

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Riverside Training is an Equal Opportunity employer. As such, it wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity whether required by legislation or not, in all aspects of recruitment, employment, training, service delivery and relationships between business partners, clients and others.

To this end, Riverside Training will take every reasonable and practicable step to ensure that there is no unwarranted discrimination against employees or learners on account of their disability, gender, marital status, age, race, sexual orientation, criminal record, or other criteria.

Riverside Training recognises that primary responsibility at law rests with the employer to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity should be understood, supported by and implemented by all employees.

In working with partners, sub-contractors and wider stakeholders, we shall encourage that all parties in our learning community are treated equally and fairly and promote equality and diversity where we have direct and indirect influence.

Objectives

This policy aims to ensure that:

- The company has access to the widest labour market and is able to secure the best employees for its needs.
- No applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment; and, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of the company and themselves.
- No candidate for training receives less favourable treatment during selection.
- The company can achieve an ability-based workforce which is in line with the working population mix in the relevant labour market areas.
- 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.

Legal Obligations

Riverside Training recognises that it has a broader duty that is required by legislation, and the company's Equality and Diversity Policy is not limited to the demands of relevant legislation (Equality Act). But for avoidance of doubt, these are the principal sources we have used as the basis for the Policy:

Equality Act 2010: The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

Sex Discrimination: The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against employees because of their sex, either directly or indirectly.

Equal Pay: The Equality Act 2010 states that Men and women in full-time or part-time employment have a right to **equal pay (Sex Equality)** - which in law means 'no less favourable' pay, benefits and terms and conditions in their employment contracts where they are doing equal work.

Race Relations: The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate either directly or indirectly due to race - this includes the different elements of colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin.

Disability: The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of disability, by treating disabled employees less favourably for a reason related to their disability without justification. If a workplace feature or practice puts an employee with a disability at a disadvantage, an employer should look to see what 'reasonable adjustments' it can make and meet with them to discuss what can be done to help them. For example, this could be as simple as supplying a special chair or power-assisted piece of equipment. Reasonable adjustments might also include changing some of the employee's duties, but an employer does not have to change functions essential to the role.

We follow the definition included in the Equality Act 2010: a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantially adverse and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Nine Protected Characteristics

There are nine specific areas (or protected characteristics) covered by equality and diversity guidelines and legislation. This Policy covers all nine including discrimination against: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Awareness

Management will bring to the attention of all employees the provisions of the Policy and will provide any training necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the Policy operates in practice.

All employees and management of Riverside Training will undertake training in Equality and Diversity Awareness as soon as possible after they join the company, and will receive refresher awareness training as part of Continuous Professional Development.

All employees and agents of Riverside Training will be provided with a copy of the company's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Recruitment

Riverside Training will ensure that job descriptions reflect the Equal Opportunity Policy. Advertisements and other recruitment materials will state that the company is an equal opportunities employer.

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Recruitment procedures will be constantly reviewed to ensure that they do not discriminate. In particular, Riverside Training will ensure that there is no unwarranted discrimination against anyone:

- In the job specification.
- In the design and completion of application forms.
- In the selection process (including interview timing and location). In the assessment technique.
- In the terms of employment offered.

A copy of this Equality and Diversity Policy statement will be available to all job applicants and will be provided to all successful candidates for jobs at Riverside Training or for training.

Training & Career Development

Specific steps will be taken to ensure that all employees have the same opportunity to develop their full potential within the organisation. The company recognises that this may in some cases require positive action.

Working Practices

Subject to due regard for the company's operational practices, the company will ensure that there is no discrimination against anyone appointed to a job:

- In terms and conditions of service.
- In induction arrangements.
- In occupational pensions.

Staff will be informed of company approaches to good working practices and relationships and be informed of all policies supporting equality and diversity including; Safeguarding; e-safety; anti-bullying and harassment.

All staff will receive a copy of the company Staff Handbook at Induction and will have access to a current copy on the company shared drive and intranet. Updates to the policy and refresher activities will be organised through staff and area meetings on an annual basis.

Enforcement

Riverside Training will take whatever steps are necessary to enforce the policy, including appropriate disciplinary mechanisms when necessary.

Any employee or trainee who considers that he or she is suffering from unequal treatment on any grounds may implement the company's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures as set out in the employees Conditions of Service.

Performance data will be presented to the Senior Management Group on an annual basis for approval and review. Subsequent outcomes will be recorded in the Implementation Plan.

Learners

Riverside Training will use its best endeavours to ensure that no prospective learner is discriminated against. This will be highlighted to learners at Induction through the Learner Handbook and monitored at each Quarterly Progress Review.

In particular, Riverside Training will ensure that all employers are aware of the relevant legislation relating to workplace discrimination; and that employers appreciate the availability of equal opportunities initiatives such as flexible working patterns and grant-aided workplace modifications.

Riverside Training will also use its best endeavours to ensure that employers have in place equal opportunity policies that are at least the equivalent of Riverside Training.

Subcontractors

Where Riverside Training subcontracts delivery through ESFA or ESF contracts, we will seek to assure subcontractors to promote equality in line with legal requirements.

This will be achieved through annual auditing and quarterly performance review meetings as part of our subcontractor quality management process.

The policy will be promoted at launch meetings of any projects and reviewed at quarterly provider meetings.

Monitoring

In order to ensure the effective operation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and in accordance to GDPR legislation (and for no other purpose), the company will seek information from all applicants for employment and from trainee candidates. This information will be gathered for statistical purposes only, it will be treated as confidential, and where possible it will be provided voluntarily by individuals categorising themselves rather than by others categorising them. All this will be explained at the time when monitoring information is being sought.

This Policy will be reviewed not less than once per annum by the Senior Management team. The Equality and Diversity Committee will meet bi-annually to review performance, analyse data, and identification of any areas or issues that require amendments, making recommendations to the Senior Management Group (SMG).

Where necessary, employees will be able to check/correct their own record of these details. Otherwise, access to this information will be strictly restricted.

Riverside Training will report key statistical data on the company website on an annual basis in accordance with GDPR regulations.

Responsibilities

The SMT is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Strategy, reviewing the policy on an annual basis and amending the Strategy and the Equality and Diversity Policy as required and securing compliance with the Policy.

The SMT is also responsible for:

- Monitoring relevant legislation and publicising new information to staff and others.
- Ensuring that staff are trained in the application of equal opportunities and diversity law and policies.

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- Preparing and delivering relevant training to staff and others.
- Reporting on Equality and Diversity related Legislation and training to the management meeting.
- Distributing the Equality and Diversity Policy to any employers who request it.
- Collecting and collating data on referrals in respect of Equality and Diversity issues (gender, disability, ethnic origin) and providing a summary to the SMG.
- Attending relevant external courses and seminars in support of this role.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that this Policy is embedded in their duties and functions. This includes attending relevant training courses and ensuring that the operation of their duties conforms to and promotes the Policy. All staff will champion Equality and Diversity opportunities as a matter of course.

Staff involved with learners will additionally verify their candidates' awareness of Equality and Diversity opportunities, discuss instances of possible discrimination with candidates, and if necessary take appropriate action to help remedy the problem.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Riverside Training's Safeguarding policy and will be reviewed on an annual basis

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