



# Equality and Diversity Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is for Step into Learning (hereafter referred to as SiL) to establish guidance regarding Equality and Diversity by stating key principles, outlining structures and describing monitoring arrangements.

**The Equality Act 2010** brings together the requirements of the three separate duties for race, gender and disability. The purpose of this policy is to meet the following criteria:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination
- To promote equality of opportunity
- To consult relevant stakeholders
- To monitor outcomes and act on data/information
- To assess the impact of the scheme and associated activity
- To report on progress and set out future actions

## Our duty

Following current legislation, SiL is required to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, both direct and indirect, in its policies and practices and in those areas over which it has influence, such as contracted partners. This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the relevant Acts and Statutory Regulations:

Equal Pay Act 1970

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Race Relations Act 1976

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Human Rights Act 1998

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA)

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The Mental Capacity Act 2005

Disability Equality Duty 2006

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Gender Equality Duty 2007

The Equality Act 2010 (and update 2014)

## Our Aims

**SiL is committed to positively promoting diversity and equal opportunities for all staff, partners and their staff, learners and trustees, either current or prospective.**

SiL aims to provide an environment where everyone is treated equally and as individuals regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, political belief,

social or economic class, marital or parental status, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or any other perceived difference.

We aim to inspire all our staff, partners and their staff and learners to help create an environment where everyone feels welcome and confident that they will be treated fairly, that they will be valued as an individual and that their views and opinions will be encouraged.

## **Our Values**

The application of the principles of Equality and Diversity leads to best practice in education, in which fairness of opportunity for learners is a basic right. This policy is, therefore underpinned by the following values, observation of which will reduce barriers to learning:

- equality as the basis of social justice;
- active challenges to stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour;
- acknowledging and celebrating diversity;
- respect for others regardless of visible and non-visible differences;
- neutral language concerning protected characteristics;
- compliance with legislation;
- commitment to inclusive education by ensuring that the principle of diversity informs our activities;
- support for learners to develop their full potential by recognising the individual not the differences between groups of people who share protected characteristics;
- accountability of SiL members for compliance with this policy

## **Definitions:**

The following definitions help one to meet the aims of this policy.

a) Prejudice is negatively pre-judging people according to preconceived ideas about them.

b) Stereotyping is making broad generalisations about particular groups of people and expects all members of that group to think and behave identically.

c) Positive action is offering special help to people who are disadvantaged because of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination so that they may take full and equal advantage of opportunities in jobs, education, training, services, etc.

d) Direct discrimination is treating people less favourably because of race, nationality, religion, gender, etc.

e) Indirect discrimination is applying a rule or requirement, which effectively leads to less favourable conditions or treatment for a particular group of people.

f) Ethnic origin is a sense of cultural and historical identity based on belonging by birth to a distinctive cultural group.

g) Disability According to The Disability Discrimination Act, '*...a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.*'

Long term in this context is one year or likely to recur more than a year later.

Normal day-to-day activities are defined as:

- a. Mobility
  - b. Manual dexterity
  - c. Physical co-ordination
  - d. Ability to lift, carry, or otherwise move everyday objects
  - e. Speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
  - f. Perception of the high risk of danger
  - g. Continence
- Religion or belief is defined as being any religion, religious belief, or similar philosophical belief.
  - Harassment is behaviour which is offensive, frightening, or in any way, distressing, will be considered to be harassment and will not be tolerated.
  - Victimisation is discrimination against or harassment of individuals who make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment.
  - Mental Capacity is the ability to make decisions for oneself.
  - Best Interests. The Mental Capacity Act does not contain a definition of the term "best interests." Still, section 4 of the Act sets out a checklist of issues that should be considered by anyone taking action or decision on behalf of someone else. The checklist is non-exhaustive, which means that many issues can be considered.

## Policy statement

SiL will celebrate and promote diversity and equal opportunities through:

- Processes for recruiting staff, partners and learners
- Initial, Advice and Guidance sessions and Induction programs
- The Individual Learning Plan
- Schemes of Work and Session Plans
- SiL and Partners' marketing and promotional material and events including websites

SiL will provide an environment where everyone is treated equally and valued as an individual; where everyone feels welcome and confident that they will be treated fairly; and where their views and opinions will be encouraged by:

- Actively promoting the benefits of diversity and equal opportunities
- Ensuring all relevant policies and strategy documents positively address equality and diversity issues and enable individual needs to be recognised and met
- Provide opportunities for the positive promotion of diversity
- Confronting behaviour that runs contrary to the aims of this policy
- Dealing quickly and decisively against instances of discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- SiL will ensure that the relevant procedures for recruitment and enrolment do not discriminate against anyone applying for a place or position at SiL through partner organisations on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, political belief, social or economic class, marital or parental status, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or any other perceived difference.
- SiL will support the development of equality and diversity by providing suitable and regular training to trustees and staff (both SiL and Partner organisations).
- This Equality and Diversity Policy will be included in the Quality Manual and on the website.
- Staff (both SiL and Partners) and learners will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding equality and diversity at induction sessions.
- All staff and learners will be made aware of the actions to take and procedures to follow in the event of them being the victim of real or perceived discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

## Unacceptable behaviours

Each of these examples of behaviour refers to prejudice or stereotyping on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, political belief, social or economic class, marital or parental status, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability and any other perceived differences.

### Verbal

- Derogatory or uninvited comments regarding any of the above
- Offensive jokes or nick-names
- Unwelcome invitations
- Promises or threats relating to any of the above
- Non-co-operation or other unfavourable treatment for no reason other than the above

### Non-verbal

- Looking, staring, threatening, gesturing, following or chasing a person regarding any of the above
- Displaying explicit or offensive material concerning any of the above, including circulated e-mail, other electronic material, or on social networking sites.

## Physical

Unwelcome and uninvited touching, pinching, caressing, kissing, hugging, tickling, slapping, or punching.

## The rights of individuals

If a member of staff believes that they have not been treated fairly, due to prejudice or discrimination, they should make their complaint known in the following ways:

- Through discussion with relevant line managers
- Through the Grievance Policy and Procedure or Harassment Policy and Procedure

If a learner believes that they have not been treated fairly on the grounds of disability, due to prejudice or discrimination, they should make their complaint known in the following ways:

- Through discussion within the relevant teaching staff
- Through the Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Implementation

### Setting Targets

SiL will set annual targets with clear milestones in an action plan for implementing and monitoring Equality and Diversity progress. The annual action plans will be considered and endorsed by the trustees. The impact of our Equality and Diversity initiatives will be monitored through measures such as:

- teaching and learning observations;
- feedback from learners and staff using surveys or other measures of attitudes and opinions;
- community monitoring by working in collaboration with local independent organisations
- analysis of complaints and incidents arising under the racist incident procedure
- inspection by Ofsted and other quality assurance bodies;
- staff and learner involvement participation strategies
- collecting and using data and information to evaluate Equality and Diversity progress in our provision on learner admission, retention, progress and achievement;
- analysis of recruitment and selection monitoring forms

## The Board

The Board is responsible for implementing the Equality and Diversity policy and ensuring that it complies with current statutory requirements. The Board has responsibility for ensuring that SiL complies with the requirements of the Equality Act, including the specific duties to publish diversity data and the general public sector duty 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

## Step into Learning

SiL is responsible for achieving the highest standards in teaching and learning and we recognise that access and inclusivity are essential to this aim. Learning resources will be free from racist, sexist and any other prejudiced assumptions, images and language and actively promote diversity. We will develop inclusive, personalised learning strategies to meet the needs of individual learners and to help them to achieve their full potential. In so doing, we will take steps to develop staff in the best teaching and learning practice and to ensure that their best practice is promoted and shared.

SiL is responsible for ensuring that all employment policies and practices reflect the principles of equality. Breaches of the Equality and Diversity policy can be regarded as misconduct leading to disciplinary proceedings. SiL is committed to:

- creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued;
- a working environment that promotes dignity, fairness and respect to all;
- intolerance of all forms of intimidation, bullying or harassment;
- making training, development and progression opportunities available equitably;
- understanding that equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense;
- regular review of our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

## All Staff

It is the responsibility of the whole institution of SiL to ensure that Equality and Diversity are at the heart of our functions and services. All staff have an obligation to:

- fulfil our public sector duty to advance Equality and Diversity;
- challenge discriminatory incidents reporting those of an equality nature through our procedures; such as the racist incident policy;
- keep up-to-date with legislation and participate in training and learning opportunities including the mandatory training offered by SiL, Equality and Diversity Essentials;
- reflect the values, principles and standards described in this policy in all our activities

In addition to these general responsibilities, the faculties, our partners, have a requirement to carry out their specific Equality and Diversity roles and responsibilities so that the whole organisation's mission is achieved.

## **Partners and procurement**

SiL, in its work in partnership with institutions, charities, local communities and their representatives, suppliers, contractors and partners in education and training, will promote good practice and relations between groups by placing Equality and Diversity at the heart of its interactions.