



Equality & Diversity Policy

Purpose

First for Apprenticeships aims to ensure that all current and future employees, learners, employers and stakeholders are treated equally, regardless of age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, trade union activity or unrelated criminal convictions.

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear centre guidance regarding equality and to establish key principles, structures and monitoring arrangements.

Scope

The policy is applicable to all First for Apprenticeships employees, learners, employers, contractors and stakeholders.

Key Principles

First for Apprenticeships recognises and accepts the legal responsibilities laid down in current legislation, such as:

- Equality Act 2010

the headings of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity are now to be known as 'protected characteristics'

- The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendments Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Equal Pay Act 1970 and Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Human Rights Act 1998



- The Learning and Skills Act 2000
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

First For Apprenticeships are opposed to all forms of discrimination and, where applicable, adapt/amend policies and procedures to protect against direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of colour, racial group, ethnic, cultural or national origins, gender, gender re-assignment, age, social class, religion or beliefs, disability, and sex and sexual orientation, marriage and Civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity. We will:

- Celebrate the diverse nature of our society
- Are committed to ensuring equality in all areas of our practice
- Are determined to tackle and challenge inequality, prejudice and discrimination in all its forms
- Promote equality of opportunity to all learners and support them to achieve their professional and personal goals
- Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups and status

Responsibility

Under the terms of this policy, the Director has overall responsibility for the management of the policy supported by the Equal Opportunities Group consisting cross departmental staff, managers and learner/employer representatives, chaired by the Quality Assurance Manager, as part of First for Apprenticeships Learner Involvement Strategy who will:

- Ensure the effective implementation of the policy
- Communicate the policy and its implications to staff, learners and other stakeholders
- Organise the delivery of relevant training for staff
- Monitor the operation of the policy
- Take any remedial actions as required and implement action plans to resolve
- Evaluate centre performance

Some staff may, from time to time, be given specific responsibilities for the implementation of aspects of the policy, such as:

- The investigation of reported incidents of racism or racial harassment
- Equality and diversity objectives

- Timescale for implementing each objective
- Success criteria
- Resources available
- Monitoring and review arrangements

First for Apprenticeships will allocate dedicated time for staff to receive ongoing training and development.

Commitment

First for Apprenticeships will treat all employees, learners, employers, contractors and stakeholders with respect and dignity, and strive to provide a working and learning environment which is free from discrimination, victimisation or harassment. We will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour towards its employees and learners from other employees, learners, employers or members of the public. Disciplinary action will be taken against those who do not comply, as detailed within First for Apprenticeships disciplinary procedure.

The service and facilities that First for Apprenticeships provide will encompass the individual needs of our service users. We will promote and embed the importance of recognising and supporting equality and diversity. A primary objective will be to ensure that our assessment procedures are appropriate and designed to accurately reflect the needs of both staff and learners.

First for Apprenticeships will ensure that no employee, job applicant or candidate for promotion will be disadvantaged, or treated less favourable on grounds of age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or beliefs, or sexual orientation. Reasonable adjustment will be made to ensure equal access for disabled staff and potential candidates.

First for Apprenticeships will ensure that all learners and potential learners are treated with equality and fairness by:

- Ensuring that teaching and learning activity design and delivery is in keeping with individual educational need.
- Establish support systems in keeping with the needs of both individuals and groups.
- Offer flexibility in terms of modes of attendance.
- Identifying and eliminating barriers to access. (Physical, Environmental and Curricular)



We will ensure that delivery staff are informed and updated on Local and National Statistics relating to race, gender, disability and age, and as part of First For Apprenticeships Learner Involvement Strategy we will actively promote its services and seek feedback to under-represented individuals and groups. Where appropriate information leaflets will be translated into a range of community languages.

General

First for Apprenticeships will monitor learner applications, enrolment, retention and achievement by gender, race, age and disability.

Ethnic group information will be recorded on the basis of each individual's self-identification. Such information will be treated as sensitive and confidential, its collection and use will comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. We recognise that some individuals may be reluctant to record their ethnic group and others may refuse to do so. No attempt will be made to encourage individuals to provide this data.

Company Commitment

Breaches of the policy will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedure set out in the relevant policy.

If a learner or potential learner believes that they have not been treated fairly, due to prejudice or discrimination they should invoke the complaints procedure.

If an employee believes they have not been treated fairly, due to prejudice or discrimination they should invoke the grievance/harassment procedure, as appropriate.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that incidents of discriminatory behaviour are recorded and referred to the Quality Assurance Manager.