

Equality and Diversity Policy

Purpose statement

Our equality and diversity policy sets out our commitment to equality and valuing diversity. We are committed to sustaining a positive and supportive working and learning environment where individuals are free from discrimination and harassment. Through our working practices, we promote a culture of inclusion, allowing apprentices to benefit from an outstanding learning experience. Staff are equally valued and respected, and all stakeholders are given equal opportunities.

Responsibility

Our Apprenticeship Director maintains overall responsibility for this policy, and we understand that our staff and stakeholders, including apprentices and employers, must also support and uphold its values and principles. The Apprenticeship Management Team, namely the Office Manager, is responsible for overseeing the management and implementation of this policy. All managers are responsible for taking every reasonable precaution to prevent discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace, and the appropriate action will be taken in the event of a breach in policy.

Scope

The enforcement of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy is a legal requirement, and our statutory duty therein is outlined within the Equality Act (2010). This is an overarching policy on equality and diversity that applies across all areas of our organisation. As per the Equality Act 2010, protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

The 2010 Act also extends the remit of protected characteristics to some that were not previously covered by equality legislation. There are a number of different types of discrimination under this legislation.

These are:

- **Direct discrimination** - harmful behaviour/activity directed towards an individual based on one of the protected characteristics
- **Associative discrimination** - direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

- **Discrimination by perception** - direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.
- **Indirect discrimination** - when a rule or policy that applies to everyone disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.
- **Harassment** - behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient. Employees can now register a complaint against offensive behaviour, even if it is not directed at them.
- **Victimisation** - when an individual receives targeted discrimination/harassment because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under this legislation.

Our moral duty is to ensure individuals within our organisation are protected from inequality and harassment. We aim to establish a culture of inclusion that is a celebrated, safe, and equal environment that delivers organisational, personal, and stakeholder benefits.

Principles

Our aim must be to respect the rights of individuals, to provide a quality working life/environment, and to reject any discriminatory behaviour. We will demonstrate our commitment to these principles by:

- Treating our apprentices, employees, colleagues, and partners fairly, and with respect.
- Work to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues with additional training where appropriate
- Promoting this policy throughout working practices by tackling any form of inequality and discrimination.
- Encouraging engagement with the Policy by requiring employees and apprentices to sign a declaration that they have read this Policy and understand their associated responsibilities as part of their induction. This includes mandatory Equality and Diversity Training for apprentices throughout their course and inclusion of Equality and Diversity within staff standardisation meetings.
- Committing to being a disability confident employer.
- Making training, development, and progression opportunities available to all staff.
- Ensuring that all procedures and practices relating to recruitment, selection, and working practices provide equality of access and opportunity.
- Recognising that an individual's needs may vary, and that a flexible approach is required to ensure full participation and access to all of its services.
- Monitor its diversity-related work performance and use this information to shape future opportunities.
- Pursue the necessary course of action against anyone in contravention of this policy.

Staff recruitment and induction

Recruitment

Our recruitment policy positively supports equality of opportunity. Our approach is to achieve a workforce that is representative of the diversity of the communities from which we recruit, and the apprentice population. All candidate's CVs for consideration will be anonymised, to ensure fair and transparent recruitment. The Office Manager will monitor the recruitment profile of all applicants for employment.

Induction

All staff will undertake an induction, in which they are provided with a full breakdown of our Equality and Diversity Policy, including our commitment to equality and diversity, their roles and responsibilities to achieve this commitment (e.g., making reasonable adjustments for apprentices with additional needs), and guidance on how the Policy is implemented and enforced in practice (e.g., clear reporting lines). Staff will also receive mandatory Equality and Diversity training by our Office Manager, with refresher training delivered annually in accordance with legislative and best practice updates.

Apprentice / employer approach

Equality and diversity values are embedded throughout our delivery of apprenticeship training and our work with employers and apprentices, with a clear focus on raising awareness of our approaches, to ensure the Policy is consistently adhered to. Examples of how we embed and promote this Policy in practice include:

- Providing effective Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) all apprenticeship programmes, ensuring it is presented in a format that can be easily understood by all potential apprentices and employers.
- Providing clear entry criteria to each apprenticeship, ensuring a transparent approach to initial and eligibility assessments.
- Providing a general overview of equality and diversity in induction sessions, introducing apprentices to the policy and topic.
- Supporting employers to adopt and apply equality and diversity processes to at least the same standard as detailed in this Policy, including requiring employers to accept and commit to our Policy where their existing standards are not sufficient.
- The development of an Individual Learning Programme (ILP), ensuring all apprentices have an ILP that meets their learning needs and ensures full participation.
- Supporting employers to make reasonable adjustments for apprentices as required, including changes to premises, specialist equipment, and flexible working arrangements.
- An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) calendar, that identifies enrichment activities throughout the year and promotes EDI proactively throughout the academic year.
- Our curriculum that will actively promote equality, celebrate diversity, and tackle discrimination, stereotypes and promotes community values.
- Encouraging apprentices and employers to explore equality and diversity issues, and question how it can impact them and others, personally and professionally.
- Embedding equality and diversity principles throughout all policies, procedures, and working practices.

Partners

We will only use the services of partners and suppliers who can demonstrate that they maintain effective policies and procedures for ensuring equality and diversity in compliance with current legislation. We will review their monitoring records at contract start up and periodically throughout the life of the contract.

Grievance and discipline

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that their actions and words support this policy. Anyone found to be in breach of this may be subject to disciplinary action. If any employee believes that they

have been unfairly discriminated against, they should register a complaint using our grievance procedure.

Where apprentices and or employers feel that they have been treated less favorably and not in accordance with this policy, they should report this in accordance with the guidelines set out in complaints procedure.

Monitoring

All policies are reviewed annually as part of our quality management system. Measures to monitor this policy are embedded into our working practices; for example, it is the responsibility of the Office Manager to review data relevant to equality and diversity practices. The Office Manager reports to the board on a monthly basis, reviewing staff equality and diversity measures.

The Quality Lead will monitor and analyse data relating to enrolment, achievement, and withdrawal, with a view to compare trends specifically highlighting any gaps in achievement between different groups. Through regular performance management activities, we aim to deliver high achievement for all apprentices. Where gaps in recruitment and achievement are identified, our robust analytical procedures will provide us with the necessary information to identify key areas for improvement, which will be actioned using our quality improvement plan.

This Policy was last reviewed on 10/01/2025 and will next be reviewed on 10/01/2026. Full details of reviews and updates to this Policy are detailed below.

Amendment reference	Amendment date	Amendment details	Section affected
1.0	10/01/2025	New Policy Created	Full Document

Dated: 10/01/2025



Allison Faires
Managing Director