

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Policy Statement

It is the Business mission to provide education and training programmes to a wide range of learners and employers. Our aim is to engage actively with learners and employers to identify their training needs, and then to provide cost-effective, flexible, and high-quality training programmes that enables learners to achieve and then progress.

It is through our people that we put the learners at the centre of everything we do by doing the right thing, innovation through technology, excellence and being the best. We believe that the best way to achieve this is through having a diverse and inclusive working environment.

The Business is committed to providing equal opportunities to our employees, learners, and customers, to breaking down barriers and to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We embrace and celebrate the diversity of our workforce, learners and customers and seek to achieve equality in their experience and achievements through the implementation of transparent policies, processes and procedures and through providing effective support.

We recognise our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate, nor will we tolerate any discrimination, on the grounds of gender, age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation or religion or belief (or lack thereof).

As part of our commitment to equality and diversity we will provide training to our employees and learners and ensure that we have appropriate policies to deal with complaints of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

We strive to maintain a culture where individual differences and the contributions of all team members are recognised and to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We also ensure that our work and learner environments are free of harassment, victimisation, unlawful discrimination, and bullying. Our bullying and harassment policy deals with these issues.

2. Policy Objectives

Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each team member to feel respected and able to give their best.

This policy is intended to assist us to put this commitment into practice.

It also allows our team members to understand our zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment and to recognise unacceptable behaviours.

3. Key Contacts

Your line manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy. Further support and information can be gained from a director.

4. Who needs to know about this Policy?

All employees, workers, learners, clients, suppliers, contractors, and anyone working on behalf of The Business. The policy also relates to all processes relating to recruitment and employment and dealing with customers and clients.

5. Definitions

Direct discrimination is where a person or group of people are treated less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criteria or practice is applied in such a way that it would be detrimental of people who share that protected characteristic compared to those who do not.

Harassment is unwanted conduct relating to one or more of their protected characteristics covers one or more of the following:

- Has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating intimidation, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person
- Is reasonable considered by that person to have an effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating environment for them.

Associated discrimination is where a person or group of people are directly discriminated against or harassed for association with other/s who have protected characteristics

Perceived discrimination is where a person/s are directly discriminated against or harassed based of a perception that they have a protected characteristic when they do not.

Third party harassment is where an employee is harassed and the harassment related to a protected characteristic by third parties such as clients, learners, and customers.

Victimisation is treating someone less favourably than other people because they have, in good faith, made a complaint (whether formal or otherwise) about discrimination (including bullying or harassment). They may have made the complaint on behalf of themselves or have

supported or given evidence for someone else. If a complaint is made in good faith, then the complainant has the right not to be victimised.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where arrangements disadvantage a person because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage. Further information can be found in the reasonable adjustments policy.

Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Race including colour, nationality, and ethnical or national origins
- Disabilities
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

6. Discrimination

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of a protected characteristic.

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics. It is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds that an individual is associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, e.g. a family member or friend.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to discriminate, without justification, on the grounds of disability or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation, or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services.

7. Equal Opportunities in Employment

We will promote equality and diversity in all aspects of employment including but not limited to, recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training and / or other developmental opportunities, pay, benefits, terms, and conditions of employment, working practices, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents and requests for flexible working.

To support this, the scope of job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against consistent criteria based on the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability.

We will take a positive approach to and comply with our obligations in relation to flexible working requests for contract variations, whilst recognising that there may be times when these requests cannot be accommodated due to a business justification. We will review employment policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and we keep these regularly updated in order to take into account any changes to the law. We will also make reasonable adjustments to standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability. Our Reasonable Adjustments Policy sets out how we will manage any such requirement.

8. Your Responsibility

All team members are required to assist The Business to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities, to actively promote equality and diversity and to avoid unlawful discrimination in employment and course delivery. Team Members are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and may be required to attend relevant training from time to time to support the application of this policy.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying, radicalisation or victimisation against employees, learners, clients, or other customers using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by us are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice (employees) or expulsion from the course (learners).

You should report any bullying or harassment by or towards employees, learners, customers, suppliers, visitors or others to your manager or a director who will take appropriate action. If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use our grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the bullying and harassment policy.

We will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that is upheld. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

You should also be aware that you could be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Business for any act of unlawful discrimination. If you commit serious acts of harassment you may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

9. Training

We commit to training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this equality and diversity policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and to prevent and challenge bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination

10. Related Policies

- Bullying and harassment policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Grievance policy
- Prevent policy
- Reasonable adjustments policy
- Resourcing policy

11. Further Support

If you require any additional support or advice, please contact your line manager. Additional information can be found from the following sites:

- www.acas.co.uk
- www.direct.gov.uk

In limited circumstances, employers can directly or indirectly discriminate against people who have any of the protected characteristics if there is an occupational requirement. The requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, which means that employer can objectively justify it (e.g. health and safety considerations based on research evidence) and that the reason for doing it is an appropriate and necessary for fulfilling the role.