



Equality and Diversity Policy

Current Year: 2022

Version: 2

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Protected

Policy/ Author Lead + Job Title:	Kim Orange, Senior HR Operations Manager
Company Lead (if different to above)	Jennifer Lovett- Head of People
Priority Level: Red - within 1 year; Amber – within 2 years; Green - within 3 years	Red
Review Date:	Review date: June 2023
Whom applicable to:	All Futures employees, volunteers and apprentices, subcontractors, grant recipients and customers.

Approval of policy (including revisions if required)

Name	Position	Policy Version No.	Date
Annette Temple	Futures Policy Lead	2019.V1	3.1.19
Jane Worrall	Futures Policy Lead	2019 V2	11/6/19
Tracey Finch	Futures Policy Lead	2020, V1	9/3/20
Dominic Dhillon	Futures Policy Lead	2020, V1	22/06/21

All policies are located in the policy section of the intranet

Policy: Revision History and distribution

Policy Version No.	Date – revision/ distribution	Summary: Revisions and distribution	Updated by – initials
2019. V1			
2019 V2	11/6/19	Reviewed by Policy lead, volunteers added to policy	TF
2020, V1	9/3/20	Reviewed by policy lead for accuracy	BA
2021, V1	22/06/21	Reviewed by new policy lead for accuracy	DD
2022, v1	07/07/2022	Annual policy review	KO

1. Policy Context/Statement

- 1.1. **For information:** The Futures Group – which we'll 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 diversity and equality in all of its employment 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 is diverse and as far as possible reflects the communities served in terms of background, language, age, location or culture and for each employee 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. See the Equality and Diversity Strategy for further information on our commitment and intention.

2 Overall Aims and Objectives:

- 2.1 Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, 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. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities
- 2.4 Understand our customer profile to deliver services which reflect the specific needs of all our customers to promote equality and inclusiveness.
- 2.5 We will achieve our aims by:
 - a) Consulting employees, apprentices, volunteers, trade unions, customers and stakeholders about how our services and employment practices could be improved.
 - b) Creating an environment which individual differences and contributions of all team members are recognised and valued.
 - c) Promoting equality and diversity in the workplace, which Futures believes, is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

- d) Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for employees, apprentices, customers, stakeholders, subcontractors and visitors.
- e) Encouraging anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so corrective measures can be applied.
- f) To make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all employees, volunteers and apprentices, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of Futures.
- g) Review employment 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.
- h) Ensure that disabled employees, volunteers and apprentices and those applying to join Futures are not just 'included' but actively supported and promoted to fulfill their aspirations.
- 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 and Diversity Impact Plan.
- k) Meet specific equality and diversity contract requirements. Where required, take action from external equality and diversity compliance audits

3. Definitions

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 Diversity – everyone is different and diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing the differences we each bring to work.
- 3.3 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.

4. Roles, Responsibilities and Structure:

Specific responsibilities of Management

- 4.1 The Chief Executive is ultimately accountable for ensuring that all Futures business and employment practices are compliant with Diversity and Equality legislation.
- 4.2 Through the E and D board lead and CEO, the Executive Board has a key role in ensuring that E and D is an integral part of Futures strategy and business planning.
- 4.3 Directors and Managers will:
 - a) Ensure that their own behaviour and those of the employees, volunteers and apprentices they manage complies in full with this policy.
 - b) Ensure that all employees, volunteers and apprentices receive the appropriate diversity and equality training.
 - c) Investigate all matters of alleged bullying, discrimination, victimisation, harassment and inappropriate behaviour promptly and thoroughly.
 - d) Ensure that Futures recruitment, selection and appointment procedures, performance management processes, staff development opportunities and disciplinary and grievance processes are fairly and consistently applied to all staff.
 - e) Ensure that all employees, 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, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers, learners and the public.

Responsibilities of all employees and apprentices

- 4.4 Futures expects all employees, volunteers and apprentices to act in accordance with this Policy. In particular, all members of staff should
 - a) Comply with the policy and undertake appropriate diversity and equality training.
 - b) Not bully, victimise, harass, discriminate or intimidate other employees, apprentices, volunteers, customers or subcontractors 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 Manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

Responsibilities of Subcontractors and Grant recipients

- 4.5 It is a contractual requirement of all subcontractors and grant recipients that they comply with all current legislation (Equality Act 2010 and 2012 and Public Sector Equality Duty April 2011) in employment and in the provision of education and training. Subcontractors and grant recipients must ensure compliance by providing an up-to-date copy of their Equality and Diversity Policy which is monitored via the CIP/progress review system.
- 4.6 Subcontractors and grant recipients must meet relevant E and D objectives which are built into quarterly reviews. Futures will support subcontractors and grant recipients to meet and add value to the contract by sharing of best practice and ongoing continuous professional development relating to equality and diversity.

5. Procedures: Grievance and Disciplinary

- 5.1 Employees , volunteers and apprentices have the right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination, bullying or victimisation via Futures Grievance Procedures.
- 5.2 Discrimination, bullying and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under Futures Disciplinary Procedure.
- 5.2 Proven allegations will result in disciplinary action.
- 5.3 Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- 5.4 For young people/adult customers, the possible withdrawal of service and for subcontractors/grant recipients, possible termination of contract.

6. Related training and continuous professional development

- 6.1 All employees, volunteers and apprentices will receive training on Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and British Values on an ongoing basis and will be made aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy as part of their company induction programme. Further details are contained in section 2: Mandatory Training Checklist of the company training plan. Mandatory training must be completed within 3 months of employees start date.
- 6.2 Employees will be responsible for identifying their CPD needs through the appraisal process, team meetings and using E and D resources on Futures intranet. Any company level CPD needs identified will be discussed at CPD champion meetings with the E and D Lead and action taken to address these needs.
- 6.3 All employees, apprentices, volunteers, subcontractors and grant recipients will receive updates from the Customer Care Co-ordinator via emails or from information added to the equality and diversity section of the intranet or the CPD/resources section of the National Careers Service extranet. For example, information on supporting customers with learning difficulties and disabilities and a National Support directory is

available for staff to use in their practice.

7. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

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

- a) The composition of job applicants and decisions in recruitment
- b) The makeup of our workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background and disability.
- c) Access to training, promotion and other opportunities and benefits
- d) The impact of our employment policies, including use of the disciplinary and grievance procedure
- e) 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 the following:
- 8.2 List of related strategies, policies and procedures (all located in the [Policy Section of the intranet](#))
 - a) Equality and Diversity strategy
 - b) Equality and Diversity Impact plan
 - c) Guidelines for supporting customers with additional needs
 - d) Safeguarding strategy, policy and Impact plans
 - e) Disciplinary procedure
 - f) Grievance procedures
 - g) Harassment and bullying policy
 - h) Recruitment and Selection procedures

- i) Malpractice policy
- j) Prayer and Contemplation Breaks – in section 3 of the HR handbook.

The Equality Policy is fully supported by the Executive Leadership Team and has been agreed with trade unions.