



Joint Learning
Management & Training Services

March 2009

Equality and Diversity Policy 2008 – 2010

Promoting Respect and Fairness

(Incorporating the requirement to publish Disability, Gender and Race Equality Schemes in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Equality Act 2006 and Gender Equality Duty and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)

If you require this information in an alternative version such as Easy to Read, large print, Braille, audiotape, or help in understanding it in your language, please contact the Operations Manager, Tel:01704 562696

CONTENTS

1.	Purpose	Page 3
2.	Definition	Page 3
3.	Scope	Page 3
4.	Policy Statement	Page 4
5.	Responsibilities	Page 4
6.	Implementation	Page 5
7.	Communication	Page 5
8.	Complaints	Page 5
9.	Support	Page 6
10.	Achievement of Policy	Page 6

1. Purpose

Joint Learning is committed to advancing equality and diversity as a key feature within all its activities, as it believes this to be ethically right and socially responsible.

We aim to provide a working environment and culture which recognises and values differences.

We will take positive action, where we deem it necessary, to create a more diverse workforce and client group.

We aim to pro-actively tackle discrimination and ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against for any reason.

All staff have a responsibility to be proactive in their approach to equality and diversity, and in tackling unlawful discrimination.

2. Definition

Equality and Diversity is about accepting and embracing people's differences and creating an environment that people can thrive in. Harnessing differences creates a productive working environment in which everyone feels valued, where talents can be fully utilised and organisational goals are met.

Equality is about treating people fairly and with respect, giving regard for others rights and wishes.

Diversity is simply *otherness* or those human qualities present in other individuals and groups that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong. Diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences.

Diversity encompasses the properties and characteristics of a person. It includes characteristics that are inborn and unchangeable; age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities/disabilities, race and sexual orientation, and includes differences that are acquired, and those that may change throughout our lives. Some examples include; educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, parental status, religious beliefs, military status, health and work experience.

3. Scope

The policy applies to:-

- Clients
- Employees
- Funding Bodies

- Partner Organisations
- Sub-contractors
- Visitors

4. Policy Statement

Joint Learning is committed to and believes that fairness and equality of opportunity are a fundamental human right for all. The company wholeheartedly supports the principles of equal opportunity and diversity for all its employees and learners on its learning programmes.

We value diversity and will:

- Aim to create a workforce with a broad range of characteristics reflecting our diverse customer base and the communities within which we operate.
- Establish a work environment free from any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- Ensure that all applicants, employees, learners and all third parties are treated fairly and with equality of opportunity, irrespective of, but not limited to, their culture, race, colour, nationality, religious or beliefs, ethnic or national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, transsexualism, disability, unrelated criminal convictions, marital or parental status and membership of an affiliated trade union.
- Appoint, train, develop, promote and reward all individuals fairly and objectively on the basis of their skills, aptitudes and abilities.
- Seek the opinions of our employees on the development and performance of equality and diversity initiatives to ensure they effectively meet their needs and those of our learners and customers.
- Demonstrate the positive benefits of diversity by monitoring the composition of our workforce and learner group and by measuring the impact of our recruitment and selection initiatives.
- Comply with UK and European legislation and Codes of Practice.

5. Responsibility

We each have a responsibility for our own behaviour, and for maintaining an environment in which prejudice is eliminated and where everyone is treated fairly, with respect and dignity. We as a company believe that each individual can only give their best if we are an inclusive organisation and can demonstrate the value we place on diversity.

- Every employee has a duty of care towards their colleagues, learners, customers and third parties, and we all have a

personal responsibility for ensuring the practical application of our policy.

- Directors, operational and line managers have key responsibilities for the direct implementation of our policy, promoting equality of opportunity for employees and learners on government funded programmes, monitoring the Policy's use and following up any relevant complaints.
- The Operations Manager is responsible for maintaining the Policy and promoting equality of opportunity in employment through clear communication, thorough understanding and good practice. The Operations Manager and HR Department will communicate, monitor and implement the policy. They are also responsible for ensuring it is reviewed annually and is up to date. Any amendments to the policy will only be implemented following consideration by the Equality and Diversity Working Party and the Managing Director.

6. Implementation

The Equality and Diversity Working Party has been established to provide a more focused forum where policies and action plans on race, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age and widening participation can be developed, progressed and monitored.

A strategy and action plan has been drawn up, it will be acted upon and regularly monitored by the Equality and Diversity Working Party to ensure that the principles are put into practise.

Appropriate training and support for employees will be provided where required to ensure successful implementation of the plan.

7. Communication

Our Equality and Diversity Policy is available in hard copy. Please contact the Operations Manager if you wish to access this document in another format.

Training will be provided for staff to ensure awareness is raised and staff have a clear understanding of equality and diversity and their responsibilities.

8. Complaints

Any complaint made verbally or in writing will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner, in accordance with our published grievance and disciplinary procedures.

The HR Director is available for confidential consultation on any issue relating to discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation.

9. Support

In support of the Equality & Diversity Policy and with particular reference to race, Joint Learning will address the statutory duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 i.e.

- a. General duties
 - To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
 - To promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups
- b. Specific duties
 - Prepare a written Race Equality Policy
 - Make arrangements for fulfilling specific duties
 - Assess impact of the policy on learners and staff of different racial groups
 - Monitor recruitment, progression and career progression of different racial groups
 - Set out arrangements for publishing the Policy, assessments and monitoring
 - Publish the results of monitoring annually

10. Joint Learning will achieve this by:

Making a commitment to positive action in relation to race and ensuring that this is monitored via mainstream planning, i.e. Strategic Plan monitoring & Senior Management Team monitoring.

- Producing an annual Race Action Plan within the overall E&D quality improvement plan.
- Developing systematic arrangements to assess the impact of race equality procedures, i.e.
- the recruitment & career progression of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) staff
- the training and development of all staff on Equality & Diversity (specifically Race).
- the career development of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) staff.
- performance appraisal & target setting.
- complaints of discrimination & harassment.
- learner enrolments, retention and achievement.
- fostering of cohesion and good relations.

Publishing the outcomes of our monitoring in a format accessible to a number of audiences, including the Black Minority Ethnic community.

Seeking to actively involve members of the Black Minority Ethnic community in our planning & monitoring procedures.

This Disability Equality Scheme is introduced in the context of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and meets the new general duty placed on all public sector providers having due regard to:

General duty:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment.
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons and encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

Specific duties:

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme
- Develop the Disability Equality Scheme involving disabled people.

A Disability Equality Scheme shall include a statement of:

- a) The ways in which such disabled people have been involved in its development
- b) Methods for assessing the impact of policies and practices on equality for disabled persons
- c) The steps which Joint Learning proposes to take toward the fulfilment of the general duty
- d) The arrangements for gathering information on the effect of policies and practices on disabled persons and in particular: recruitment, development, retention, available educational opportunities and achievements.
- e) The arrangements for making use of such information to assist in the performance of general duty
- f) Annual reporting

The Disability Equality Scheme falls under the umbrella of our Equality and Diversity policy and will be embedded within strategic planning and self-assessment processes.

Joint Learning will meet its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act as amended. We aim to be a disability friendly Training Provider. We will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments to help disabled learners to succeed.

This Gender Equality Scheme is introduced in the context of the Equality Act 2006 and meets the new general duty placed on all public sector providers having due regard to:

1. Elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment.
2. Promotion of equality of opportunity between women and men.

The new duty requires Joint Learning to be proactive in promoting equality for women, men and transsexual people and to undertake a rigorous overhaul of our policies and processes with gender equality in mind. Unlawful discrimination in the Equality Act and the Sex Discrimination Act means:

- a) Direct or indirect discrimination against women and men, in employment and education; in goods, facilities and services and in the exercise of public functions.
- b) Harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave.
- c) Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment in employment and vocational training.
- d) Direct or indirect discrimination in the employment field on the grounds that the person is married or has a civil partner.
- e) Victimisation on the basis of gender.

Furthermore, the Sex Discrimination Act also protects those individuals who are intending to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

The Gender Equality Scheme falls under the umbrella of our Equality and Diversity policy and will be embedded within strategic planning and self-assessment processes.