**Equality & Diversity Policy**

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**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy demonstrates how Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us celebrates and values the diversity of its learners and employees and is committed to equality of opportunity for all. This policy intends to provide general guidance and advice to team members, learners, managers and employers.

We want to ensure that people with diverse characteristics and backgrounds consider Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us to be a learning provider and employer of choice. We want everyone that works or learns with Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us to reach their full potential; in an environment which is respectful and that accepts individual difference.

At Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us, we celebrate, and value diversity and we are committed to advancing equality of opportunity, regardless of age, disability, gender or gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or social background and family responsibilities. This includes people from socially disadvantaged families as well as from deprived or remote geographical areas.

In particular, Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us strives to:

* Encourage the participation of learners of all abilities
* Provide a safe and welcoming physical and learning environment
* Develop its facilities and courses to improve access and widen participation
* Offer support to meet individual learner and employee needs
* Ensure its recruitment process are fair and transparent
* Ensure that Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us is an environment that is free from discrimination, bullying or harassment

This policy should be viewed in the context of the Equality Act 2010 and the extent of protection it provides.

**2. PRINCIPLES**

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us celebrates and values the diversity of its learners and team members and is committed to equality of opportunity for all. Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us resolves to eliminate discrimination or other unfair treatment against any of its team members, potential team members, learners or users.

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us wishes to be recognised as an organisation which provides excellent employment and educational opportunities. We are committed to complying with the relevant legislation and where possible will endeavour to exceed this creating a culture of inclusivity where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us does not tolerate any prejudicial behaviour by any member of Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us.

Our commitment:

Marketing and Access to Learning

* Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us publicity and learner recruitment procedures will be designed to encourage applications from all sections of the community and from all levels of ability and will be available in a range of formats.
* Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will ensure that admission procedures are user friendly and avoid unnecessary barriers to access for intending learners.
* Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will continue to identify and respond to learning needs within the community and will encourage widening participation from underrepresented, disadvantaged or excluded groups.
* Make clear our expectations and commitments to equality and diversity in our marketing materials and events, during the learner admissions process and again during induction.
* Equal opportunities data will be collected, analysed and used to inform the planning and decision-making process of our Marketing.

The Learning Environment

* Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us is committed to the development of learning environments that are welcoming and safe for all learners.
* Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will continue to develop its facilities to improve access for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities.
* Through a multi-agency approach, Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will meet the targets surrounding the Every Child Matters Strategy:
	+ Be healthy
	+ Stay safe
	+ Enjoy and achieve
	+ Make a positive contribution and
	+ Achieve economic well-being
	+ Teaching, Learning and Assessment
* Staff will ensure that teaching and learning materials and delivery methods are free from bias, avoid stereotyping and discrimination.
* Staff will encourage learners to explore equality and diversity issues.
* Awareness raising of equality and diversity issues will be part of the general induction and tutorial programme for learners.
* Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will ensure that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate additional support to meet individual learner needs to reach their potential.
* Provide a range of support services and facilities which will enable learners with particular physical, social and cultural needs to participate fully in studies, including:
	+ tutorial support
	+ additional support with learning
	+ financial and welfare advice
	+ personal counselling
	+ social/recreational/catering facilities
	+ multi faith rooms
* Staff will regularly review course design and delivery to meet the various learning needs to improve access to learning.
* Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will ensure that the views and perceptions of learners are included in the process of curriculum review and self-assessment and also curriculum development.
* Resources are available in formats appropriate to the needs of individual learners, including the use of specialist equipment where appropriate.

Recruitment, Training and Development

* Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will treat all team members with respect and dignity and seek to provide a working environment free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation. Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against its team members, either from other team members, learners or members of the public.
* Individual training and development needs will be identified through the Appraisal process.
* Work towards the achievement of a workforce that is representative of the diversity of the communities from which we recruit and the learner population.
* Ensure progression opportunities are available to all team members
* Ensure all policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity and are not unlawfully discriminatory in their operation.
* Applicants are not treated less favourably because of disability, age, gender (sex), race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will abide by its current statutory duties for learners and team members, in line with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and resulting duty to:

* Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation (harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act).
* Advance equality of opportunity (between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it) and
* Foster good relations between different groups (between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it).

**3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

This is an overarching policy on equality and diversity that applies across all areas of Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us, including employment, teaching and learning, procurement and marketing and admissions. This policy should not be read in isolation but cross referenced with all associated policies, procedures and practices, as listed above.

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will operate within the legislative framework of the Equality Act 2010. This policy applies to all team members, temporary staff from employment agencies, contractors, visitors, employers and learners. The procedures set out in this policy are intended for implementation across all Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us sites. Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us views discrimination against any learner or team member on any grounds as a serious disciplinary offence.

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will not tolerate any forms of discrimination based upon:

* Direct discrimination
* Indirect discrimination
* Associative discrimination
* Perceptive discrimination
* Harassment
* Victimisation
* Third party harassment

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment on the grounds of: Age, disability, gender; gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership or socio –economic status.

Breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and will therefore be subject to the learner and team member Disciplinary policies.

**4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

This policy applies to all team members, including agency staff, learners, employers, work placement providers, visitors, and contractors working on site and sub-contractors.

Board of Directors

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director and Board of Directors to ensure that Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us meets its legislative responsibilities in respect of equality and diversity and for receiving and responding to monitoring information.

Senior Management Team

They are responsible for ensuring that team members and learners are familiar with their roles and responsibilities and the content of this policy. It is committed to providing support and equality and diversity training to promote a positive and inclusive culture for learning and for work. The Team is responsible for monitoring the profile of the learner and team member profiles by age, gender, race and disability.

They are responsible for ensuring that the recruitment and selection policy does not discriminate in any way and that job advertisements are fully inclusive. This will include advertising through recognised minority group’s publications. Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are open, consistently applied and free from bias, stereotyping and discrimination. Additionally, Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will endeavour to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to arrangements and premises to ensure both current and potential team members with a disability have equality of access.

Team Members and Learners

All team members and learners are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy, and for their own conduct. All team members should challenge discriminatory behaviour by learners, placement providers, outside contractors and other team members. It is the duty of all team members and learners to avoid unfair discriminatory practices.

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us is committed to the general health and wellbeing of its learners and team members, and encourages them to develop positive relationships, to respect others and to celebrate diversity. Bullying or discrimination or any other form of discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated. Safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure that learners have a safe and secure environment.

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment according to the policies listed in this document.

**5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

New team members are made aware of the policy and procedure during the formal induction process. Updated and amended procedures are disseminated and reinforced in training sessions and team meetings. Team members and learners have access to this policy on Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us’ website. A copy of this policy will be available to all learners at induction and on request.

**6. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Equality and Diversity Policy is subject to regular review. The policy and the implementation arrangements which underpin it will be formally reviewed on an annual basis. This review will take into account the views of team members, learners and relevant legislation.

Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us monitors the profile of its learners and team members by age, gender, disability and ethnicity. Monitoring for learners is undertaken by the Head of Central Services, for team members, by the Managing Director. Data collected for monitoring purposes will be reported annually to the Board of Directors. The presentation of such information shall observe Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us’s legal and contractual responsibilities in respect of individual confidentiality particularly in regard of sensitive data and will not unnecessarily identify individuals.

Learner enrolment, retention, and achievement, learner survey and complaints are annually monitored by ethnic group, gender, age and disability and the findings are used to inform the Self-Assessment Reviews. Learners’ views are identified by means of satisfaction surveys, learner representatives and the equality and diversity groups.

Complaints made to Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us on grounds associated with equality and diversity are actioned and analysed to establish any trends.

The following systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the equality and diversity impact of Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us policies;

* Annual SAR;
* Learner survey and focus groups;
* Equality analysis;

**7. DEFINITIONS**

Protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful.

Direct Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have.

Associative Discrimination already applies to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This is now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. It occurs when you treat people less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity).

Perceptive Discrimination already applies to age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This is now extended to cover disability, gender reassignment and sex. It means direct discrimination occurs against an individual because others think they have a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person doesn’t actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination already applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership. This is now extended to cover disability and gender reassignment.

Indirect discrimination can occur when Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us has a condition, criteria rule, or policy that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. It doesn’t matter if it was unintentional, it matters if your action disadvantages a person compared with a person who does not share that characteristic.

Harassment is 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’. Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Team members will be able to complain of behaviour they find offensive – even if it is not directed at them. Team members do not need to possess the relevant characteristic themselves and are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

Third Party Harassment applies to sex, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Equality Act makes Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us potentially liable for harassment of team members and learners by people (third parties) such as clients or customer and contractors of the employer/provider.

For an employer to be liable:

* the harassment must have occurred on at least two previous occasions (although not necessarily by the same harasser or suffering the same type of harassment);
* it must be aware that the previous harassment has taken place; and
* it must have failed to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment from happening again.

Victimisation occurs when a team member is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so. If you treat a person less favourable, because of this then this will be classed as unlawful victimisation.

A ‘protected act’ is:

* Making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Equality Act).
* Helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information.
* Making an allegation that you or someone else has breached the Act.
* Doing anything else in connection with the Act.

(Source: The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 2012)

**8. SUPPORTING/RELATED INFORMATION**

Complaints

All complaints relating to harassment and bullying will be dealt with using the Harassment Policy and Procedure and for learners, the Learner Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure.

If you have any concerns you can email the confidential email address equality@learnplusus.co.uk

Further useful sources of information are listed below:

[www.ucu.org.uk](http://www.ucu.org.uk)

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

[www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk)

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Please contact equality@learnplusus.co.uk if you would like this policy to be made available in an alternative format