



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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Table of Contents

Statement of Intent.....3

Purpose3

 Gender.....3

 Race3

 Disability.....4

 Sexual orientation4

 Religion or belief.....4

 Age4

Eliminating discrimination5

 Racial harassment5

 Sexual harassment.....5

 Harassment against disabled people.....5

 Victimisation.....6

 Indirect discrimination6

Responsibilities.....6

Volunteering.....7

Recruitment and employment7

Monitoring and review.....7

Statement of Intent

iLearn Bedford aims to encourage, value and manage diversity and is committed to providing equality for all. iLearn Bedford wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities and is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst volunteers and users of its services. Equality and diversity will be considered in all activities and resources. This policy will be implemented within the framework of current legislation. This policy is underpinned by and complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in iLearn Bedford volunteering and service delivery and to eliminate discrimination on grounds of:

Gender (including sex, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender re-assignment)

Women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution at all levels of the organisation through:

- challenging gender stereotypes
- supporting employees and volunteers in balancing their life at work and at home

iLearn Bedford will take positive steps to support a transgender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

Volunteers and service users are treated fairly and equally irrespective of their marital/civil partnership or family status.

Race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin)

The racial and cultural diversity of the local community is represented through:

- challenging racial stereotypes
- understanding, respecting and valuing racial and cultural difference and perspectives

- encouraging and enabling members of minority ethnic groups to volunteer for iLearn Bedford at all levels

Disability

The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued through:

- focussing on what people can do rather than on what they cannot
- challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities and in particular, not making false assumptions that disabled people are unable to do certain things
- making appropriate adjustments in the workplace so that people can reach their full potential regardless of any disability.

Sexual orientation

People are treated fairly irrespective of their sexuality through:

- respecting the rights of everyone irrespective of whether they are open about their sexuality
- respecting different lifestyles even if someone's different lifestyle conflicts with one's own religious or cultural beliefs
- challenging negative stereotypical views
- celebrating and welcoming significant lesbian, gay and bisexual events in the same way that similar events of importance to heterosexual people are celebrated

Religion or belief

People are treated fairly irrespective of their religious beliefs, faith or lack of belief. Demands of religion (e.g. prayer times and religious holidays) and of culture (traditional dress) are accepted.

Age

Age diversity is promoted and valued through:

- challenging age stereotyping, recognising that the new ideas and fresh approaches can come from anyone irrespective of their age

- recognising the benefits of mixed-age volunteers

Eliminating discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied which cannot be justified. Forms of direct discrimination include less favourable treatment (denial of access to or a poor level of service), harassment or victimisation.

Harassment occurs when someone's actions or words, based on the relevant grounds, are unwelcome and violate another person's dignity or create an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.

iLearn Bedford will not tolerate harassment in any form and in particular:

Racial harassment is unlawful. Incidents include:

- physical assaults/threats against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity
- racist insults/jokes/name calling
- racist graffiti/any other written insult
- provocative behaviour (e.g. wearing racist badges or insignia)
- racial comments in meetings conversation/workshops
- attempting to recruit for racist organisations or groups
- racist literature (leaflets, comics, magazines) brought into the organisation's premises
- providing a platform for racism

Sexual harassment is unlawful. The definition adopted by iLearn Bedford is: Repeated and unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminating remarks which are offensive to the person involved, which cause them to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised or harassed or which creates a threatening or intimidating environment.

Harassment against disabled people is also prohibited. It is unlawful to subject a disabled person to harassment by engaging in unwanted conduct which has the purpose

or effect of violating the disabled person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him/her.

Victimisation means treating someone less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination (a "protected act"), or are thought to have done so; or because they have supported someone else who has made a complaint of discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where the effect of provisions, criteria or practices imposed by an employer have an adverse impact disproportionately on one group or other. Indirect discrimination generally occurs when a rule or condition, which is applied equally to everyone, can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular group; the rule is to their disadvantage, and it cannot be justified on other grounds.

iLearn Bedford will seek to overcome indirect discrimination by:

- provision of training for volunteers, and where possible service users
- provision of information about relevant support organisations
- making clear its expectations of volunteers in the conduct of their duties in any circumstances where they represent iLearn Bedford

Responsibilities

iLearn Bedford's commitment to equality and diversity means that everyone involved with iLearn Bedford has a duty to:

- promote equality and diversity in the delivery of iLearn Bedford services
- ensure that everyone associated with iLearn Bedford is treated in a non-discriminatory way
- promote a welcoming environment in which individuals from all backgrounds feel welcome, valued and respected
- promote this equality and diversity policy

Managers and trustees have additional responsibility to:

- ensure systems, procedures and services do not discriminate
- promote and implement diversity within the management of service provision
- provide appropriate training to put this equality and diversity policy into practice

- challenge inappropriate behaviour immediately
- listen to and respect others, and not dismiss their problems as “trivial”
- set a positive example in everything they do

Volunteering

It is crucial that all volunteers can participate and enjoy the activities without discrimination. iLearn Bedford believes that volunteers should not be excluded from any opportunity without due reason.

Volunteers will not be discriminated against in the advice and support they are given. Nor will they be denied access to opportunities because of their assumed abilities, skills or behaviour and each volunteer will be judged on his/her own merits. iLearn Bedford will actively encourage and support volunteers to participate in the planning and implementation of their work.

Recruitment and employment

iLearn Bedford is an equal opportunities employer and wishes to attain a workforce that is representative of the local community to secure the widest pool of talent possible. All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation. iLearn Bedford aims to ensure equitable access to services, facilities, events, training and leadership opportunities.

Monitoring and review

Trustees are responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within iLearn Bedford, including policy and

internal procedures oversight. Any complaint or grievance should be made to the chair of the organisation.

This policy will be annually reviewed by iLearn Bedford, to ensure that it is up to date. As part of this review, iLearn Bedford will invite input and consultation from its associates to ensure the policy continues to provide comprehensive and suitable Equality, Diversity and Inclusion guidance for all individuals involved.