

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Community Links Training & Enterprise ('Community Links') is committed to raising awareness of equality and inclusion, promoting diversity and combatting all forms of inequality, disadvantage, prejudice, unfair discrimination, harassment and mistreatment within our community.
- 1.2 Community Links is committed to achieving a working environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.
- 1.3 This Policy aims to identify and address unfair and discriminatory practices and to encourage full contribution from our diverse community. Community Links is committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent guidance under the PSED (Public Sector Equality Duty) listed in schedule 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.4 All of Community Links' policies and operational procedures aim to project equality of access and opportunity to all sections of our community.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 Community Links recognises the positive impact we can make as a community through the active promotion of all courses to all individuals irrespective of status or ability.
- 2.2 Community Links' aim is to eradicate all forms of discrimination within the work and/or training environment. Although various sectors may prove naturally selective in the form of sex, age, disabilities or gender.
- 2.3 Community Links aims to provide a service that does not discriminate against its learners, delivery partners and customers in the means by which they can access or deliver the services and goods supplied. Community Links believes that all employees, delivery partners, learners and customers are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.
- 2.4 In all its activities, Community Links will;
 - Foster the principles of the Equality Act 2010
 - Foster the principles of the PSED as a body carrying out a public function
 - Foster good relations (tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others)
 - Ensure individuals and groups protected characteristics are respected
 - Make society fairer through talking discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to the protected characteristics
 - Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
 - Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low

- Take proportionate actions when applying and complying with our Equality Duty

2.5 The objectives of this policy are:

- To prevent, reduce and stop all forms of unlawful discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, benefits, pay, terms and conditions of employment, redundancy and dismissals are determined on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Discrimination	Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and includes discrimination by perception and association.
Direct discrimination	This occurs when a person or a policy intentionally treats a person less favourably than another on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.
Indirect discrimination	This is the application of a policy, criterion or practice which Community Links applies to all but which is such that: • If it is detrimental to a proportion of people or person that the people or person is applying it to or represents; • Community Links cannot justify the need for the application of the policy on a neutral basis; and • The person to whom Community Links is applying it to suffers detriment from the application of the policy.
Harassment	This occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Bullying	Although there is no legal definition of bullying it is usually defined as: • Repeated • Intend to hurt someone either physically or emotionally • Often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation It takes many forms and can include • Physical assault • Teasing • Making threats • Name Calling • Cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)
Victimisation	This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have brought or intend to bring proceedings or they have given or intend to give evidence.

4. Implementation

- 4.1 Community Links is fully committed to its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It continues to be ambitious when advancing and embedding Equality and diversity for all learners, staff, stakeholders, contractors and visitors and to challenging all forms of discrimination based on the promotion of fundamental British Values.
- 4.2 In order to fulfil its commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation, as well as meeting its requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Community Links will:
- Implement necessary actions and training to ensure that equality is advanced and embedded for all, in line with a broad spectrum of policies, which guide the delivery of the training and wider corporate business.
 - Engage and communicate, both internally and externally, with learners, staff, visitors and the wider community where appropriate, in relation to the above.
 - Ensure an organisation wide commitment to advancing and embedding EDI and that it is understood by all.
 - Ensure the principle of equal opportunities and inclusion is embedded in service delivery and that gender equality is promoted
 - Ensure activities are fully accessible to people with disabilities in line with our public duty under the 2010 Equality Act. We recognise that some activities such as working at height may not be accessible to everyone.
 - Monitor the effectiveness of policies and procedures
 - Ensure the policy is informed by current legislation, the current Ofsted Framework for Inspection and is supplemented by other organisational policy documents
- 4.3 The Equality Act 2010 gives the key legislative requirements relating to EDI. The Act identifies nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender, gender identify, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and philosophical beliefs, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnerships. All nine characteristics are covered in the employment duties of the Act. The protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is not included in the educational duties of the Act.
- 4.4 The Act outlaws unfair discrimination against an individual because of a protected characteristic and this includes the following types of discrimination:
- Direct discrimination
 - Indirect discrimination
 - Harassment
 - Victimisation
 - Discrimination arising from disability
 - Failure to make reasonable adjustments (for disabled people)
- 4.5 The Act requires due regard to the three aims of the general duty:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 4.6 The first part of this duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation applies to all nine protected characteristics while the rest of the duty applies to eight of the protected characteristics and excludes marriage and civil partnerships.

- 4.7 The Equality Act states that meeting different needs includes taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities.
- 4.8 The Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people of different groups. Community Links actively wishes to encourage participation in training both internally and externally by staff/learners from all backgrounds and groups including those generally under-represented.

Examples of under-represented groups include the following:

- People who are unemployed or who have been out of the labour market because of domestic, childcare or other caring responsibilities;
- Learners who are or have been 'Looked After' especially those in the care of the local authority;
- People who speak English as an additional language;
- People that have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment;
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual people;
- People in low income groups;
- Black and minority ethnic groups (BME) including Gypsies, Romas, Travellers;
- People with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those with mental illness and those with sensory and/or mobility impairment;
- People without formal qualifications;
- People with emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- Ex-offenders;
- Part-time and temporary workers;
- Unskilled manual workers;
- Males or females in an environment predominantly consisting of the opposite sex.

5. Unlawful Reasons for Discrimination

- 5.1 Sex. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably on the grounds of sex, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or transgender status. This applies to men, women and those undergoing or intending to undergo gender reassignment. Sexual harassment of men and women can be found to constitute sex discrimination. Example: Asking a woman during an interview if she is planning to have any (more) children constitutes discrimination on the ground of gender.

- 5.2 Age. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their age. This applies to people of all ages. This does not currently apply to the calculation of redundancy payments.
- 5.3 Disability. It is not permissible to treat a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person. Reasonable adjustments must be made to give the disabled person as much access to any services and ability to be employed, trained, or promoted as a non-disabled person.
- 5.4 Race. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their race, the colour of their skin, their nationality or their ethnic origin.
- 5.5 Sexual Orientation. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sexual orientation. For example, an employer cannot refuse to employ a person because s/he is homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.
- 5.6 Religion or Belief. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their religious beliefs or their religion or their lack of any religion or belief.
- 5.7 In the event that a client, subcontractor, delivery partner and/or customer is the subject or perpetrator of, or witness to, discriminatory behaviour, please report to your contract lead.

6. Positive Action

- 6.1 Positive action is a range of measures allowed under the Equality Act 2010 which can be lawfully taken to encourage and train people from under-represented groups to help them overcome disadvantages in competing with other applicants. If Community Links chooses to utilise positive action this will not be used to treat people with a protected characteristic more favourably.

7. Reasonable Adjustments

- 7.1 Community Links has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the engagement of a disabled person. These may include:
 - Making adjustments to premises;
 - Re-allocating some or all of a disabled learner, delivery partner and customer duties;
 - Transferring a disabled learner and/or customer to a role or course better suited to their disability;
 - Relocating a disabled learner, delivery partner and/or customer to a more suitable office or training environment;
 - Giving a disabled learner, delivery partner and/or customer time away for medical treatment or rehabilitation;
 - Providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee;
 - Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction, training and/or manuals for disabled learners, subcontractors, delivery partners and customers; or
 - Any other adjustments Community Links considers reasonable and necessary provided such adjustments are within the financial means of the organisation.
 - If a learner, delivery partner and/or customer has a disability and feels that any such adjustments could be made by Community Links, they should contact their tutor or the office.

8. Responsibility for the Implementation of this Policy

- 8.1 All staff, learners, delivery partners and/or customers of Community Links are required to act in a way that does not subject any other learner, delivery partner and/or customer to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of their race, sex, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. The co-operation of all is essential for the success of this Policy.
- 8.2 Employees may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by Community Links and in some circumstances an Employment Tribunal may order them to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts.
- 8.3 Community Links takes responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and endeavours to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice.

Employees

- 8.4 It is the responsibility of all employees to understand, adhere to, promote and foster the ethos outlined within this policy to enhance the beneficial effects of operation. Although all departments have their own responsibilities, commitment of everyone to work as part of a team is one of the strengths on which Community Links is founded.
- 8.5 All new employees will be inducted in the content contained within this policy. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure employees, contractors and delivery partners for whom they are responsible, understand any new or amended policies and the contents are communicated by them and adhered to.
- 8.6 The Director and Operations Manager will monitor the effectiveness of the policies which may be changed from time to time to ensure they are effective and comply with current legislation.

Subcontractors

- 8.7 Subcontractors and external providers delivering services and goods on behalf of Community Links will be issued a copy of this policy or signposted to our website where one is publicly available.
- 8.8 When subcontractors or external providers are delivering on behalf of Community Links they will be subject to review and/or monitoring of delivery. Community Links expects that all subcontractors and external providers adhere to the guidance outlined within this policy and any legislative requirements at all times and report any issues immediately to their contract lead.
- 8.9 Should a subcontractor and/or external provider fail to adhere to the guidance outlined within this policy then the right to work for or on behalf of Community Links may be revoked, in the worst case. Each case will be investigated and judged on its own merit with the following remedial action/s or sanctions imposed:
 - Suspension (removal of work for defined period)
 - Curtailment (restrictions or conditions imposed on continued work)
 - Revocation (removal of right to contract to Community Links)

9. Review and Monitoring

- 9.1 Monitoring of the policy will be the responsibility of the Director and Operations Manager. This will include:
- Annual review of the policy
 - Learner and staff surveys
 - Data analysis
 - Monitoring of formal complaints
 - Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice
 - Quality Improvement Plan
- 9.2 All staff receive training on equality and diversity
- 9.3 Everyone is given the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and develop their potential. All staff participate in the appraisal process, this focuses on performance only and guards against discrimination, staff performance is considered honestly and impartially on the basis of evidence.
- 9.4 Standards in which all employees are assessed and reviewed are communicated with employees. Development stages are identified and put in place to enable employees to achieve short, medium and long term goals to upskill and progress with their employment.
- 9.5 All delivery personnel, either internal or external, will be monitored periodically. Where an under-performance is identified the expectations of Community Links will be reiterated and confirmed with the individual concerned and/or the disciplinary process will be enacted should it be deemed applicable by the Operations Manager.

END

Version Control

Version history	Content Changed
1 – Sep 2024	Policy produced
2 – 26/10/2025	Wording updated across the Policy Definitions added Reasonable adjustments added
3 – 23/10/26	Policy reviewed and agreed

Review and Ratification

Next Review Date	Reason for Review
October 2027	Annual Review