

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Number: OPG011

Version 2

Date released: 10.08.2012

Date reviewed: 27.07.2021

Reviewed by: Kate Temple-Brown

Date to be reviewed: 01.07.2022

Author: Kate Williams

Contents

1	Policy Statement	3
2	Aims	3
3	Promotion	3
4	Inductions	3
5	Performance Reviews	4
6	Observations	4
7	Commitment to the policy	4
8	Equality and Diversity Champion and their role	5
9	Train employees	5
10	Recruitment of employees and apprentices	6
11	Training apprentices	6
12	Grievances/Discipline	7
13	Monitoring and Review	7

Policy Statement

The Opportunity Group's aim is to ensure that no employee, job applicant, or learner receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment, employment or training and assessment grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- (the protected characteristics)

Aims

- To ensure that Equality and Diversity are promoted by our organisation
- To ensure that we demonstrate commitment to the policy
- To ensure that we will set out procedures as to how we will train the employees in implementing this policy
- To ensure that this policy is used to influence the recruitment of employees and apprentices.
- To ensure that this policy is implemented when training apprentices

The Opportunity Group is committed to ensuring that we remain compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and strive to actively promote equality and diversity amongst our workforce and within the services we provide. We will strive to promote access to our services for all at all times.

This policy will remain subject to review on a continuous basis (see Equality and Diversity champion, below). Any changes will inform the development of our strategy as part of our business development cycle.

Promotion

Responsibility for the promotion of Equality and Diversity throughout the learner and employee journey is shared across our organisation.

Inductions

The Senior Directors, when conducting learner and staff inductions, will make reference to this policy and ensure that an up to date policy is contained within the Staff Handbook and available online at all times.

The Senior Directors, will also inform the Coaches as to their duties in relation to Equality and Diversity, in particular ensuring that all concerns, whether reported or observed, are recorded at the time of any observations and reported in line with this policy.

The Coaches will also inform learners during the initial learner induction period as to the Equality and Diversity policy and process contained here.

Performance Reviews

Equality and Diversity will feature within the Self-Assessment report (SAR) process, as part of the annual and interim performance reviews [see Performance and Development policy].

Observations

When undertaking observations, the Coaches are responsible for recording Equality and Diversity concerns and issues.

The concerns may result from the learner raising an issue or, by the Coach, where the learner is not aware of the breach. Any concern will be recorded and reported in line with reporting requirements.

Coaches will ensure that feedback captured from learners throughout is provided to the Head of Delivery who will in turn report back any emerging trends as appropriate during monthly Leadership and Management meetings to inform strategic business plans and development.

Commitment to the policy

The Senior Directors of The Opportunity Group will ensure that this policy remains up to date and subject to review at all times. The SMT, including all senior directors, will ensure that they 'lead by example' in the matter of Equality and Diversity in practice.

The OMT will oversee the work of the Equality and Diversity champion in ensuring that the policy is reviewed and that assessments, performance reviews, 1-2-1 meetings and group sessions contain provision for discussion as to Equality and Diversity issues.

To promote equality in the workplace and learning environment which is good management practice and makes sound business sense and confirms to all employment standards required by law.

To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our employees and learners are recognised and valued.

That every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all and every learner is entitled to a learning environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all employees.

All Learners have access to training and assessment appropriate to their learning program.

The company will review and monitor its employment practices and procedures and those covering training it delivers to ensure fairness.

Breaches of the company's equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Equality and Diversity Champion and their role

The OMT will ensure that an employee is assigned the role of being the Equality and Diversity champion for the company. Their role will be to monitor and review the policy and act as a resource for the organisation, updating knowledge as to current thinking and working with the Client Director, Kate Temple-Brown, to ensure that training and skills needs are reviewed and updated where appropriate.

The champion will lead on ensuring that the policy, systems, records and practices are reviewed to ensure ongoing compliance with current legislation.

The Equality and Diversity champion will ensure the implementation of stand-ups and stand-downs on Equality and Diversity matters. Stand-ups will involve group discussions on 'hot topics' such as mental health and optimism bias and stand-downs will involve a discussion as to Equality and Diversity incidents recorded within the workplace or in learner observations and on site. These campaigns will seek to ensure that we maintain focus on Equality and Diversity as an organisation.

Train employees

The Equality and Diversity champion will strive to ensure that we provide training on Equality and Diversity issues to our workforce. We will work with third party organisations to enable us to provide presentations to our workforce.

The Equality and Diversity champion will ensure that employees maintain knowledge and awareness of up to date Equality and Diversity legislation and regulations impacting on the work they do. This information will be provided via our internal management system and emailed to employees.

The Opportunity Group will keep records of qualifications and certifications and, working with the Senior Directors, will ensure that employees are notified as to when their qualifications are due to lapse so that training can be booked in time and they remain compliant with industry requirements.

This provision will at all times align with the performance and development policy in that mandatory and voluntary training in Equality and Diversity will comply with the provisions of that policy document.

The Equality and Diversity champion will ensure observation of stand-ups and stand-downs in relation to Equality and Diversity campaigns and issues for our employees, standardising learning and sharing knowledge across the organisation.

Recruitment of employees and apprentices

We will observe provisions always contained within the Equality Act 2010 in relation to our recruitment process and within the learning journey.

All marketing, course promotion and web materials will be assessed and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain free from bias. We will strive to ensure that all language is graded to ensure that they are easily accessible and understandable to our employees and learners. Where possible, we will provide support for all learners, enabling them to fully access our service and training.

The Equality and Diversity champion will have responsibility for ensuring that Equality and Diversity feature within the initial assessment of our learners (see Initial Learner Engagement policy) and the induction of our employees (see above).

Should issues or concerns be raised to any of our employees or management as a result of recruitment practice that is undertaken which brings us into conflict with this policy or legislation, our Equality and Diversity champion will use the change process to inform the SMT and oversee the amendment of the practice at fault and implement new practice to comply with legislation.

All learners will be required to complete an Equality and Diversity workbook to develop their knowledge and understanding of the topic. This knowledge will then be reinforced via an assessment which will be linked to their Apprenticeship/ Training activity.

Training apprentices

Views of learners will be sought on their perception as to their treatment during the training to ensure we are operating within the provisions of this policy and current legislation. Our Coaches/Training Advisors will use the formal reviews to discuss Equality and Diversity issues to capture instance of concern and check their developmental knowledge.

We will also undertake leaver's analysis, to determine views at the conclusion of training, exit interviews, to determine satisfaction levels, progress reviews, to understand and capture concerns during the course of training.

Grievances / Discipline

Employees have the right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the company's grievance procedures policy: learners should use the appeals procedure which is covered in the appeals policy.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the company disciplinary procedure as detailed in the policy.

Monitoring and Review

The company deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice accordingly. It will periodically monitor and measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.

If the monitoring shows that the company or its learners are not representative, or that sections of our workforce or learners are not progressing properly within the company or their learning programmes then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, the delivery of learning programmes and company's policies and practices.