



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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Introduction

Liberty College is committed to encouraging diversity and reducing discrimination in both its role as an employer and as a provider of services. Liberty College aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential. Liberty College accepts the spirit and intention of the various legislation, regulations and codes of practice which separately and collectively outlaw certain kinds of discrimination in selection, recruitment, induction, programme delivery and assessment.

Liberty College aims to ensure that learners are truly representative of all sections of society and that every learner feels respected and able to give their best.

Liberty College undertakes to ensure equality of treatment for all and aims to:

- ensure no learner is discriminated against or receives less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic
- ensure awareness is raised around issues of diversity, and
- acknowledge any issues of discrimination, harassment or victimisation that are brought to the attention of management ensuring they are investigated and rectified promptly and sensitively using an appropriate procedure.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy Liberty College has adopted the following definitions:

- a. Diversity means recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to make the way we work and learn more creative, efficient and innovative
- b. Direct discrimination is treating a person less favourably than others due to a protected characteristic
- c. Indirect discrimination is the applying of a requirement or condition, which, although applied equally to everyone, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of a particular group can comply with it and it cannot be justified
- d. Harassment is the violation of a learners' dignity, or, the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment relating to a protected characteristic
- e. Victimisation arises where someone is treated badly because they have made a complaint or helped someone else make a complaint by giving evidence.

Liberty College will take steps to address identified inequalities or barriers that may arise and challenge discrimination in respect to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy
- Marriage/Civil partnership

Roles & Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this policy.

Liberty College has a responsibility to:

- Adhere to the Equality Act (2010)
- Not discriminate, harass or victimise a learner in relation to the withdrawal of a qualification
- Ensure that there is an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all learners are recognised and valued
- Ensure that every learner can learn in an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all and to ensure that no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
- Ensure that practices and procedures are reviewed and amended to ensure fairness
- Ensure that equality is promoted in the learning environment
- Ensure that any breaches to this policy and procedure are dealt with appropriately
- Provide advice and guidance to staff and learners to ensure that equality of opportunity is demonstrated
- Check that policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they promote equality of opportunity for all
- Consult with relevant learners and/or their representatives to ensure that there are no barriers to entry to the units and qualifications offered, other than those directly related to the integrity of units or qualifications
- Oversee the fair and consistent application of this policy and procedure
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and determine the nature of any corrective action

Reasonable Adjustments

There is a duty to make reasonable adjustments which can apply to all the protected characteristics. There are three requirements in relation to reasonable adjustments that Liberty College is required to follow:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid a substantial disadvantage to, for example, a disabled person (in comparison to someone who is not disabled) arising from a provision, criteria or practice
- Take reasonable steps to avoid a substantial disadvantage to, for example, a disabled person (in comparison to someone who is not disabled) arising from a physical feature
- Provide an auxiliary aid to avoid a substantial disadvantage to, for example, a disabled person (in comparison to someone who is not disabled).

Principles

- We encourage learners to develop respect for themselves and for others
- We deliver services that recognise and build on the strengths of learners from all cultures, religions, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability and backgrounds; in ways that meet their needs and help them to achieve their full potential.
- Every effort is made to ensure that the learning environment is welcoming to all learners and others significant in their care and wellbeing. In addition to this, resources used to develop work with learners are chosen for their suitability and anti-oppressive nature.
- Learners are offered opportunities to try out new experiences, which are not restricted by traditional gender options.
- Staff are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory, in a positive way.

- Managers are expected to monitor the range of learners accessing Liberty College's services in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability. This is to ensure the service provision is reaching all and not creating barriers to certain groups.
- All learners are given the opportunity to be cared for and educated. Where possible this is alongside their peers in order to develop their full potential.
- Learners are encouraged and supported to understand their rights and be well-informed about ways of challenging discrimination.
- Learners are supported by staff who have been suitably trained in all aspects of equality and diversity including legislation and their responsibilities.
- Managers ensure that assessments of the learner specific needs is carried out with an aim to support and develop their full potential.
- Staff are expected to examine ways in which diversity can be valued and activities adapted to meet the individual learner's needs including food preparation and menu choices.
- Staff are expected to offer appropriate support to aid inclusion and ensure that the learners can fully participate in activities.
- Additional support is offered to staff and/or learners who are finding difficulty in understanding diverse or complex situations.

Learners

Need to ensure that they accept personal responsibility for the application of Liberty College's diversity policy. They are also responsible for bringing to the attention of the teaching staff any examples of discrimination of which they become aware.

Staff

Need to ensure that good practice in the area of equality of opportunity is applied within their area of control; and that all their learners are aware of Liberty College's policy in this area.

Procedure

- a. Learners who are aware of discrimination of any kind, or consider that they are being discriminated against, should in the first instance consider whether it may be appropriate to raise the issue informally with the alleged discriminator, who may not be aware that their behaviour is causing offence
- b. Where it is not appropriate for an approach to be made to the alleged discriminator, or the learner is unwilling to do this, they should consider to whom they should highlight their issue. In most cases it is envisaged this would be their tutor. Where their tutor is implicated in their concerns, they should approach their tutor's line manager or the Head of College
- c. The manager with whom the matter is raised should either investigate the concerns raised or refer the matter, wherever possible with the agreement of the employee concerned, to a more appropriate manager. Whenever allegations of discrimination are made the manager must be a Director
- d. Once the matter has been investigated the learner who has alleged discrimination should be informed of the action taken and, where appropriate, the outcome. It may not be appropriate to give details of any disciplinary sanctions applied
- e. Where learners are not happy about the action taken, they should appeal, within seven working days, to the Head of College, who should appoint an appropriate senior manager to review their concerns.