



Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Area: Equality & Diversity

Effective from: 01/01/2018 Last review: 01/01/2022

Equal Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

Equality, diversity, and inclusion are fundamental aspects of 21st-century life. A more diverse and inclusive society fosters collaboration, promotes tolerance and enhances the opportunities for all groups.

It is this organisation's policy to treat all learners and stakeholders including job applicants, learners, and visitors fairly and equally, regardless of sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age, race or ethnic origin, or origins or disability (protected characteristics).

The organisation will not discriminate on grounds of protected characteristics and through this policy, the organisation will outline how it promotes, advises and educates learners and stakeholders and how it seeks to eliminate discrimination of all kinds as far as is reasonably possible.

The non-discrimination principle inherent in this policy includes the prohibition of discrimination against an individual because the person associates with a particular protected characteristic.

This policy applies to applicants seeking to undertake a programme with Apprenticeship Connect, learners undertaking a programme with Apprenticeship Connect and visitors. Further, the policy applies to the process of recruitment and selection, promotion, training, conditions of work, pay and benefits and every other aspect of employment, including general treatment at work and the processes involved in the termination of employment. The policy extends to outline its commitment to its positive treatment of external stakeholders in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Legislative Framework

This policy is written in line with statutory requirements in the Equality Act 2010.

Apprenticeship Applicants and Learners

Equality Diversity and Inclusion in the Candidate Application Process (Apprentices)

The organisation is driven to ensure equality of opportunity during the recruitment and selection process of learners in education programmes. Equal opportunity is about conducting compliant recruitment processes, being inclusive and monitoring diversity during recruitment. Every manager and employee has personal responsibility for the implementation of the policy. To promote equality, diversity and inclusion during the candidate application process the organisation seeks to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the following stages.

Job descriptions and adverts

The policy applies to job applicants for traineeship and apprenticeship vacancies. The

organisation will:

- create job descriptions that don't discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic;
- ensure that job description contents don't imply a preference on the grounds of protected characteristics;
- job descriptions are written by individuals who have undertaken training in equality, diversity and inclusion;
- job adverts are written inclusively, emphasising the organisation's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Candidate shortlisting

- The placement team will include only the candidate's name, work history and education history thus reducing the risk of discrimination or unconscious bias.
- Hiring managers within employers will not be given access to sensitive personal data or protected characteristics information throughout the recruitment process.

Apprentice Programme Induction

All new learners are informed of the organisation's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion during the induction. Learners are given access to this policy in a dedicated 'policies' module' in their course.

Other Candidate and Learner Provisions

- The organisation will not take into account protected characteristics when considering training and/or progression opportunities.
- Learners who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the organisation about their disability. The tutor and/or the operations manager will then arrange to discuss with the learner what reasonable adjustments to their programme might assist them in the performance on the programme. The learner will also be encouraged to suggest any adjustments that they believe would be helpful. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals and, where reasonable and reasonably practicable, such adjustments will be made. There may, however, be circumstances where it will not be reasonable or reasonably practicable for the organisation to accommodate proposals put forward by the learner.
- All employees and job applicants will be asked to complete a form denoting their sex, race, ethnic origin, age and any disabilities that they have. The organisation guarantees that the information provided on this form will be used solely to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

Handling Equality Diversity and Inclusion Issues

Any applicant for a programme or a learner may complain about alleged discriminatory conduct

through the organisation's Complaints Policy. The applicant or learner may also raise the complaint with their account manager, tutor or another relevant contact person. The organisation is concerned to ensure that applicants and learners feel comfortable about raising such complaints. No individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or the complaint is made in bad faith, for example out of malice.

This policy will be monitored regularly by senior management. Where there are issues with the way the policy is working, these will be looked at closely to identify measures to improve the effectiveness of the policy.

Promoting Equality Diversity and Inclusion

The organisation will promote equality, diversity and inclusion through an Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Committee convenes at least quarterly with the following stated objectives:

- To implement equality, diversity and inclusion strategies into meaningful plans
- Create and release an equality, diversity and inclusion newsletter distributed to staff, employers and learners
- Support the development of the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion information, advice and guidance for stakeholders
- Develop extra-curricular activities and extended learning for learners
- Diversity monitoring

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Training

The organisation will induct learners onto the programme, outlining its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The induction outlines how to locate relevant policies and communication points for information, advice and guidance.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded into teaching lessons at various stages in all programmes. The organisation is committed to ensuring that topics are diverse, current and inclusive. All learners have the opportunity to engage in topics and tutors will seek to ensure that a range of views is heard.

Marketing

The organisation understands that marketing plays a role in fostering an inclusive environment. To this effect, the organisation selects a diverse range of imagery when creating marketing and learning resources.

Contact Us

If you'd like to contact Apprenticeship Connect about the application or feedback about this policy you can do so in several ways:

- Contact your account manager

- Contact your tutor
- Email customerfirst@apprenticeshipconnect.co.uk
- Call us on 0203 829 6920

Apprenticeship Connect Staff and External Stakeholders

Equality Diversity and Inclusion in the Recruitment Process

The organisation is driven to ensure equality of opportunity during the recruitment and selection process. Equal opportunity is about conducting compliant recruitment processes, being inclusive and monitoring diversity during recruitment. Every manager and employee has personal responsibility for the implementation of the policy. To promote equality, diversity and inclusion during the recruitment process the organisation seek to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the following stages.

Job descriptions and adverts

The policy applies to job applicants and all employees and other workers whether full time, part-time, temporary, seasonal or contract. The organisation will:

- Create job descriptions that don't discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that job description contents don't imply a preference on the grounds of protected characteristics.
- Ensure that job description are written by individuals who have undertaken training in equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure that job adverts are written inclusively, emphasising the organisation's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Candidate shortlisting

- The HR team shortlists candidates through a 'blind' CV process whereby all candidate's details barring work history and education history and hidden, thus reducing the risk of discrimination or unconscious bias.
- Hiring managers don't have access to sensitive personal data or protected characteristics information throughout the recruitment process.
- Hiring managers are trained to ensure that references to a protected characteristic aren't made during the hiring process.

Interview

- Interview questions, scenarios and tests are created to ensure that candidates with a particular protected characteristic aren't advantaged or disadvantaged during interviews.

Employee Induction

All employees are required to review and accept the organisation's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The organisation monitors acceptance of the policy through the intranet, MyAC.

Other HR Provisions

- Where increased pay and/or enhanced benefits are offered to employees based on length of service, these are intended to reward loyalty, maintain motivation and reflect higher levels of relevant experience.
- When establishing criteria for recruitment and promotion into vacant posts, the employer will consider carefully whether any minimum or a maximum number of years of relevant experience is necessary for the effective performance of the job. Such restrictions will not be imposed unless there is a proper job-based reason why they are necessary.
- The organisation will not take into account protected characteristics when considering training and/or progression opportunities.
- The employer does not operate any compulsory retirement age, and each employee may choose for him/herself when to stop working, subject to him or her continuing to be sufficiently fit to perform his or her job to a satisfactory standard.
- Employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the organisation about their disability. Management will then arrange to discuss with the employee what reasonable adjustments to their job or working conditions or environment might assist them in the performance of their duties. The employee will also be encouraged to suggest any adjustments that he or she believes would be helpful. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals and, where reasonable and reasonably practicable, such adjustments will be made. There may, however, be circumstances where it will not be reasonable or reasonably practicable for the organisation to accommodate proposals put forward by the employee.
- All employees and job applicants will be asked to complete a form denoting their sex, race, ethnic origin, age and any disabilities that they have. The organisation guarantees that the information provided on this form will be used solely to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.
- The organisation understands that a diverse workforce reflective of its communities can inspire people from a range of backgrounds. To this effect, the organisation endeavours to utilise a diverse range of advertising routes to attract applicants from different backgrounds.

Stakeholder Commitments

The organisation is committed to the following in respect of stakeholders:

- Ensure that its staff do not discriminate or harass an individual based on a protected characteristic
- Robustly investigate any instance of alleged discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Promote the Equality Act 2010
- Promote and engage with its supply chain, customers, suppliers and partners concerning equality, diversity and inclusion
- Share resources with stakeholders
- Provide information, advice and guidance

Handling Equality Diversity and Inclusion Issues

Apprenticeship Connect Staff

Any member of staff may use the Grievance Policy and Procedure or Bullying and Harassment Policy to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to a protected characteristic then the complaint may be raised directly with their line manager. If the individual feels that a report to their line isn't appropriate or if the report is about the line manager they should report this to the organisation's business manager or a director in their absence.

The organisation is concerned to ensure that staff feel comfortable about raising such complaints. No individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or the complaint is made in bad faith, for example out of malice.

Where an employee is falsely accused of discriminatory conduct, then he or she may implement the organisation's grievance procedure.

Any employee who makes a false accusation of discrimination or harassment will be subjected to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal.

This policy will be monitored regularly by senior management. Where there are issues with the way the policy is working, these will be looked at closely to identify measures to improve the effectiveness of the policy.

External Stakeholders

Any external stakeholder may complain about alleged discriminatory conduct through the organisation's Complaints Policy.

The organisation is concerned to ensure that complainants feel comfortable about raising such complaints. No individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or the complaint is made in bad faith, for example out of malice.

This policy will be monitored regularly by senior management. Where there are issues with the way the policy is working, these will be looked at closely to identify measures to improve the effectiveness of the policy.

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The organisation will promote equality, diversity and inclusion through an Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Committee convenes at least quarterly with the following stated objectives:

- To implement equality, diversity and inclusion strategies into meaningful plans
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- Develop extra-curricular activities and extended learning for learners
- Create opportunities for learners and employers to engage in equality, diversity and inclusion
- Diversity monitoring

Apprenticeship Connect employees from various teams form the committee team and considered selection takes place to ensure diversity of membership.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Training

All staff

The organisation conducts equality, diversity and inclusion training at least annually for all staff.

Teaching Learning and Assessment

Tutors will undertake training in equality, diversity and inclusion through the organisation's Teaching Learning and Assessment CPD Schedule.

HR staff

HR staff undertake equality, diversity and inclusion training at least bi-annually.

Line managers

Hiring managers receive dedicated training regarding managing equality and diversity in teams annually.

Marketing

The organisation understands that marketing plays a role in fostering an inclusive environment. To this effect, the organisation selects a diverse range of imagery when creating marketing and learning resources.

Review

The organisation will review this policy at least annually or sooner if required.

Policy Review

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Related Policies

Complaints Policy
Grievance Policy and Procedure
Bullying and Harassment Policy