

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Our Values

As a company we are committed to providing a welcoming environment where every employee and learner is treated with dignity and respect for their own characteristics and abilities and in ways that value and make best use of these abilities. We aim to promote an inclusive culture in which everyone is encouraged to be themselves and use their talents to get the very best from all that they do.

We will achieve this by:

- Raising staff and Board members awareness, through training and education
- Deploying a policy that provides clear guidance and definitions of what equality, diversity and inclusion means
- Upholding our collective responsibility to adhere and enforce this policy and to promote a working and learning environment that is free from discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying
- Taking action should individuals or groups act contrary to this policy

We will make it clear that discriminatory behaviour against employees and learners is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Guiding Principles and Definitions

Our policy is informed by the Equality Act 2010 and is designed to comply with the requirements of this legislation to ensure that no prospective or existing employee or learner shall receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of definitions specified within the Act. The Equality Act defines nine protected characteristics and six types of discrimination:

Protected Characteristics:

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| 1. Age | 2. Marriage and Civil Partnership | 3. Religion and Belief |
| 4. Disability | 5. Pregnancy and Maternity | 6. Sex |
| 7. Gender Reassignment | 8. Race | 9. Sexual Orientation |

Types of Discrimination:

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| 1. Direct Discrimination | Discrimination because of a protective characteristic |
| 2. Associative Discrimination | Direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person with a protective characteristic. This includes carers of disabled people and elderly relatives, who can claim they were treated unfairly because of duties they had to carry out at home relating to their care work. It also covers discrimination against someone because, for example, their partner is from another country |
| 3. Indirect Discrimination | When you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a protective characteristic |
| 4. Harassment | Behaviour deemed offensive by the recipient. Employees can claim they find something offensive even when it is not directed at them |

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| 5. Victimisation | Discrimination against someone because they made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act legislation |
| 6. Discrimination by Perception | Direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic (even if they don't) |

Responsibility and practice

We all have a duty towards upholding the principles of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. Our practice is to implement a structured framework to manage equality and diversity, promote compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and to continually improve our practice. This will be achieved by:

- At strategic level, our policy will be reviewed periodically in conjunction with statistics, emerging trends and legislation to ensure it remains relevant, current and reflective of internal and external factors
- Annually, we will establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and monitor our performance to measure our success in widening participation in the recruitment, progression and success of learners on programme
- We will actively monitor our recruitment and staff development practice to measure our effectiveness in applying equality, diversity and inclusion to the recruitment, development and promoting of employees
- Recruitment of staff will be subject to DBS checks appropriate to safeguarding principles
- We will make reasonable efforts to meet the needs of any individual arising from religious or cultural obligations
- Learners and employees joining our organisation will receive an induction into the practical interpretation of equality, diversity and inclusion, related policies and expectations regarding individual conduct and non-acceptable behaviour towards others, either directly or indirectly
- Equality, diversity and inclusion will be embedded within our learning programmes
- We will nominate internal champion, who will act as an internal lead on equality, diversity and inclusion

Our response to breaches to our policy

We are committed to upholding our values through our practical application in everything we do. Should any instance of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying arise, we will take a serious view and address these individuals concerned, applying a level of action appropriate to the breach in policy.

Associated Policies

There are further policies in support of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy covering areas such as discipline and grievance, safeguarding and data protection.