Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Item	Details
Policy owner	Kirsty Noble
Position	Quality Director
Version	Version 2
Applies to	All
Effective from	August 2026
Review cycle	August 2027

1. Policy Statement

Skills-UK, Education & Training Limited is committed to providing an inclusive working and learning environment in which people are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
Skills-UK values diversity and will promote equality of opportunity in employment, education, training and the delivery of its services.

Skills-UK will not unlawfully discriminate against, harass or victimise any person because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Skills-UK will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and other applicable equality and employment legislation.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote equality, diversity and inclusion throughout Skills-UK;
- prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- identify and remove unnecessary barriers to employment, learning and participation;
- support fair and accessible recruitment, employment and learning practices;
- ensure reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented where required;
- provide clear routes for raising concerns; and
- ensure equality considerations inform Skills-UK's decisions and services.

This policy applies to:

- directors and employees;
- job applicants;
- contractors, temporary workers and volunteers;
- adult learners and apprentices;

- employers, partners and other organisations working with Skills-UK; and
- visitors and other users of Skills-UK services.

The policy applies to conduct at Skills-UK premises, during learning or work activities, at external venues, online, during work-related events and through work or learning-related communications.

3. Our Commitments

Skills-UK will:

- treat people fairly, consistently and with respect;
- make decisions based on relevant, objective and proportionate criteria;
- provide fair access to employment, learning, assessment and development opportunities;
- consider the different needs and circumstances of individuals;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled people where required;
- challenge discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation;
- take concerns seriously and respond appropriately;
- promote an environment in which individuals feel able to participate and contribute;
- review policies, practices and services to identify unnecessary barriers; and
- take lawful positive action where appropriate to address disadvantage or under-representation.

Treating people fairly does not always mean treating everyone in exactly the same way. Different support or arrangements may be appropriate to remove disadvantage, meet individual needs or comply with legal and awarding organisation requirements.

3. Discrimination Harassment and Victimisation

Skills-UK will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
Unlawful conduct may include:

- **direct discrimination**, where someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic;
- **indirect discrimination**, where a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone places people sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage and cannot be objectively justified;
- **discrimination arising from disability**, where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be justified;
- **failure to make reasonable adjustments** for a disabled person;
- **harassment**, including unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment;
- **sexual harassment**, including unwanted conduct of a sexual nature; and

- **victimisation**, where a person is treated unfavourably because they have raised, supported or provided information about an equality concern in good faith.

Discrimination or harassment may occur through spoken or written words, behaviour, images, physical conduct, online activity or electronic communications.

Skills-UK will take the reasonable preventative steps required by law to protect workers from sexual harassment, including risks arising from the behaviour of colleagues and third parties such as learners, employers, partners, contractors and visitors.

4. Recruitment Employment and Development

Skills-UK will aim to ensure that employment decisions are fair, transparent and based on the requirements of the role.

Recruitment, selection, promotion, training, development, performance management and other employment decisions will be based on relevant skills, experience, qualifications, conduct and performance.

Skills-UK will:

- use clear and relevant selection criteria;
- make reasonable adjustments to recruitment and employment arrangements where required;
- provide fair access to training and development;
- avoid questions about health or disability before offering employment except where legally permitted;
- review employment practices to identify potential barriers or disadvantage; and
- take appropriate action where discrimination, harassment or victimisation is identified.

Staff are expected to treat colleagues, learners and others professionally and respectfully.

5. Learning and Assessment

Skills-UK will promote equality and inclusion throughout the learner journey, including recruitment, induction, teaching, learning, support, assessment and progression.
Skills-UK will:

- provide fair access to programmes and services using relevant eligibility and programme requirements;
- use inclusive teaching and learning practices;
- provide information in accessible formats where reasonably required;
- consider reasonable adjustments and appropriate support for disabled learners;
- apply assessment requirements fairly and consistently;
- take appropriate steps to prevent and address discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
- seek feedback to improve the learner experience.

Reasonable adjustments must not change the competence standard, learning outcome or assessment requirement being measured. Assessment adjustments will be made in accordance with the relevant awarding organisation's requirements.

6. Reasonable Adjustments

Skills-UK will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled job applicants, workers, learners and service users where they would otherwise experience a substantial disadvantage. Adjustments will be considered individually and may include changes to:

- recruitment or selection arrangements;
- working or learning practices;
- hours, timetables or methods of communication;
- premises or physical access;
- equipment, technology or learning materials; and
- support arrangements.

Individuals are encouraged to tell Skills-UK about any disability, health condition or barrier for which an adjustment may be required. Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary to arrange appropriate support or meet legal obligations.

7. Responsibilities

The Directors are responsible for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively.

The Quality Director is responsible for:

- overseeing the implementation and review of this policy;
- providing advice and guidance;
- monitoring equality-related concerns and recurring themes;
- supporting appropriate staff development; and
- identifying areas for improvement.

Managers are responsible for applying this policy consistently, considering equality implications when making decisions and responding appropriately to concerns.

All staff and workers are responsible for:

- treating others with dignity and respect;
- complying with this policy;
- completing relevant training;
- challenging or reporting inappropriate conduct where it is safe and appropriate to do so; and
- cooperating with investigations.

Learners, employers, partners and visitors are expected to behave respectfully and comply with relevant Skills-UK policies and procedures.

8. Raising a Concern

Anyone who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment or victimisation should raise the matter as soon as reasonably possible.

Employees should normally raise employment-related concerns with their manager or through the Grievance Procedure. Where appropriate, concerns may also be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy.

Learners and other service users should raise concerns with their Tutor, Trainer or another appropriate member of staff. Formal complaints will be considered under the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Safeguarding concerns will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
A concern involving the person who would normally receive or investigate it will be referred to another appropriate senior or independent person.

Skills-UK will consider concerns fairly and sensitively. No person will be disadvantaged for raising or supporting a genuine concern in good faith.

Deliberately false allegations may be addressed under the relevant disciplinary, learner conduct or contractual procedure. A concern will not be treated as deliberately false merely because it is not upheld.

9. Breaches of This Policy

A breach of this policy by an employee may be considered under Skills-UK's Disciplinary Procedure.

Inappropriate conduct by a learner, contractor, employer, partner or visitor may be addressed under the relevant learner conduct, complaints, safeguarding or contractual arrangements.

Skills-UK will determine the appropriate response according to the nature, seriousness, circumstances and impact of the conduct.

10. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Information about equality concerns will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who reasonably need it to consider the matter, provide support, take appropriate action or meet a legal obligation.

Skills-UK will maintain appropriate records of concerns, decisions and actions in accordance with its data protection and records retention arrangements.

Equality information used for monitoring will be limited to what is necessary and, where appropriate, anonymised or aggregated.

11. Monitoring and Review

Skills-UK will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through relevant information such as learner and staff feedback, complaints, grievances, reasonable adjustment requests and identified equality concerns.

Monitoring will be proportionate to the size and activities of Skills-UK and will be used to identify barriers, recurring issues and opportunities for improvement.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, guidance, organisational arrangements or Skills-UK's services.

12. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside the following, where relevant:

- Complaints Policy and Procedure;
- Employee Grievance Procedure;
- Employee Disciplinary Procedure;
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Access to Fair Assessment Policy;
- Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure;
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration arrangements;
- Data Protection Policy; and
- Staff and Learner Codes of Conduct.

13. Superseded Policy

This policy replaces and supersedes the former Equal Opportunities Policy.
The separate Equal Opportunities Policy is withdrawn because its subject matter is fully incorporated within this Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy.