

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Signed:



Printed Name:

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Job Title:

Managing Director

Date:

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy demonstrates how Simply One Stop Ltd t/a Learn Plus Us (LPU) 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 LPU to be a learning provider and employer of choice. We want everyone that works or learns with us to reach their full potential; in an environment which is respectful and that accepts individual difference.

At LPU, 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, we strive to:

- Encourage the participation of learners and Apprentices of all abilities.
- Provide a safe and welcoming physical and learning environment.
- Develop facilities and courses to improve access and widen participation.
- Offer support to meet individual learner and employee needs.
- Ensure recruitment processes for employees, Apprentices and learners are fair and transparent.
- Ensure that colleagues, Apprentices and learners find LPU to be 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

At Learn Plus Us we celebrate and value the diversity of its Apprentices, learners and team members and we're committed to equality of opportunity for all. We resolve to eliminate discrimination or other unfair treatment against any of its team members, potential team members, Apprentices and learners.

Learn Plus Us is 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. We do not tolerate any prejudicial behaviour by any colleague; employee or freelancer.

Our commitment:

### Marketing and Access to Learning

Our publicity and learner recruitment procedures are 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.

We will ensure that admission procedures are user friendly and avoid unnecessary barriers to access for intending learners.

We will continue to identify and respond to learning needs within the communities in which we work and will encourage widening participation from underrepresented, disadvantaged or excluded groups.

We make clear our expectations and commitments to EDI in our marketing materials and events, during the Apprentice and learner on-boarding process and again during induction. This is further embedded throughout our Apprenticeship and other learning programme delivery.

Equal opportunities data will be collected, analysed and used to inform the planning and decision-making process of our marketing.

### The Learning Environment

We are committed to the development of learning environments that are welcoming and safe for all learners.

We will continue to develop its facilities to improve access for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities.

Through a multi-agency approach, we meet the targets surrounding the 'Every Child Matters Strategy':

- Be healthy.
- Stay safe.
- Enjoy and achieve.
- Make a positive contribution.
- Achieve economic well-being.

### Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Staff ensure that teaching and learning materials and delivery methods are free from bias, avoid stereotyping and discrimination.

Staff encourage learners to explore equality and diversity issues.

Awareness raising of EDI, with real examples forms part of the part of the general induction and is embedded as a golden thread within our curriculum.

We 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.

We ensure that the views and perceptions of learners are included in the process of curriculum review and self-assessment and 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 (CPD)

LPU treat all team members with respect and dignity and seek to provide a working environment free from harassment, discrimination, and victimisation. We 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 are identified through the appraisal process. Our CPD Policy identifies EDI as a topic for annual refresh and update, this happens using a range of methods that are suitable for each role in the organisation.

We are working towards the achievement of a workforce that is representative of the diversity of the communities from which we recruit and our Apprentice / learner population.

We 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)
- 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, diversity and inclusion that applies across all areas of business, 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 (section 8), procedures, and practices. EDI is the golden thread that runs through the business and is an integral part of our strategic intent.

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

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

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 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 Learn Plus Us meets its legislative responsibilities in respect of EDI and for receiving and responding to monitoring information. The Board sets an example in the promotion and engagement with this policy and principle of EDI.

### Senior Management Team (SMT)

The SMT is responsible for ensuring that team members, Apprentices and learners are familiar with their roles and responsibilities and the content of this policy and understand their legal obligations. The SMT 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 Apprentices, learners 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. We ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are open, consistently applied, and free from bias, stereotyping and discrimination. Additionally, we 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. Additionally, if required, we will provide Apprentices and learners with additional learning support, by accessing funding from the ESFA and allocating protected time with our Learning Support Specialist.

The SMT are charged with bringing this policy to life and using a range of communication and training techniques to ensure that there is full engagement across the business.

### 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.

We are committed to the general health and wellbeing of our Apprentices, 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 Apprentices and learners have a safe and secure environment.

We 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 our website, additionally colleagues can access it from our internal HR Breath system. A copy of this policy will be available to all learners at induction and on request.

All colleagues, including Board members will complete annual update training, which is recorded on CPD logs.

## 6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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.

We monitor the profile of our Apprentices, learners and team members by age, gender, disability and ethnicity. Monitoring for Apprentices and learners is undertaken by the Contracts and MIS Manager, for team members, by the HR Administrator. Data collected for monitoring purposes will be reported annually to the Board of Directors. The presentation of such information shall observe our 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 Learn Plus Us on grounds associated with equality and diversity are considered a high priority and actioned as quickly as possible and analysed to establish any trends.

The following systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the equality and diversity impact Learn Plus Us policies:

- Annual SAR.
- Learner survey and focus groups.
- Equality analysis.

## 7. DEFINITIONS

The nine ***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*** 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*** 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*** 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 a business 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 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
- 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)

#### Definition of the nine protected characteristics

##### **i. Age**

- A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year olds).
- A range of ages (for example 18 to 30-year olds).

##### **ii. Disability**

- A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

##### **iii. Gender reassignment**

- The process of transitioning from one gender to another

##### **iv. Marriage and civil partnership**

- Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple.



- Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'; civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
- v. Pregnancy and maternity**
- Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby.
  - Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context.
  - In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
- vi. Race**
- Refers to the protected characteristic of race.
  - It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- vii. Religion or belief**
- Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion.
  - Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.
  - Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- viii. Sex**
- A man or a woman.
- ix. Sexual orientation**
- Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and other sexual identities) is an "inclusive" way to represent all the different identities in the longer acronym.

Source: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

## 8. SUPPORTING/RELATED INFORMATION

All external complaints relating to any aspect of equality will be dealt with as a priority in line with our published **Complaints Policy**.

If you wish to make a complaint relating to any aspect of EDI, please use the following email address and give an overview of the complaint so that we can allocate the most appropriate person to contact you and investigate further: [complaints@learnplusus.co.uk](mailto:complaints@learnplusus.co.uk)

All staff grievances relating to any aspect of equality will be dealt with as a priority, following our **Grievance Procedure**. Staff are encouraged to address any concerns with their manager or another manager prior to raising a grievance, as this is often the most effective way to resolve a problem.

We will use of **Disciplinary Policy** with any employee that has conducted themselves in a manner that is contrary to this policy. All such occurrence may lead to a disciplinary sanction and could result in termination of contract.

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

[Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

Please contact [info@learnplusus.co.uk](mailto:info@learnplusus.co.uk) if you would like this policy to be made available in an alternative format.

Linked policies:

CPD Policy

Disciplinary Policy

Grievance Procedure

Safeguarding & Prevent Policy

Whistle Blowing Policy

Complaints Policy