

# Equality and Diversity Policy

**Applies to staff, volunteers and learners**

## 1. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide diversity and equality to all persons, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, marital status and social class. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

TaylorITEX CIC recognises that it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of any of the nine "protected characteristics" in the Equality Act 2010, as of 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021. (Learners are to be treated in the same light.) The characteristics are:-

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

and that anyone who claims one of these "protected characteristics" does in fact possess that characteristic.

As a company we abide by the Equality Act 2010 which makes it unlawful for staff to discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of the protected characteristics of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, marriage or civil partnership and sexual orientation in the provision goods and services. We also recognize age although this is not covered by the act. We recognize that associative and perceptive discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

We will not discriminate against anyone because of his or her political activity or trade union activities or membership or unrelated criminal convictions. We encourage our employees to join relevant trade unions (such as Unison), but recognise that this is a personal choice, which cannot be a basis for any form of discrimination.

1.1 TaylorITEX CIC is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all people who work and study at TaylorITEX and recognises the range of legislative requirements, together with associated codes of practice.

1.2 TaylorITEX CIC will not tolerate any form of behaviour or activity that discriminates without proper justification on the grounds of disability, gender, marital status, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality, religion or belief, ethnicity, age and unrelated criminal convictions. Any person within our groups displaying discriminatory behaviour will be challenged by the person in charge who will inform one of the management team, to allow them to deal with it in a succinct and timely manner. If any person in charge of a group displays discriminatory behaviour, one of the group should inform management so the matter can be dealt with.

## **POLICY STATEMENT (Cont.)**

1.3 TaylorITEX CIC seeks to employ a workforce which reflects the diverse community at large, because we value the individual contributions of all people. We will provide a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. To this end, within the framework of the law and best personnel practice, we are committed, wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce which broadly reflects the local community. All employees, Volunteers and Work Experience people whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and equally, with respect and dignity.

1.4 No employee or job applicant (including Volunteers), should be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements which cannot be justified and TaylorITEX CIC will seek to make reasonable adjustments to its arrangements and premises with a view to avoiding any substantial disadvantages for disabled people. Action will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career management and on the termination of employment, are based solely on objective and job related criteria. All employees will be given guidance and support to develop their full potential. TaylorITEX CIC intends to utilise the talents and resources of the workforce to maximise the efficiency of the organisation. All members of staff will be informed of the Equality and Diversity Policy at their Induction. All learners will also be informed of the Policy and the content in the Lincolnshire County Council Learner Handbook at the Course Induction, the initial session (and appropriate points during the course). Partner organisations, including referral agencies will have access to this Policy, which will be displayed on the website.

1.5 TaylorITEX CIC aims to create an accessible institution and extend opportunities in education, training and employment to every section of the community, within financial constraints. All learners are invited to attend and participate in the services offered by TaylorITEX CIC.

1.6 TaylorITEX CIC will develop marketing and admissions strategies which will counteract stereotyping and prejudice. It will also seek to encourage participation from those who might suffer from discrimination through the promotion of equal access to all parts of TaylorITEX CIC. (This includes staff, volunteers and learners.)

1.7 Codes of Conduct regarding the social norms, religious rules, responsibilities and proper practices for an individual, party or organisation are clearly set out to all employees and management on induction to the company, reiterated during the Annual Review and referred to in the Employee Handbook, available in print form from the Finance Director's office or on-line on the company's internal system.

## **2. Action to Implement Policy**

TaylorITEX CIC have Equality and Diversity as an agenda item for discussion at both Staff Meetings and Director's Meetings. Minutes are taken of these meetings. Actions will be implemented and recorded subsequent to the meetings.

### **Responsibilities**

2.2 All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of the policy, which extends to the treatment of employees, volunteers and learners, and through our contractual agreements with contractors. The Executive Director of Services, Michael Taylor has overall responsibility of this policy. Breaches of our Equality and Diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and will lead to disciplinary proceedings.

## Action to Implement Policy (Cont.)

2.3 The Executive Director of Services, Michael Taylor will be responsible for ensuring that fair and adequate arrangements exist for both effectively handling and recording all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment and selection. TayloriTEx CIC abides by the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

2.4 All Managers and Directors, have a responsibility to ensure the policy is carried through effectively, by giving active support to the policy and ensuring employees under their control understand and implement the policy and their Equality Duty and the principle of proactively promoting equality. They should encourage employees to inform them of any instance of discrimination, and ensure that all allegations are investigated. The Executive Director of Services has responsibility for these activities.

2.5 Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who does not comply with these requirements.

2.6 Learners also have a right to make complaints to the Executive Director of Services if they feel that they have a grievance. All complaints will be dealt with in writing in 10 working days and the learner will be given the opportunity to meet with a member of staff to discuss their complaint. Complaints can be made in writing to the Executive Director of Services at the company address. Learners on an Adult Skills course are informed of this, Equality and Diversity Policy at the Induction or first session of their course. They are advised of how complaints can be made. This Policy is included in the Tutor pack for each individual course, enabling learners to have sight of and ask for a copy to be made available for them on request to the Director of Learning and Operations.

Any complaints regarding the Executive Director of Services, need to be reported to the Director of Learning and Operations.

2.7 Equality and Diversity is discussed within staff and Director meetings and all staff must participate in annual training as part of their CPD. This training can be taught sessions, or on-line based. The annual Staff Review Meeting will include a talk by the Executive Director of Services on Equality and Diversity to implement strategies, procedures and practices.

## 3. Training

The responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities will be positively incorporated into training at all levels. Equality and Diversity will be detailed in the course Induction and also at the initial training session, to ensure that all learners are fully aware of the Policy and how to participate and implement it.

## 4. Information

The policy will be made available to all employees including new employees. Learners will also be made aware of the Policy during the Induction process and also during the initial session of the course. Learners will also be notified of the Equality and Diversity section in the Lincolnshire County Council Learner Handbook (all learners attending an Adult Skills course are given a copy of this booklet). Partner organisations including referral agencies are informed of Policies, including this one. Policies are available on request and copies are published on the company website. A Policy folder is also maintained at Fenside Community Centre.

## 5. Recruitment

5.1. All job applicants shall receive an equal opportunities statement with the job information package. (This also applies to Volunteers), setting out Equality and Diversity and target setting to improve participation and attainment.

5.2 TaylorITEX CIC will examine and review existing procedures for recruitment, selection, promotion and training.

## 6. Vicarious Liability

6.1 All employers are initially held responsible for the discriminatory acts of their employees. If an employee undertakes an action that has a discriminatory effect, the employer would be deemed responsible, except where they have taken clear steps to ensure that such discriminatory acts do not happen.

6.2 The Equality Act 2010 places responsibility on to individuals as well as the employer. If an employee, in the course of employment, commits unlawful discrimination, both the individual and the employer are held responsible regardless of whether or not the employer knew or approved of the action. However if it can be proved that all reasonable, practicable action was taken by the employer to prevent the employee from discriminating then this may act as a defence. Further details can be found within the Equality Act 2010.

## 7. Monitoring

7.1 The effectiveness of the employment policies and practices of TaylorITEX CIC will be monitored by quantitative and qualitative analysis. In particular, records of the sex, marital status, age, nationality, ethnic origin and disablement of employees and job applicants, should be kept. Any monitoring will be in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

7.2 Information will be gathered from a variety of sources, which will include: Learner reviews, client and staff questionnaires, feedback from external agencies and partners, analysis of complaints and grievances and their outcomes, annual policy review, and quality audits. The information gathered is reviewed on a regular (monthly) basis, and used to generate reports to be discussed in relevant meetings eg staff meetings and appraisals. Also used to provide quantitative information as part of the Self Assessment Report. Actions taken to improve or update are recorded. Targets are set for Adult Skills courses which are evaluated and discussed in the monthly meetings with the Lincolnshire County Council representative.

7.3 If the monitoring process indicates possible areas where discrimination, harassment, victimisation may be occurring, appropriate action will be taken. This will be recorded and monitored with further assessment carried out at a later date to ensure that the action continues to be adhered to.

7.4 If under representation of certain groups occurs, then in the first instance an investigation will be taken to identify the causes. If necessary positive action such as training employees and managers, encouraging applications, or introducing more flexible working practices may be considered.

## 7. Monitoring (Cont.)

7.5 The operation of this policy will be reviewed annually by the Equality and Diversity Working Group to ensure that it is working properly. This policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970 (Equal Value Amendment 1984)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act (Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999)
- Race Relations Act 1976 as amended 2000 and 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended 2005
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2010

7.7 Wherever TaylorITEX CIC is stated this also includes any partner organisations and other entities associated with the Directors of the Company and all policies are also disseminated to them.



Signed:

Name of Signatory: Julie Ann Mitchell

Date: 27 July 2023

**End**