
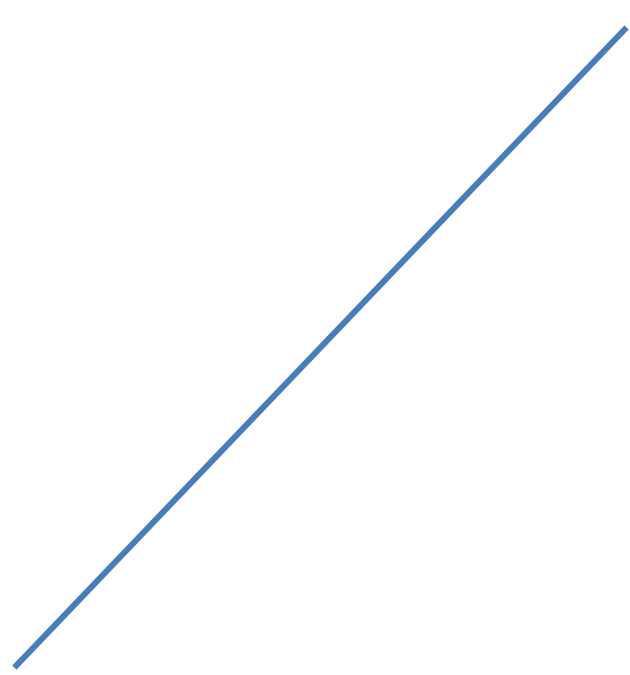


EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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1. OUR COMMITMENT

At Learning Skills Partnership (LSP) we aim to treat all people fairly irrespective of their race, colour, religion, political opinion, ethnicity, nationality, disability, gender, trans-gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, trade union membership or the fact that they are a part-timeworker or an associate.

The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of employees, visitors, clients, customers, learners, suppliers, and all of our stakeholders have a duty to promote and comply with this equality and diversity policy.

Our aim is to create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our stakeholders are recognised and valued.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, associates, contractors, learners and clients of LSP as well as potential new employees and recruitment candidates. It affects how we work with our partners and stakeholders as well as our suppliers of goods and services.

This policy covers the following matters:

- Recruitment and selection
- Learning and Development
- Access to Examinations and Assessment
- Reasonable Adjustments for Examinations and Assessments
- Terms and conditions of employment/terms of engagement
- Disability
- Consequences of discrimination, victimisation and harassment
- The Complaints Procedure
- Monitoring

It accepts and reiterates our responsibilities under UK anti-discrimination and equality legislation and the Human Rights Act 1998.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 The Law

It is generally unlawful to discriminate in employment against a person on the grounds of gender, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity status, age or disability. Employment issues

particularly affected by the legislation relating to discrimination are recruitment, promotion, transfer, pay and access to other benefits as well as dismissal and redundancy and discipline, grievance and harassment. It also has implications for the way we interact with colleagues and learners and manage employees.

3.2 Equality

A definition of equality is the notion of individuals being treated equally, fairly, with dignity and free from discrimination, but not always necessarily being treated the same. There may be occasions where an unequal effort is required to ensure the principle of equality is met. It is also the notion of individuals being given access to the same opportunities in employment education and services.

3.3 Diversity

Diversity involves valuing and embracing the differences in people and reaping the benefits of a varied workforce that makes the best of people's talents whatever their backgrounds. Diversity encompasses visible and non-visible individual differences. It can be seen in the makeup of the workforce in terms of gender, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities etc., and where those people are in terms of management positions, job opportunities and terms and conditions in the workplace. Diversity also involves respecting individual differences such differences can be many and varied.

3.4 Discrimination

Discrimination is to treat some people differently to others. It is not always unlawful but there are certain factors that employers and public bodies cannot discriminate against. These are known as protected characteristics and include:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Discrimination also includes harassment, bullying or victimisation on any of these grounds.

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure LSP fulfils its legal obligations
- Prevent and/or minimise the risk of any discrimination or unfair treatment to LSP employees, associates and learners.
- Increase awareness of minimum acceptable standards and encourage all LSP's employees, associates and learners to take an active role against all forms of discrimination and harassment
- Promote positive attitudes and behaviours with regard to equality and diversity for the well-being and benefit of LSP employees, associates and learners
- Ensure the correct processes are adopted and applied to ensure the necessary support is in place for learners who may require additional support or access arrangements in examinations and assessments
- Share good and best practice which leads to continuous improvement through embedding equality into all the policies, strategies and procedures.

LSP is fully committed to providing an inclusive and harmonious working and training environment that offers equal opportunities for all and where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Whilst we recognise that the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy lies with the senior management team, all employees and associates whatever their position within the Company have some measure of responsibility for ensuring its effective implementation

in their day to day activities and working relationships with colleagues, learners and others they meet within their scope as an LSP employee or associate.

Examination and Assessment access and support

The SENCo will have prime responsibility for ensuring that assessors and other staff are aware of the processes for obtaining assessments of need on an individual basis. The SENCo is responsible for maintaining the contract with the external access arrangements assessor who is qualified to level 7 in access arrangements assessment. Contact details on personnel file along with qualifications.

To this effect, all employees and associates should ensure that:

- They co-operate with any measures introduced to develop equal opportunities. This refers in part to being aware of, contributing to and carrying out any relevant actions on the LSP Equality and Diversity Action Plan
- They respect the sensitivities of others
- They refrain from taking discriminatory actions or decisions which are contrary to either the letter or spirit of this policy and, for employees of managerial status, that they ensure those who report to them also comply with the policy
- They do not instruct, induce, or attempt to induce or pressurise others to act in breach of this policy
- Employees or associates who make complaints of breaches of this policy are treated fairly and responsibly both when the complaint is made and thereafter
- Assessors and other staff involved in the examination and assessment process must ensure that any Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments are identified as early as possible and that the SENCo and Examination Officer are notified at this stage.

- The SENCo and Examination Officer will ensure that all guidance is followed as per JCQ Guidance – ‘Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments’ <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>

Any breaches of LSP’s equality and diversity policy and procedure and any unfair or unlawful discrimination will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures. In serious cases, this could lead to dismissal of the relevant individual.

There are detailed processes to follow should a learner appeal against access arrangements or reasonable adjustments. These are covered in the Policy Po42 LSP Appeals Policy V7 Nov 21

6. GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

6.1 Recruitment and Selection

All jobs and positions will be advertised as widely as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that applicants come forward from a plethora of backgrounds and walks of life.

All applicants are welcomed and are considered for selection on the relative merits of the applicant against the job and/or person specification for the position regardless of age, gender, marital status, race or ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion or religious or other beliefs, sexual orientation, social or educational background or family or care responsibilities.

Where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applications from all sections of society and especially from those groups which are underrepresented in the workforce.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are drawn up prior to any recruitment activity and only include criteria which are objectively required for the duties and responsibilities of the vacancy.

Interviewers will not ask questions which relate to any protected characteristic and will ensure fair treatment as far as possible. Where an applicant identifies himself or herself as having a disability, the Company will make all necessary adjustments to accommodate them at interview.

The principles applicable to recruitment shall apply equally to promotion. Promotion shall be solely on the basis of competence, proven ability and experience. No person shall be denied or offered promotion for any reason relating to a protected characteristic.

The principles applicable to recruitment of employees and associates will also apply to the recruitment and selection of learners for the training that LSP provides. Learners will be recruited according to their own needs and interests and recruitment advertising will avoid stereotyping.

6.2 Learning and Development

LSP will communicate this policy to all employees and associates to ensure they understand the content and the Company's and their own obligations and responsibilities. LSP will also communicate and promote the key equality and diversity aspects to learners, employers and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Training is recognised as an integral part of promoting equal opportunities and ensuring that individuals have a clearly defined understanding of relevant issues.

All employees, associates and learners will receive equal opportunities training as indicated in the following situations:

- As part of the Induction process
- At each bi monthly Standardisation meeting, to be attended by all freelance and permanent staff
- As a result of an Equality and Diversity issue or problem
- When any changes to legislation have been made
- When the LSP Equality and Diversity Policy has been updated

LSP will work with its employers to ensure that equal access is given to training and development that materials are free from bias and that training styles give attention to all groups.

6.3 Terms and Conditions of Employment and Terms of Engagement

We ensure that terms and conditions of employment/terms of engagement are free from all forms of direct and indirect discrimination and apply equally regardless of age, gender, marital status, race or ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion or religious or other beliefs, sexual orientation, social or educational background or family or care responsibilities.

Where appropriate and necessary LSP will endeavour to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service which take into account the specific needs of employees which arise from their ethnic or cultural background, gender, responsibilities as carers, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

We recognise the need to balance personal and work life and that flexibility with regard to working patterns assists the broadest range of people.

6.4 Disability

We value the individual contribution of all employers, learners, employees and associates from all sectors of the community. We are committed to facilitating the employment of people with disabilities and retaining individuals who become disabled whilst with us wherever practicable and in order to achieve this, we will apply the following principles.

- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the working and learning environment, working practices, terms and conditions of employment and terms of engagement do not prevent disabled people from taking up positions for which they are suitably qualified and the best person for the job

- Avoid, remove or alter the barriers to the employment of disabled people, wherever possible when acquiring and fitting out buildings with equipment and devising working practices.
- Make reasonable adjustments to recruitment arrangements, the working environment, working practices, role responsibilities and to the terms and conditions of employment so as to ensure that no particular disabled person is placed at an unreasonable disadvantage.
- Apply the processes of applying for access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special arrangements are applied promptly and correctly as per the JCQ guidance in the Invigilation policy document LSP Po 40
- Before making a decision not to make adjustments which might enable or assist a colleague or prospective colleague, we will ensure that all possible adjustments have been fully investigated, including consultation with the individual concerned and any appropriate expert.

7. CONSEQUENCES OF DISCRIMINATION, VICTIMISATION AND HARASSMENT In the case, where any employee, associate, learner or other persons who fall within the scope of this policy not being offered equal opportunities, the circumstances will be investigated by one of the Directors or their nominee. Appropriate action will be taken where necessary to redress the effects of any practice which may be found to have unjustifiably limited the provision of equal opportunities.

All complaints or grievances raised must be recorded on the Protected Characteristics Record of Complaints and Grievances. This document will be used to identify, understand and inform future developments.

If any complaints or appeals are generated from the application or arrangement of Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments or Special Arrangements for examinations the appeals process must be followed as per JCQ guidance and as contained in the LSP Appeal Policy Po 42

LSP will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying. If individuals are found displaying such conduct, they will be subject to disciplinary action with all internal complaints processed through the Grievance procedures and any external complaints managed by the Directors.

All employees or associates who feel discriminated against in anyway should adhere to the LSP Grievance Policy.

Where an employee or associate is made aware of an equal opportunities issue by a learner that is not connected to their training e.g. they are being subjected to unwelcome behaviour by work colleagues they should in the first instance be encouraged and supported to use their employer's grievance procedure.

If an LSP employee or associate becomes aware of a learner who feels they have experienced discrimination, harassment or bullying by an employee or associate of LSP in relation to an assessment decision they must encourage the learner to follow the LSP Appeals Procedure.

Should an employee or associate of LSP become aware of a learner who feels they have experienced discrimination, harassment or bullying by an employee or associate of LSP in any other instance they must encourage the learner to follow the LSP Complaints Policy.

8. MONITORING

We are committed to monitoring the effectiveness of this Equality and Diversity policy and the associated complaints procedure and will establish appropriate information systems to monitor all elements of:-

- (i) Recruitment and selection
- (ii) Promotion and transfer
- (iii) Training for employees, associates and learners
- (iv) Terms and conditions of employment
- (v) Terms of conditions of learning
- (vi) Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- (vii) Learner appeals procedure including Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations
- (viii) Resignations, redundancies and dismissals

9. CHANGES TO THE POLICY

This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly, to ensure that it meets the needs of the business and to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Full review will take place annually.

This Policy does not form part of the contract of employment

Appendix 2 – Protected Characteristics Record of Complaints and Grievances

Complaint/ Grievance	Date	Nature of Complaint/Grievance	Person Dealing with the Issue	Future Action – Monitoring/Change to policy, procedures etc.