forced out by the Local Council and others have left the country because of Brexit. Admissions at the academy have been quite challenging as there are a lot of surplus places in the Borough. The academy has been oversubscribed for many years, and this is a new development. The school is marketing itself well; a Year 7 open morning was being held for pupils and parents during the day of my visit and it seemed to be busy. I hope the numbers return to expected levels in September 2025.

The Sixth Form, however, is growing rapidly and they offer a wide range of courses, including BTECS and Level 2 courses along with A Levels. The only problem is finding the space to house them all and to provide a decent-sized common room and private study place. This is important if they are to compete with the larger sixth-form colleges. However, the academy has recruited many students for other schools in the Borough and beyond and most Year 11 students decided to stay on until they were eighteen. Therefore, they are bulging at the seams.

The Headteacher told me she is very well supported by the Executive Headteacher and Trust as well as by the senior team and tells me she is enjoying the role, even though it is challenging! She is learning to let go of things and delegate things far more. Learning to trust others to do their jobs will be an essential lesson to learn if she is to survive headship in the future!

The Trust has provided her with an external coach whom she finds to be useful and supportive.

It was good to meet once again with the Wellbeing Coordinator. We had met the previous year, and this was an opportunity to see how far the academy has moved in this aspect of its action plans. The wellbeing work is being done in conjunction with the trauma-formed practice development. It is about students having a space to come to if they are feeling overwhelmed and are trying to deal with stress and anxiety. The numbers seeking support for these issues are steadily growing throughout the school and indeed nationally.

We visited the new Wellbeing Hub (very nice, insulated and beautifully furnished huts!) in one of the school courtyards. These have been designed to be a comfortable calming space where counselling sessions and similar support sessions can be carried out. There are colourful benches and planting in the courtyard, and I am told that the area is usually well used by students at lunch and break time. Sadly, the day I visited, it was raining so the area was not being used by students as it would normally be used.

There are three rooms (one especially for Sixth Formers) that are a little more sophisticated in terms of furnishing. Three counsellors come in on different days and they see students in



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the Wellbeing Hub rooms. The academy is now a Place2Be school and finds the service to be very good and flexible in its approach.

I asked how many students had been identified as being vulnerable and prone to anxiety. She said it was huge and probably about 100 so there is a long waiting list of students who want to see a counsellor or who are recommended to see one. The numbers are increasing day by day. There are not nearly enough available slots even if they increase the number of counsellors. The PHSE curriculum and the pastoral staff do a lot to support students who are suffering from anxiety. Great efforts are put into giving them strategies to cope with their anxiety and to develop resilience.

The number of students reporting anxiety and issues around mental health is constantly growing and the staff at the academy work hard to support them. The Wellbeing Coordinator told me that hearing and supporting their issues can take a toll on her wellbeing and mental health and that of other staff involved. We talked about the need for supervision which she said is available through the Trust but she has not yet taken this up! I think it is important that she does take advantage of this offer. I suggested she look at Solution Circles as a way of providing supervision for a wider group of staff involved. I will email her some information about this process and can put her in touch with an IQM school that uses this process to support staff very well.

Staff wellbeing is also a growing issue and there are many measures in place to ensure staff are appreciated and valued. Workload issues are constantly on the agenda and the academy has already taken many steps to lessen the load of teachers and to improve their working conditions.

Next came my opportunity to meet with the new Careers Coordinator who has been in post since January. He is already making a big impact in the academy. It was a real pleasure to meet this young man who had previously been a pupil of a school I had led! His confidence in his role was impressive as was his ambition for what can be done in the school in terms of careers and work-related learning. He is about to complete his Careers (Level 6) qualification with Teach First; the course starts in October. The school is supporting him while he does the course.

There is a whole school Careers Programme for each year group. This involves a mixture of discrete lessons delivered through PHSE, workshops, and targeted career drop-off days. The Careers Coordinator works with the Heads of Year to deliver the programme. There are numerous external visitors who contribute to the programme. He also organises university visits for Sixth Form students.

Work Experience is part of the programme for Year 10 and Year 12. The destination data at the end of Years 11 and 13 is carefully tracked and the few who have not gone on to appropriate places are supported by Young Work Path which is an external agency. Students with EHCPs are provided with additional support. The school has two Careers Advisors in school two days a week. All Year 11 students have an interview and those with EHCPs get an extra interview and get additional support from the advisors.



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A Careers Fair for Year 9 is going to happen soon and this will involve representatives from a wide range of occupations. Apprenticeships are growing and the school is trying to get as many apprentice providers as possible into school to speak to students. It is also important to train staff about the wide range of apprenticeships available and to know more about them. Training is provided for staff on INSET days and the aim is to ensure staff know more about the Gatsby benchmarks.

The Careers Coordinator told me he had been made very welcomed at the Mulberry Academy Shoreditch and has been very well supported. He was not thrown into things but was given time to get to grips with the role. He has two line managers and he is based in the Sixth Form area now. This is the first time he has supported Sixth Form students and is a new learning experience for him.

The Careers Coordinator meets with others in a similar role through the Careers Hub and others in the Trust. He also has two other colleagues who will be working on careers with him and taking some responsibility for KS3 and Year 11. Having a team of people to work with and collaborate with will be a great asset and will certainly help him achieve his highly ambitious plans for Careers Education and Guidance in the academy.

The Mulberry Academy Shoreditch continues to lead the way in inclusion. They are an IQM Flagship School in every sense of the word. Their practice at all levels is inclusive and solution focused. The sharing of good inclusive practices is a real strength of the school. They move at a pace and they do what they say they will do! Things get done in this school.

The school is to be congratulated on achieving the National Champions Award and we had discussions on how they will share this within the local community and beyond. They have thought about this and have lots of plans to spread the word.

I recommend that Mulberry Academy Shoreditch continue to be an IQM Flagship school. They easily meet the Flagship criteria and go way beyond that. They have so much to be proud of.

The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice and I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Flagship School. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Flagship Status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Flagship status.

**Assessor: Dr Kenny Frederick**

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH  
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd