

Equality and Diversity Policy - Learners and Apprentices

Please note that this BreatheHR version of this policy is the only version that is maintained. Any printed copies should, therefore, be viewed as 'uncontrolled' and as such, may not necessarily contain the latest updates and amendments.

Scope

This policy applies to all learners and apprentices at The Skills Centre Limited. The Skills Centre Limited reserves the right to amend at any time.

The Skills Centre Limited is committed to ensuring equality is embedded throughout all of its learning activities. The Skills Centre Limited is committed to creating an environment where all learners and apprentices, irrespective of their circumstances and/or background:

- Are treated fairly
- Are treated equally
- Are fully respected
- Are listened to and encouraged to offer their views and opinions
- Have equality of opportunity

The Equality Act 2010 describes that discrimination to learners and apprentices on the grounds of age, gender reassignment, race, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

The Skills Centre Limited encourage all learners and apprentices to be themselves and respect who they are whilst conducting themselves in an honest and law-abiding way.

The Skills Centre Limited also understands the environment our learners and apprentices work in very well and the social taboos that have been associated with that environment over the years. The Skills Centre Limited encourage all learners and apprentices to conduct themselves and behave in a way that they would expect someone to behave if welcomed into their home. Learners and apprentices are reminded that respect between learners and apprentices and colleagues in the working environment is not only legal standing but also contributes to a much more successful and happier place.

The Skills Centre Limited will ensure that:

- Equality of opportunity is embedded in all policies, practices, decision-making and evaluation processes
- That all employees receive the appropriate training.

- Our Learners and Apprentices are provided with the appropriate guidance and support to understand the policies, practices, decision-making and evaluation processes and who to contact for support if needed.
- Flexible opportunities are offered which meet learners and apprentices needs and enable all learners and apprentices to realise their potential
- Positive images of achievement from all sections of society are recognised and celebrated
- We actively promote access to learning programmes and services for all our learners and potential clients to enable them to improve their skills, to make progress and be successful in realising their ambitions.
- We create a visibly diverse and inclusive environment, which values and celebrates difference and raises the aspiration of existing and potential learners.
- We provide services which are effective in recognising and assessing the specific needs of individuals and in ensuring that the right kinds of support and interventions are provided to meet these needs
- Tackle discrimination, whether direct or indirect.

Inclusiveness

The Skills Centre Limited are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of, and meet, their statutory responsibilities. Learners and apprentices are made aware of and expected to behave in a way that is consistent with this Equality and Diversity Policy. The policy is promoted through ensuring all staff and learners are provided with a copy and sign up to it at induction, and receive such refresher training as they need when it is identified through our quality and assessment processes. All learners and staff receive a training session on equality and diversity after induction.

Age

The Skills Centre Limited will:

- Not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age
- Monitor the performance of learners and apprentices and address any inequality issues
- Help minimise age stereotyping in the site environment

Gender Reassignment Commitment

The Skills Centre Limited will:

- Not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of gender re-assignment towards trans-gender or transsexual people
- Monitor the performance of learners and apprentices and address any inequality issues

- Help minimise gender reassignment stereotyping in the site environment

Race Commitment

The Skills Centre Limited will:

- Actively tackle racial discrimination among any cohorts of learners and apprentices
- Always clearly explain race and ethnicity eligibility guidelines from the funding or government bodies
- Monitor the admission and progress of all learners and apprentices by racial group

Disability Commitment

The Skills Centre Limited will ensure all learners and apprentices with disabilities have access to:

- Appropriate opportunities to disclose disability and/or learning difficulties
- Equal opportunities to prospective employment opportunities
- Specialist equipment and technology to aid them
- Information in relevant formats

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Skills Centre Limited will:

- Not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Monitor the performance of learners and apprentices and address any inequality issues

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Skills Centre Limited will:

- Not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of Pregnancy and Maternity
- If a break in studies is required The Skills Centre will revise the dates in the apprenticeship agreement and take account for the duration of the break.
- Provide facilities that are suitable
- Monitor the performance of learners and apprentices and address any inequality issues

Religious Belief Commitment

The Skills Centre Limited will:

- Not discriminate directly against anyone due to their religion or belief

- Not discriminate indirectly by applying criterion, provision or practise which disadvantages anyone due to their religion or belief
- Not victimise anyone because they have made or are going to make a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief
- Promote the Prevent strategy

Gender and Sex Commitment

The Skills Centre Limited will:

- Strongly oppose discrimination on the grounds of sex
- Monitor the performance of learners and apprentices and address any inequality issues
- Help minimise sex stereotyping in the site environment

Sexual Orientation Commitment

The Skills Centre Limited will:

- Strongly oppose discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and are committed to remove discrimination from all areas of the learners and apprentices working environment
- Encourage positive acceptance of all gender identities and gender expressions
- Not tolerate gender or sexuality identification harassment in any area of the learners' and apprentices' working environment

Fair Recruitment and Assessment

The Skills Centre Limited will, as part of its Equality and Diversity policy, ensure that all assessments and assessment activities undertaken by learners and apprentices are:

- Reliable
- Valid
- Transparent
- Recognise and respect equality and diversity
- Use appropriate language and documentation that is accessible to all learners and apprentices
- Use a variety of assessment strategies

The Skills Centre Limited will ensure that feedback is given to every learner when they achieve certain milestones during their learning programme, such as passing a unit or achieving an element of a framework. Two-way feedback is encouraged amongst all learners and apprentices to adopt strong lines of communication.

Fair recruitment is also prioritised, with our Recruitment Strategy including targets for each excluded group which meet or exceed representation in the communities we serve. Activities are focused on specific community and representative groups and support is provided to ensure recruitment and retention meet targets.

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and bullying of any kind will not be tolerated by The Skills Centre and we are committed to promoting a safe, healthy and fair environment, where learners can be treated with dignity and respect at all times. If harassment and bullying is left unchecked then this can lead to a poor learning experience and outcome as well as damaging our reputation. The Skills Centre courses are free from discriminatory behavior and any kind of harassment and bullying. The Skills Centre recognizes the right of all learners to study in an environment that is free from unacceptable behavior. This policy defines what harassment and bullying are and how it will be dealt with.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment, as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is any unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may not be by another. Bullying in itself is not unlawful; however, this conduct may ultimately be defined as harassment. Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment but it is sometimes the 'grey' areas that cause most problems. Examples of unacceptable behaviour are set out below. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome or derogatory remarks or comments about a protected characteristic e.g. jokes, teasing and verbal abuse
- Unwelcome physical contact
- The display of offensive material e.g. pornographic pictures
- Offensive or suggestive gestures
- Demands for sexual favours
- Offensive or sexually explicit language
- Adverse comments, whether to their face or behind their backs
- Undignified treatment, ridicule or exclusion of people because of a protected characteristic
- Pressure to take part in religious activities
- Comments suggesting that people of a certain age are less able than others.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to:

- Insulting behaviour

- Threats
- Physical assault
- The intention of belittling someone them feeling hurt or upset.
- Cyber Bullying

Such behaviour will constitute unlawful harassment if it is on grounds of age, disability (past or present), race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender, gender reassignment or sexual orientation, and is unwanted by the recipient. This behaviour is unacceptable and, if it occurs, measures will be taken to stop it, including learner disciplinary action if necessary. Sexual harassment also includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (whether or not that conduct is on grounds of sex) which has the purpose or effect set out in the previous paragraph.

Harassment can often be hard to recognise as the actions may not be obvious to others and can take many forms: verbal, non-verbal, physical and bullying ranging from physical attack to more subtle conduct which makes the recipient uneasy. It can be persistent or an isolated incident. All learners must be aware of the sensitivities of others. It is no excuse that behaviour is tolerated by other learners. If one learner is offended or feels bullied by a particular type of behaviour, then that behaviour constitutes harassment even if others are not offended. We treat any form of harassment as serious misconduct.

Dealing with complaints of Harassment – informal action and advice

All allegations of harassment will be dealt with seriously, promptly and in confidence. Learners who believe they have been harassed are encouraged to use this procedure. They should not fear victimisation.

Learners and employees should expect their complaint to be taken seriously, treated confidentially and the process to provide protection from retaliation or intimidation. In some cases it may be possible to rectify matters informally. Sometimes individuals are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an informal discussion may be all that is required to ensure a greater understanding and the ceasing of the behaviour. The complainant may raise the issue with a Tutor/Assessor, or another appropriate person either directly, or in the first instance, through a chosen support person to initiate a complaint of this nature.

Where an informal resolution is not possible then the learner should make a formal complaint as defined in the Complaints Procedure. Any complaint made out of malice will be a learner disciplinary issue.

Managers must ensure that any alleged harassment is investigated and action taken to prevent recurrence.

Training

The Skills Centre are committed to providing training for employee to ensure they embed Equality and Diversity in all policies, practices, decision-making and evaluation processes. The Skills Centre will use a range of learning and development opportunities throughout the employment cycle.

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