

SOUTH WEST SKILLS ACADEMY (SWSA)

Equality And Diversity Policy

Name of policy	Equality and Diversity Policy
Name of person responsible	L Sturgess Head Of Centre SWSA Safeguarding Lead, Cornwall College Group
Approved by	SWSA
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1. Policy Statement

South West Skills Academy is committed to achieving a working environment, both as an employer and as a training centre, which promotes, encourages equal opportunities, diversity and eliminates discrimination.

We are committed, wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce that broadly reflects the local community to which we provide services.

SWSA believes and recognises that the diversity of communities is a huge asset that should be valued and seen as one of the community's strengths. As a provider of training to local people we are committed to providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, harassment and intimidation, and disadvantage. We are also committed to providing the highest quality standard in training delivery, and decision making.

Equality of opportunity for all sections of the community and workforce is an integral part of this commitment.

SWSA aims to be responsive to providing good quality and efficient services. An essential part of providing a good quality service is making sure that everyone has equal access to our services.

1.1 Statement of Commitment:

We are committed to equality and to make fair treatment an important part of everything we do. We make this commitment because we want to provide the best service we can to all students and the community and because we value the contribution that our employees make to achieve this.

2. Purpose

Our aim is to create a culture that respects, values and celebrates differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential irrespective of

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

We will strive to provide equality and fairness for all employees and in the provision of services and to ensure that we do not discriminate and are committed to comply with legislation and best practice in respect of equality of opportunities. We strongly oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of skills and ability.

We aim to make sure that services are provided fairly to all sections of our community recognising the multiplicity of individuals and respecting these, and that all of our existing and future employees have equal opportunities taking into account their range of personalities and needs.

We will take action to identify and eradicate direct or indirect discriminatory practices, which act as barriers to achieving these aims.

South West Skills will:

- Seek to ensure that our workforce reflects the diverse students and communities that we serve and that every employee is treated fairly during the whole of their working life.
- Take action to eradicate discrimination and inequality when delivering services.
- Fulfil our obligations by adopting legal, national and local guidelines that seek to ensure equality of opportunity, eradicate discrimination and promote good relations between all the communities in which we deliver services.
- Make equalities an every-day working practice and train our employees to carry out this policy.
- Set challenging equality objectives and targets in relation to employment, service delivery and the carrying out of our functions.
- Make any changes necessary to our working practices and publicly available information so that SWSA and its services are available to everyone.
- Work with others to eradicate harassment and intimidation.
- Consult with people from all diverse communities to help shape the services that we deliver and our policies and practices.

As a company that delivers training services we want to be:

- An influential company with a strong voice in the community in which we serve to benefit the people of the community.
- A modern company with a diverse and growing economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all local people.
- A vibrant company that celebrates diversity, creativity and culture in all the local communities.
- A fair company where good care training is available to all, allowing everyone to benefit from learning and wider opportunities.
- Working in partnership with professionals to enable everyone to live in safety, free from fear, harassment and intimidation.

3. Scope

- i. This policy applies to all directors, employees, learners, volunteers and other users of our services.

- **Equal Opportunity**

1. South West Skills Academy is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all and requires all employees, of any grade or authority, to abide by and adhere to this general principle. Every effort will be made to ensure that all practices and procedures follow and exceed the legal requirements and good practice as recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
2. South West Skills Academy aim to ensure a working environment where:
 - a. Dignity and respect for all is promoted.
 - b. Individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued.
 - c. Discrimination, intimidation, victimisation, bullying or harassment is not tolerated in any format.
 - d. Decisions are based on merit, qualifications and abilities.
- ii. South West Skills Academy aims to be an equal opportunities employer and provider of services. No job applicant, employee or user of our services should receive less

favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions. This principle applies to recruitment, promotion, training, benefits, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions of employment.

- iii. South West Skills Academy is committed to challenge any form of discrimination it encounters. Any employee, learner or user of our services with questions or concerns about equality and discrimination or with knowledge of breach(s) of this policy will be encouraged to bring such issues to the attention of the head of centre or management team as soon as they are able either informally or as part of the Comments, Commendation and Complaints procedure.

B. Diversity

- C. South West Skills Academy will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of a diverse and inclusive society. We will promote working practices that deliver opportunities and access, not barriers to learners.
- D. South West Skills Academy will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and to bring benefit to individuals and the community.
- E. South West Skills Academy will encourage all employees, learners and other users of our services to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their opinions and contributions will be valued.
- F. South West Skills Academy will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to employees to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in our service delivery.

3.3 Promoting British Values

3.31 South West Skills Academy is committed to the promotion of British Values. All staff have to complete mandatory training through Education and Training foundation.

3.32 In line with Department for Education guidance, South West Skills Academy will promote and integrate the following British Values:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Respect of those with different faiths and beliefs.

3.33 South West Skills Academy seeks to implement the promotion of British Values in all sections of the company to ensure that effective equality and diversity provision is present throughout the business.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Head of Centre, who will ensure that there are systems in place to put this policy into practice on a day-to-day basis and review it on an annual basis.

- The Head of Centre is responsible for coordinating this policy with other policies, strategies and Plans
- Personnel Managers is responsible for ensuring all employees are aware of and implement the policy and procedures.
- Inductors and assessors are responsible for signposting the policy to the learners and implementing the procedures with their allocated learners and other users of our service.
- Learners are responsible for following the principles of equality & diversity in their working practices and interaction with their assessors and other learners.

5. Policy Implementation – Procedures

5.1. General implementation

We will do this by:

- Meeting our responsibilities for equal opportunities in relevant legislation, codes of practice and company policies and strategies.
- Making equality a mainstream of our work. This means making sure that all aspects of what we do, such as our policies, plans and practices and procedures, reflect and incorporate equality objectives and targets.
- Setting challenging quality objectives and targets in relation to employment, service delivery and the carrying out of our functions.
- Tackling all forms of bullying, harassment and intimidation.
- Making equalities the responsibility of every employee of the company.
- Use the “Social Model of Disability” as the basis of our work to promote equality of opportunity for and to tackle discrimination against disabled people. Continue to maintain links with Disability awareness.
- Offer a range of ways for students to obtain our services and information.

5.2. Recruitment, Selection and Promotion

All potential employees will be given equal opportunities through the recruitment and selections processes. This will be attained by:

- Advertising vacancies sufficiently to reach the widest possible range of applicants, both internal and/or external and ensuring that all recruitment material does not imply any preferred group, unless a genuine occupational qualification exists limiting a post to a particular group.
- Advice will be sought to ensure that job titles, personal specifications and job descriptions that may include ‘essential’ and ‘desirable’ requirements that are necessary and justifiable, are not discriminatory.
- Giving potential employees the opportunity to complete paper based or computerised application forms. We will also endeavour to provide, on request, application forms in different languages, on different coloured papers or in different size or coloured fonts.
- Ensuring that applicants with a criminal record are treated according to their merits and to any special criteria of the post (unless the offence excludes them from working with the client base). Safer recruitment policy adhered to.
- Ensuring that all application forms that are received for short listing will have personal information such as date of birth and sex removed to ensure that the short listing panel or

person will not select candidates on the basis of the gender, name, possible disability or age of the applicant.

- Being committed to ensuring interview people do not ask discriminatory questions unrelated to the requirements of the job, e.g. race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities.
- Endeavouring to recruit a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of our client base.

5.3. Training

Our employees are required to comply with and support our policies in relation to equality. Failure to do so may result in action being taken against employees.

- All new employees will be encouraged to read the equality and diversity policy as part of their induction training and are made aware of how it affects their work.
- All employees will be required to attend on-going regular equality and diversity training as required to ensure their continued understanding of their rights, roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity law and the companies' policy.
- Appropriate training will be provided to enable employees to perform their jobs effectively. The training offered will take into account the needs of all people and we will not discriminate in the provision of training courses/ opportunities wherever possible.
- All employees will be supported to understand any action plans relevant to them and their responsibilities for implementing them.

5.4. Users of our services

- We will strive to ensure that they and their employers are aware of our equality and diversity policy and their responsibilities to comply as applicable with this policy.
- We will endeavour that our advertising materials conform with equality and diversity legislation and do not imply any preferred group.

5.5. Complaints and discrimination

- South West Skills Academy will not treat lightly or ignore grievances from members of disadvantaged groups on the assumption that they are over-sensitive about discrimination
- Any employee that feels that they have been subject to discrimination by the company, another employee or a user of our services will be encouraged to report the issue. Any such reports will be taken seriously and will be investigated through the complaints Procedure.
- Failure to comply with the equal opportunities and diversity policy and proven acts of direct discrimination will be handled under the companies Disciplinary Procedure
- Any complaints of discrimination raised by a learner/user of our services will be taken seriously and will be handled by the Complaints Procedure
- Any job applicant that believes they may have been treated unfairly should raise the issue with the Head of the Centre.
- Any incidents of indirect or inadvertent discrimination will be investigated by the Head of Centre, who will determine if they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Where incidents of victimisation and harassment by employees are proven, they will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment by learners or users of our services are proven, the issue will be dealt with through their employer.

5.6. Other Plans and Strategies

We will ensure that equality and diversity aims are reflected in all plans and strategies that form our infrastructure.

5.7. Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed annually
- South West Skills Academy policies will be reviewed yearly; this will include ensuring they don't contravene this policy and the equality and diversity legislation and guidance.