

# Humber Learning Consortium

## Equality and Diversity Policy



**Humber Learning Consortium is committed to a policy of equality and diversity which promotes and ensures just and fair treatment for all. The aim is to maintain a positive working and learning environment which creates mutual respect and dignity and enables everyone to realise their full potential.**

**It is our intention to ensure that no person is subject to unfair treatment in any way. We recognise our responsibilities and legal obligations under all current acts of law, and in particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty.**

Prepared by  
Humber Learning Consortium

(This document is designed to be printed double sided)

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## PART 1: POLICY OVERVIEW

### 1.1 STATEMENT OF OUR COMMITMENT

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to a policy of equality and diversity which promotes and ensures just and fair treatment for all. The aim is to maintain a positive working and learning environment which creates mutual respect and dignity and enables everyone to realise their full potential. It is our intention to ensure that no person is subject to unfair treatment in any way and we recognize our responsibilities and legal obligations under the following acts:

Public Sector Equality Duty – *this came into force across Great Britain on 5 April 2011. It means that public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.*

Equality Act (2010)  
Disability Discrimination Act (2005)  
Employment Equality (Age Discrimination) (2006)  
Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations (2003)  
Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) (2005)  
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (2004)  
The Equality Bill (2005)  
Equal Pay Act (1970)  
Gender Recognition Act (2004)  
Human Rights Act (1998)  
Protection from Harassment Act (1997)  
Race Relations Act (1976)  
Race Relations [Amendment] Act (2000)  
Racial and Religious Hatred Bill (2005)  
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)  
Sex Discrimination Act (1975)  
Special Education Needs & Disability (2001)

HLC have an absolute commitment to meet the following general duties:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate harassment; victimisation and bullying
- Other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance and promote 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
- Promote respect between HLC, partners and service users
- Monitor progress towards key objectives, including monitoring representation and performance of different groups of participants
- Provide a positive, safe environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Ensure that responsibilities are understood by HLC staff, partners and service users

The policy gives a commitment to communicate to staff and participants (HLC partners, i.e., partners, and service users) and suppliers as necessary.

To be read in conjunction with Human Resource Procedures/Policies in HLC Staff Handbook.

Endorsed by: Andy Crossland, Chief Executive, Humber Learning Consortium

## **1.2 AIM OF THE POLICY**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all forms of prejudice, discrimination (direct and indirect), harassment and victimisation will be challenged and addressed in a culture of mutual acceptance and respect.

HLC will strive pro-actively to achieve a model of good equality and diversity practice for partners and service users within the local and wider community. Where appropriate, HLC will strive to take positive action to address and counter the disadvantage and discrimination suffered by sections of the community whether based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, as well as pregnancy and maternity – referred to as protected characteristics throughout this document.

The ethos of HLC is one of positive participation by all, the setting of standards of citizenship and a zero tolerance level in incidents relating to equality and diversity.

## **1.3 KEY PRINCIPLE**

The key principle of this policy is that all members of Humber Learning Consortium and the community are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity in an environment in which a diversity of backgrounds and experience is recognised and valued.

## **1.4 REVIEW**

The policy will be reviewed on a two year basis and the implementation plan monitored through the Steering Group on a six monthly basis. As a working document, the policy and implementation plan are expected to be subject to continuous improvement and may be reviewed at other times as necessary, including the incorporation of legislative changes.

## **1.5 RESPONSIBLE OFFICER**

The Quality Director at HLC has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

## 1.6 DISCRIMINATION DEFINITIONS

### Direct Discrimination

Treating people less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic is classed as direct discrimination. Specific provisions allow for different treatment because of age where it is justified as a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim, and for treating a disabled person more favourably than a person who is not disabled.

The definition of direct discrimination is broad enough to cover discrimination because the person is the spouse, partner, parent, carer or otherwise associated with a person who has a protected characteristic or where a person is thought to have a protected characteristic even if they do not.

### Indirect Discrimination

Applying a provision, criterion or practice which disadvantages people of a particular protected characteristic and which is not justified in objective terms.

### Discrimination through association

Discrimination or harassment because of association with a person who has any 'protected characteristic' is unlawful. However, discrimination by association does not apply where the protected characteristic is marriage/civil partnership — in this case the person who is discriminated against must be the one who is married or a civil partner.

### Harassment

Unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment is classed as harassment.

Three types of harassment are defined:

(1) Unwanted conduct related to a particular protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant or violating the complainant's dignity. This does not cover pregnancy/maternity or marriage/civil partnership (2) Sexual harassment: unwanted conduct of a sexual nature where this has the same purpose or effect as the first type.

(3) Treating someone less favourably because they have either submitted to or rejected sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

### Victimisation

Treating people less favourably because of action they have taken under or in connection with the new legislation - for example, if someone made a formal complaint of discrimination or given evidence in a tribunal case

## **PART 2: POLICY STATEMENTS**

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity in employment, education and training and the provision of equal access to services and facilities for all groups within the community. The equality strands include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, as well as pregnancy and maternity.

### **2.1 Policy Statement: Age**

People of all ages should benefit from Humber Learning Consortium and we are committed to the provision of flexible strategies and practices that cater for all ages and take into account individual circumstances and needs.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Challenging stereotyping and marginalisation based on age
- Recognising that both older and younger people can make a contribution based on their own experiences and skills
- Providing work, education and training opportunities for people regardless of age
- Ensuring that literature and correspondence reflects positive images of people of all ages

### **2.2 Policy Statement: Gender**

The Humber Learning Consortium recognises the various ways in which males and females can be subject to discrimination, lack of opportunity and social injustice.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Challenging stereotyping and discrimination on the basis of gender
- Ensuring that service provision is discrimination free, and that there is equality of access or uptake of services
- Supporting the rights of individuals to identify their own gender
- Ensuring that gender does not inhibit individuals' abilities, preferences and aspirations



### **2.3 Policy Statement: Disability**

Disability, in the context of this policy, includes those with learning and physical disabilities/difficulties, sensory impairment and difficulties due to mental health.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Meeting different needs including taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities
- Endorsing the right of people with disabilities to lead an independent life
- Working to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities in its procedures and practices and encouraging change in individual behaviour and attitudes
- Ensuring the provision of access, facilities and services to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- Providing opportunities and support for people with learning disabilities/difficulties, and positive encouragement to be involved and/or participate within their ability

### **2.4 Policy Statement: Race**

Issues of nationality, ethnic or national origins and colour are all components of the perception of Race. For the purposes of this statement, Race is used as a general term to cover all of these factors.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Fostering good relations and tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups
- Working to eliminate racism in its structures as well as encouraging change in individual behaviour and attitudes
- The use of positive images in all literature
- Positive action measures that meet the needs of minority ethnic people
- Identifying the needs of different minority ethnic groups using its services so as to ensure that services and employment practices are as relevant as possible to all groups

## **2.5 Policy Statement: Religion or belief**

Humber Learning Consortium is not a religious organisation and does not promote any creed or belief.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Supporting the rights of individuals to their religious beliefs and customs
- Treating these with respect
- Endorsing the diversity of a multi-faith society, including those with no religious beliefs
- Combating derogatory stereotyping, myths and abuse

## **2.6 Policy Statement: Sex and Sexual Orientation**

Humber Learning Consortium supports the provision of equal access to its services and equal treatment of its staff and learners and of people who use its services whatever their sex and sexual orientation.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Ensuring that no individual suffers discrimination based on their sex and sexual orientation
- Providing an environment which is free from harassment
- Challenging value-laden assumptions, attitudes and behaviour
- Ensuring that staff, learners and service users do not receive any adverse treatment due to their sex and sexual orientation

## **2.7 Policy Statement: Gender reassignment**

Humber Learning Consortium supports the provision of equal access to its services and equal treatment of its staff and learners and of people who use its services irrespective of gender reassignment status.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Ensuring that no individual suffers discrimination based on gender reassignment. This protection applies to all transsexuals: not only those who are planning to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment surgery, but also those who are living, or transitioning to living, in the gender other than the one they were born in, even if they have not had and are not planning to have surgery.

## **2.8 Policy Statement: Marriage and civil partnership**

Humber Learning Consortium supports the provision of equal access to its services and equal treatment of its staff and learners and of people who use its services irrespective of marriage and civil partnership status.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Ensuring that no individual suffers discrimination based on being married or in a civil partnership  
Single people are not protected.

## **2.9 Policy Statement: Pregnancy and Maternity**

Humber Learning Consortium supports the provision of equal access to its services and equal treatment of its staff and learners and of people who use its services irrespective of pregnancy and maternity.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- Ensuring that no individual suffers discrimination because of pregnancy, or in the 26 weeks after the birth for a reason connected with having given birth or breastfeeding.
- Treating all women equally irrespective of whether one is pregnant or has a pregnancy-related illness, is on statutory maternity leave (compulsory, ordinary or additional) or has sought to take statutory maternity leave.

## **2.10 Policy Statement: Employment Practices**

All job applicants are considered on the basis of merit, abilities and potential. No applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender; sex and sexual orientation; age; race or ethnic origin; religion or belief; political views; physical or mental disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; responsibilities for dependants or offending background.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- The selection, professional development and treatment of staff on the basis of equality of opportunity
- The use of positive action, where appropriate
- The monitoring of selection criteria to ensure that they are not discriminatory
- The treatment of any form of victimisation carried out by an individual, as a matter for disciplinary action

- The expectation that all staff appointed to Humber Learning Consortium are committed to the principles and implementation of equality of opportunity, including the challenging of discriminatory behaviour.

### **2.11 Policy Statement: Teaching & Learning**

No learner will be excluded from a learning programme on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity.

Humber Learning Consortium is committed to:

- A learning environment which fosters an atmosphere of openness and acceptance of a variety of views, perceptions and experiences
- Challenging all forms of prejudice, discrimination and stereotypical attitudes and behaviors' within the learning environment
- Wherever possible, providing learning materials and resources which reflect the diverse society in which we live
- Wherever possible, ensuring adequate physical access to the learning environment
- Ensuring that individuals with learning, physical or sensory disabilities who have an identifiable support need, are provided with additional learning support

## **PART 3: GENERAL**

### **3.1 Publicising the Policy**

The policy will be publicised as widely as possible to include staff, learners and partners. This policy and implementation plan will be communicated to staff, partners, participants and other suppliers by the following:

- HLC website
- Dedicated website
- Sub-contract
- QINs
- Programme Manager performance meetings

### **3.2 Marketing Strategies**

Humber Learning Consortium will ensure that marketing strategies reflect equal opportunities good practice and that provision is actively and appropriately promoted to all sections of the community.

### **3.3 Complaints**

#### **Learners**

Learners, including potential learners and visitors, may raise complaints about unfair/unequal treatment using the Complaints Procedure. This is available from Humber Learning Consortium.

#### **Staff**

Complaints from staff can be raised using the Grievance Procedure available in the company Policies folder.

## **PART 4: RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of everyone in Humber Learning Consortium to work together to ensure that we achieve our Equality & Diversity Policy. The Quality Director has overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy.

No one has to tolerate disrespectful and/or discriminatory behaviour. We are all responsible for challenging such behaviour.

### **4.1 Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees:**

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees to set the policy and strategy and make sure that Humber Learning Consortium is meeting its goals through regular monitoring.

They will ensure that effective systems to monitor and evaluate equality and diversity practices are in place by monitoring the implementation plan.

### **4.2 Staff:**

It is the responsibility of all other staff to make sure that our goals are achieved, to ensure that we all understand what the policy means and to respect the differences of the people within Humber Learning Consortium.

### **4.3 Learners:**

It is the responsibility of all our learners to make sure that they understand what the policy means and to respect everyone's differences within the learning environment.

### **4.4 Subcontractors/Visitors:**

All subcontractors and visitors should respect and adhere to the principles and practices of this policy.