

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

It is The Portland Training Company Limited “Portland Training” policy to provide equality and fairness for all. In practice this means that we will make every effort to ensure that there is no harassment or discrimination on the grounds of the Protected Characteristics as defined in The Equality Act 2010. The Protected Characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment (This includes those proposing to undergo, undergoing, or who have undergone a transition process. Protection against discrimination on the basis of gender identity is also provided.)
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity Leave
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Our employees and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes. The Company shall, always, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity apply equally to the treatment of visitors, clients, learners and suppliers by members of our workforce and also, in some circumstances, ex-employees.

Portland Training complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the general duty to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation 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.

Portland Training is also legally required to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of its employees and learners in the course of their employment or engagement. This proactive duty is a core part of our commitment to eliminate harassment.

The Company is committed to a policy of Equality and Diversity which respects the identity rights and values of everyone and opposes all direct and indirect discrimination within the organisation. We believe everyone is entitled to a working and learning environment which promotes dignity and respect.

The following information deals with the specific categories of employees' areas of work which we have identified as potentially giving rise to equal and diversity issues and provides more specific guidance on the parameters of our policy and approach to Equality and Diversity.

Objectives

- To ensure potential and current staff, learners and visitors will experience a safe environment and do not experience discrimination.
- To create a positive and inclusive work and learning environment for all staff and learners where everybody feels valued and respected.
- To raise awareness of discrimination and ensure that all learners, staff and stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities under the current equality legislation.
- To remove barriers, enabling all learners to achieve their full potential.
- To eliminate all forms of discrimination, bullying, harassment or other oppressive behaviour. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- To enhance equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences.
- To deliver equality and diversity and inclusion throughout organisational policies, procedures and practice and develop an ethos which respects and values all people.
- To challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity and encourage other organisations and individuals to do the same to actively promote equality of opportunity.
- To create a culture that respects and values an individual's differences and recognises that difference/diversity is an asset to our organisation both to its work and the people it serves.
- Take positive action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by stereotyping and cultural expectations and to prepare learners for life in a diverse society.
- To ensure all employees, volunteers, learners, employers and collaborative partners are aware and encouraged to support the objectives of this policy.
- Promote diversity and good relations amongst people within the organisation's community and the wider communities within which we work.
- Monitor the implementation, set targets for improvement and evaluate the impact of equality and diversity action.

Standards and Good Practice

Equality of opportunity is crucial to good practice in any organisation and fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right.

This policy is therefore underpinned by the following values, principles and standards:

- Active challenge to stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes and unfair discriminatory behaviour.
- Commitment to promote fundamental British Values by developing learners understanding and appreciation of diversity; celebrating what we have in common; and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.
- Commitment to inclusive education and training which enables and supports all learners to develop their full potential.
- Commitment to the positive development of all staff.
- Accountability for compliance with this policy by all employees and others engaged in Company business or activities.

Discrimination

Discrimination, victimisation, and harassment are prohibited. This includes:

Direct Discrimination: Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination: Applying a rule or policy that puts people with a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage.

Discrimination by Association: Treating someone less favourably because of their connection to someone who has a protected characteristic (e.g., a carer).

Discrimination by Perception: Treating someone less favourably because they are mistakenly believed to have a protected characteristic.

Discrimination whether direct or indirect may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage for a reason related to one or more of the grounds set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not “fit in” on the grounds of their race could be direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women and men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, it would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex.

Discrimination also includes victimisation (less favourable treatment because of action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in that regard) and harassment.

Recruitment and Selection

The Company aims to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed above. Recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and that sufficiently diverse sector of the community is reached. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

The Company shall take steps to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches a wide labour market and, where relevant groups under-represented in the Company. Where appropriate, use may be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably qualified people to cater for the special needs of particular groups. Vacancy advertisements shall include an appropriate short statement on our equal opportunities policy.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively with respect to recruitment and selection and the other areas identified above, and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented in employment, the Company monitor applicants' racial origins, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. We also maintain records of this data solely for the purposes stated in this policy. On-going monitoring and regular analysis of the data provide the basis for taking appropriate steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and implement this policy.

Responsibilities

All Portland Training staff and learners have a responsibility to ensure they do not ignore, trivialise or condone discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying by others of any kind and to ensure that their own conduct conforms to the expected standards and reflects this policy.

The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring:

The Company implements and follows its Equality and Diversity policies and codes of practice and meets its legal responsibilities.

Senior Management are responsible for ensuring:

- A consistent and high-profile lead on Equality and Diversity.

- Promotion of Equality and Diversity inside and outside the training organisation.
- Policies and procedures are in place to comply with all applicable legislation.
- The Company implements its Equality and Diversity policies and codes of practice.
- Quality audits are carried out in all areas of Equality and Diversity.
- That any gaps in achievement are monitored and strategies are put in place to reduce them.
- There is baseline data on admission used to ensure learner progression and for staff recruitment and career progression.
- That all staff and learners know their responsibilities and receive the necessary support and training.
- Relevant procedures and actions are followed in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Employees and Volunteers are responsible for:

- All members of staff are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives.
- Co-operating with the Company to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination.
- Promoting Equality and Diversity and avoiding unfair discrimination.
- Ensuring the curriculum and all learning materials are non-discriminatory and accessible for all.
- Reviewing the policy on an annual basis and communicating any updates.
- Challenging, reporting and analysing any incidents of discrimination, bullying or harassment.
- Keeping up to date with Equality and Diversity Legislation and participating in regular Equality and Diversity training.

Employees should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination.

Learners are responsible for:

- Participating in Equality and Diversity training.
- Respecting others in their language and actions.
- Having an input into policy amendments.
- Reporting instances of unfair discrimination, bullying or harassment.
- Implementing the Company's Equality and Diversity policies and codes of practice.

Employers are responsible for:

- Following Portland Training fair recruitment guidelines for the appointment of apprentices.
- Adhering to the Company's Equality and Diversity policies and codes of practice.
- Treating apprenticeship learners with respect.
- Providing a workplace free from discrimination.
- Reporting any instances of discrimination which occur in the workplace in relation to the apprentice to the designated safeguarding officer.

All Portland Training staff members are responsible for understanding, disseminating and adhering to this policy.

Information Gathering

Information will be gathered from a variety of sources, which will include:

- Learner reviews.
- Learner and staff questionnaires.
- Learner and employer surveys.
- Feedback from external agencies and partners.
- Analysis of complaints and grievances and their outcomes.
- Annual policy review.
- Quality audits.
- Management information data produced on the admission and achievement/progression of learners (to monitor and minimise achievement gaps between groups).

Training and Development

- All staff will have access to the same training and development regardless of their working arrangement.
- All new employees will receive a thorough induction programme that will cover their responsibilities as employees, the company's responsibilities and commitment to them in terms of their employment, training and development, Equality and Diversity and Health and Safety.
- Will provide high quality training and development opportunities to support employees to develop and progress in their roles. All training content and materials will be free from discriminatory assumptions and language.
- We will provide regular performance management reviews and appraisals where employees are encouraged to provide feedback and discuss any identified training needs.

Promoting Equality and Prevention

The Portland Training Company Ltd commit to protecting employees and learners from harassment by third parties (including clients, service users, and suppliers). Any such incident will be taken seriously, investigated, and addressed using appropriate disciplinary or contractual measures.

We recognise the statutory Day One Right to Request Flexible Working for all employees. We will handle all requests reasonably and promptly, in line with statutory requirements and our Flexible Working Policy, as this supports individuals with diverse needs and promotes equality.

Monitoring

- Statistical information is collated and passed to Management in order to ensure adherence to this policy and to identify and improvements that are required with regards Equality and Diversity.
- Equality and Diversity is an agenda item at all Management and Team meetings.
- A record of all incidents and complaints is maintained by all line managers and HR. Actions will be taken as appropriate.
- Portland Training will review this policy annually and ensure any updates are communicated to staff and learners.

Disclosure Procedure

Every employee, volunteer, learner and employer has a duty to report instances regarding the unfair or negative treatment and acts of discrimination, either direct or indirect, by any other individual either to themselves or to others. This can be achieved informally by speaking with, or writing to, the Designated Person or a Support Team Member or the Managing Director. If, having raised a complaint, you feel that it has not been adequately resolved you can formalise your complaint by following the Grievance Procedure.

Disciplinary Action

Action under the Company's disciplinary procedure will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of the equal opportunities policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

Portland Training's Designated Equality and Diversity Officer is:

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Relating Policies

Dignity at Work Policy
Safer Recruitment Policy
Learner Handbook
Employee Handbook and Grievance procedure
IAG Policy
Whistleblowing (within Safeguarding policy)