Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy for Customers

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Protected

Policy Author/Lead + Job Title	Karenza Morgan: Safeguarding Lead
Company Lead (if different to above)	Daphne Saxelby: Associate Director of Excellence
Priority Level **Red** - within 1 year; **Amber** – within 2 years. **Green** - within 3 years	**Amber**
Review date	**Review date: September 2024**
Whom applicable to	All Futures learners, apprentices, and customers.

Approval of policy (including revisions if required)

Name	Position	Policy Version No.	Date
Daphne Saxelby	Associate Director of Excellence	V1	01/09/2022

Revision History and distribution

Policy Version No.	Date (revision/ distribution)	Summary of changes	Updated by (initials)
Karenza Morgan	25/08/2022	V1 new customer policy separated out of company staff policy	KM

All policies are located in the policy section of the intranet.

1. Policy Context/Statement

1.1. **For information:** The Futures Group – which we will refer to as 'Futures' in this policy – is made up of a number of related brands and businesses: Futures for You, Futures for Business and Futures Employment Solutions. To keep things simple throughout this document, 'we' and 'us' means the Group and its brands.

1.2. Futures is committed to supporting, developing, and promoting Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) in all of its practices and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based on the values of fairness, dignity and respect as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and 2012 and Public Sector Equality Duty April 2011.

1.3. We will strive to ensure our workforce and learner cohort is diverse and as far as possible reflects the communities served in terms of background, language, age, location, or culture and for each learner to feel respected and able to give their best.

1.4. Futures will ensure that all customers (i.e., young people, adults, learners, schools, and employers), subcontractors, stakeholders, employees, volunteers, and apprentices understand that they are entitled to be treated fairly and equally and will take stringent steps to ensure this is adhered to.

2. Overall Aims and Objectives

2.1 Provide equality, fairness, and respect for all in our learners, and customers, whether temporary, part-time, or full-time.

2.2 Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability (physical or mental impairment), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

2.3 Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination.

2.4 We will continue to take positive action to address any under representation in the customer or learner profile, and to tackle any gaps in the success, retention, or achievement rates for any equality group. We will also work to eliminate any barriers that might inhibit the success or progression of any groups of customer or learners.

2.5 Understand our customer and learner profile to deliver services which reflect the specific needs of all our customers and learners to promote equality and inclusiveness.

2.6 We will achieve our aims by:

a) Consulting customers, learners, apprentices, and stakeholders about how our services and practices could be improved.

b) Creating an environment which individual differences and contributions of all customers and learners are recognised and valued.

c) Promoting Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, which Futures believes, is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

d) Creating a learning environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for learners' apprentices, customers, stakeholders, and visitors.

e) Encouraging anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so corrective measures can be applied.

f) Review practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law**.** Any identified discriminatory elements will be removed.

g) Ensure that disabled learners, customers, and apprentices are not just 'included' but actively supported and promoted to fulfill their aspirations.

h) All participants in the educational process will be made aware that they have a legal and moral responsibility to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people from different backgrounds and communities, and between different equality groups.

i) Exemplify British Values in everything we do i.e. democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

j) Identify priorities, set equality objectives, and regularly review impact – our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Impact Plan.

k) Meet specific Equality, Diversity & Inclusion contract requirements. Where required, take action from external Equality, Diversity & Inclusion compliance audits

3. Definitions

3.1 Customers - Young people, adults, learners, schools, and employers' subcontractors, stakeholders, volunteers, and apprentices.

3.2 Equal opportunities is a principle that emphasises that opportunities in employment, education and other areas are available to all. Equality means treating everyone with equal dignity and worth regardless of particular characteristics.

3.3 Diversity – everyone is different, and diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing the differences we each bring to work.

3.4 Inclusion is where people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters, and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances.

3.5 A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

3.6 Direct discrimination: this is treating someone less favourably (or, in the case of pregnancy and maternity, unfavourably) because of a protected characteristic. It also includes less favourable treatment because someone is associated with another person who has a protected

characteristic.

3.7 Indirect discrimination: this is treating a group of people in the same way, but in a way which adversely affects those with a protected characteristic.

3.8 Victimisation: this is treating someone less favourably because they have alleged discrimination or asserted their right not to be discriminated against because of a protected characteristic.

3.9 Harassment: this is unwanted conduct, related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone or violating their dignity. Harassment may also be of a sexual nature. It may also occur where someone harasses the victim, the victim either rejects or submits to the harassment and, because of that rejection or submission, that person then treats the victim less favourably

4. Roles, Responsibilities and Structure:

Specific responsibilities of Management

4.1 The Chief Executive Officer is ultimately accountable for ensuring that all Futures business and employment practices are compliant with Equality, Diversity & Inclusion legislation.

4.2 Through the ED&I board lead and CEO, the Executive Board has a key role in ensuring that ED&I is an integral part of Futures strategy and business planning.

4.3 Futures will monitor how well equality of opportunity is promoted, and discrimination tackled, through all its quality assurance and self-assessment processes.

4.4 Directors and Managers will:

a) Ensure that their own behaviour and those of the employees, volunteers, learners, customers, and apprentices they manage or engage with complies in full with this policy.

b) Ensure that equality and diversity is reflected in its values and vision statements, and that a high profile is given to these issues at all levels of the Futures' work.

c) Ensure that all employees, learners, volunteers, and apprentices receive the appropriate Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion CPD through specific training or embedded in learning sessions

d) Investigate all matters of alleged bullying, discrimination, victimisation, harassment, and inappropriate behaviour promptly and thoroughly.

e) Ensure that all learners, customers, volunteers, and apprentices understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment or learning, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers, learners and the public.

f) Directors and individual managers will regularly monitor the success, retention rates and attendance rates of learners, customers and apprentices from different equality groups and will take action to address any gaps.

g) Futures will constantly review its provision and support services to ensure they are designed to take into account the specific needs of all equality groups.

h) Futures will work to ensure that there is no discrimination of any kind in relation to the recruitment and admission of learners or customers to courses or apprentices to training.

i) Recruitment patterns across curriculum areas for all equality groups will be reviewed and positive action taken to address any under-representation.

j) Publicity material will, where practical, reflect the diversity of all communities, and will be free from bias.

Responsibilities of all learners, customers, and apprentices

4.5 Futures expects all learners, customers, and apprentices to act in accordance with this Policy. To include:

a) Compliance with this policy and to behave in line with our code of conduct.

b) Not bully, victimise, harass, discriminate, or intimidate other learners, customers, employees, apprentices, volunteers who have or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.

c) Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

d) Treat everyone with dignity and respect.

e) Inform their tutor, skills coach, or adviser if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

Behaviour, Attendance, and Discipline

4.6 All formal processes relating to learner, customer and apprentices' behaviour or disciplinary actions will be monitored by managers, and any over-representation or other issues will be addressed.

4.7 Staff managing these processes should be trained in equalities and diversity as part of their induction programme.

4.8 Attendance of learners, customers and apprentices on different courses will also be monitored and action will be taken to seek, understand, and address any patterns that emerge.

The Curriculum, Assessment, Learning and Teaching

4.9 It is the legal and ethical responsibility of all staff to conduct their teaching and learning activities in a non-discriminatory manner, and this is reinforced in the requirements of the Education Inspection Framework.

4.10 Staff will ensure curriculum content will help learners, apprentices and customers to recognise the rights and responsibilities of themselves and others in relation to these issues

4.11 The outcomes of any assessment processes will be regularly monitored to ensure that they do not indirectly discriminate against any particular group of learners or apprentices.

4.12 All tutors should use materials, resources and learning activities that are free from discriminatory assumptions, images and language, challenge stereotypes, are sensitive to diversity and promote equal opportunities. Futures' will take swift action if it is made aware of any inappropriate materials that are discriminatory, or work against community cohesion.

4.13 Futures will offer learning support in English and maths for all students who are identified as requiring it; support for students whose first language is not English; and appropriate additional support for any disabled students.

4.14 A range of inclusive activities will be developed, that promote the good relations between students from different backgrounds, and support community cohesion.

5. Harassment and Bullying

5.1. Futures will ensure that all learners, customers and apprentices are aware of the policies and processes for reporting harassment and bullying through induction and tutorials, and this information will be available in all major publications, and on the intranet.

5.2. Support will be provided for any learners, customers and apprentices who are victims of harassment or any other form of bullying.

5.3. All complaints of bullying and harassment will be recorded and dealt with through the Harassment and Bullying Policy where it states staff report complaints to the line manager. Learners and customers should report to tutor/coach/adviser or Safeguarding Officer.

6. Procedures: Grievance and Disciplinary

6.1. Learners, customers, volunteers and apprentices have the right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination, bullying or victimisation via Futures Complaints Procedures.

6.2. Discrimination, bullying and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences, and they will be dealt with under Futures Disciplinary Procedure.

6.3. Proven allegations against an employee will result in disciplinary action.

6.4. Particularly serious complaints against an employee could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

6.5. For learners, customers and apprentices, the possible withdrawal of service and for subcontractors/grant recipients, possible termination of contract.

7. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 Futures is fully committed to making the principle of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion a reality and ensure that it is embedded into all of our practices. We set ambitious targets that actively promote Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and tackle discrimination. To achieve this, we have in place an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Impact Plan that supports this policy. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Impact Plan will be reviewed every 6 months with the Leadership team and Board to review progress, measure impact, and implement improvements.

7.2 The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure they remain in line with legislation and contract requirements.

7.3 Futures will monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives.

Within Futures, as part of this process, we monitor:

Profile of Learners, customers and apprentices

a) Profile of learners, customers and apprentices
Applications, success and failure rates of admission to programmes
b) Retention rates
c) Achievement rates
d) Work placements including success rates, satisfaction levels and job offers
e) Disciplinary action
f) Complaints by students and their response
g) Satisfaction surveys

Profile of employees:

h) The composition of job applicants and decisions in recruitment
i) The makeup of our workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background and disability.
j) Access to training, promotion and other opportunities and benefits
k) The impact of our employment policies, including use of the disciplinary and grievance procedure
l) Dismissals and other terminations

Information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

8. List of related strategies, policies and procedures

8.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with Futures customer facing policies on Policies - Futures Group (the-futures-group.com)

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy is fully supported by the Executive Leadership Team