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Equality and Diversity Policy

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# Our Commitment

At City Skills we strive to ensure that quality is at the forefront of our agenda for the learner’s learning journey. For City Skills to develop into a successful business, that is recognised for delivering high quality training through robust partnerships because of effective delivery sessions, technology includes every learner to engage in their apprenticeship and the extraordinary delivery team. City Skills acknowledges that, it is through our employees that we can drive our vision of inclusion that values equality and diversity in our business’s vision.

City Skills is passionate and committed in removing barriers to learning across the business, whether this is learners/apprentices, our partnership businesses, and employees. Through our passion for learning and removal of these barriers, City Skills eradicate unlawful acts of discrimination. City Skills values the diverse work force within City Skills and celebrate the diverse backgrounds of our learners/apprentices and partnership businesses.

City Skills acknowledges its commitments under the Equality Act 2010, and will never knowingly discriminate or tolerate any discrimination towards any employees or learners/apprentices based upon their, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, race, pregnancy, maternity, disability, and gender reassignment; and will offer all employed staff and learners/apprentices the opportunity to be treated with respect and offer the same opportunities in all aspects of their journey with us whether this is employment or training.

As part of City Skills commitment to equality and diversity, City Skills will provide training to all employees on a yearly basis through online CPD tasks and standardised exercises to develop and upskill employee’s knowledge and confidence to challenge any inappropriate behaviour as well as reporting through the correct channels. For City Skills learners/apprentices, we will work to develop their understanding of treating everyone with respect and equality by sequencing topics throughout their programme to challenge and promote the correct action. City Skills will also deliver topics at the during their review sessions to develop knowledge and thought process to be of a positive nature.

City Skills strive to ensure that it has a positive culture which allows all employees to feel confident and psychological safe in their environment which enables learners/apprentices to be themselves without fear of prejudice and achieve their full potential. City Skills has put into place appropriate policies and procedures should any complaints, discrimination, harassment or bullying take place.

# Objective

City Skills objective is to ensure that our entire workforce is fully represented by all areas of society enabling all our employees and external clients to feel respected in any engagement activities. Another objective that this policy has been designed for, is to ensure that our employees and external customers such as client and learners/apprentices are aware that City Skills has a zero-tolerance stance to any form of discrimination, bullying and harassment and any possible inappropriate behaviour.

# Key Contact

City Skills expects all Line Mangers to ensure all employees are following this guidance and seek support or guidance on any concerns with the HR Department.

# Scope

The policy has been designed to encompass all employees, regardless of the employment contact, whether permanent, fixed term, or temporary. The types of roles are workers, learners/apprentices, external clients, communities, suppliers, and contractors who are working on or behalf of City Skills. The policy also covers the realms of employment at City Skills, our training, and any work we conduct with learners/apprentices and clients.

# Discrimination

City Skills recognises that it is unlawful to discriminate an individual directly or indirectly in our recruitment strategy or within our employment because of a protected characteristic:

1. Religion or belief
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Gender reassignment
5. Pregnancy/Maternity
6. Race
7. Sexual orientation
8. Marital status (marriage or civil partnership)
9. Disability

City Skills recognises that whilst it can be clear of either direct or indirect discrimination, individuals can be discriminated on different grounds:

* Associate discrimination
* Perceptive discrimination
* Harassment

City Skills also acknowledges that is it also illegal to discriminate someone from the public, for example a potential or current learner because of one of the 9 protected characteristics and intentionally by a type of discrimination. City Skills works hard to ensure that any potential learner or existing learner is not discriminated on the grounds of disability or demonstrate adaptions within our delivery model or reasonable adjustments for assessment.

# Equal Opportunities for Employment

City Skills advocates the promotion of equality and diversity in all aspects of the business and recognises the need for equality and diversity in its approach to employment. City Skills believes that recruiting from a wide range of backgrounds will further enhance and strengthen the business’s drive to provide a wider inclusive environment to meet changing demands and agendas. This will include:

* Our recruitment process – City Skills ensures a robust criterion is set to ensure a fair process to all
* Promotion – City Skills will always advertise the role internally to ensure all employees are offered the opportunity to develop within the business
* Training and development activities – City Skills will constantly offer a range of courses to help develop our employees and offer opportunities should an employee wish to move into another area of the business.
* Pay, benefits, terms and conditions, dealing with grievances and disciplinaries, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parent and flexible working – City Skills will ensure that as a business it promotes equality and diversity in its decision makings.

Within our recruitment process the job description will set out the scope of the role to ensure that effective performance can be achieved by all applicants to promote equality and diversity. For any roles that may be offering existing employees’ promotion, City Skills will assess each candidate against robust criteria, ensure that a decision can be objectively assessed against a scoring matrix to source the best candidate.

City Skills will constantly review our packages to all employees and promote a positive approach to employee requests, such as flexible working requests or contract variations. All requests will be treated with a fair approach with all opportunities explored before reaching a decision and continue to constantly work with employees to promote an inclusive working environment. City Skills will regularly review any changes within employment law and adapt our policies and procedures to ensure that City Skills remains within the law and promote fairness within all areas of the business to all employees.

# Your responsibilities

It is City Skills expectations that all employees follow and drive our commitment of fairness across the business whether internally or externally to promote and provide equal opportunities and avoid and unlaw discrimination through employment opportunities or our delivery method and assessment to learners/apprentices.

City Skills will expect all employee to regularly familiarise themselves with this policy, attend any standardisation or training course either internally or externally to update their knowledge and skill set on how to identify any type of discrimination within the business. City Skills will also expect all employees to complete yearly CPD exercises, send certificate to the HR department and ensure CPD log is updated to promote the business’s vision for equality and diversity.

City Skills recognises that any type or act of discrimination (APPENDIX 1), harassment, and bullying towards any employee, external client, learner will be recognised as a disciplinary offence and as such will be treated under our disciplinary procedure. City Skills treats any act of discrimination, harassment and bullying as gross misconduct and as a result could lead to the employee being dismissed immediately without notice and learners/apprentices removed from their apprenticeship.

City Skills requires and expects any employee to report any type of discrimination, harassment or bullying against another member of staff, client or learner to their line manager, or if this is not practical to report this to the HR department, who will investigate the concern and take action as necessary.

Should you feel that you have been treated with the sole purpose of discrimination, you must report this to your line manager or if not practical the HR department. If you feel that you have been subjected to any form of harassment or bullying, City Skills encourages you to report this through our grievance process which can be found in our bullying and harassment policy. City Skills will treat each reported concern/accusation with the strictest of confidence and will fully investigate to ensure the most appropriate outcomes is implemented. City Skills will not penalise the individual for raising a concern of discrimination, harassment or bullying, even if not upheld, unless through the investigation you have been found to have made a concern that is either untrue or made in bad faith.

All employees should be aware that should any false claim made by an employee against another employee, client, or a learner, could be personally liable for any claim that was made against the individual. Should you as an employee commit serious acts of harassment or bullying, you may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

# Training

City Skills expects all new employees to complete mandatory training as set within their on-boarding plan to ensure they have either gained knowledge on this topic of equality and diversity or upskilled their knowledge before working within the business or conducting sessions with learners/apprentices.

City Skills expects all employees to attend standardisation meetings or business meetings to ensure any delivery on the topic of equality and diversity is delivered to the business at the same time.

Each year the HR department of City Skills will invite all employee to complete an accredited programme to ensure that knowledge of all employees is being continually developed.

City Skills HR department will deliver training to all line manager to ensure recruitment is conducted correctly to ensure our commitment to equal opportunities to employment and promotion within the business. City Skills HR department will provide all line managers on how to deal with concerns raised effectively to provide the correct outcome.

Whilst City Skills will offer support, guidance, and training to all employees throughout their employment journey; City Skills expects all employees to conduct themselves appropriately to promote an inclusive environment for all to work, opportunities in employment, and learn. City Skills expects all employees to prevent and challenge any direct or indirect discrimination, bullying and harassment and report this to their line manager or if not practical the HR department.

# Monitoring and Review

City Skills will review this policy each year to ensure that we are able to offer all employees and its learners/apprentices the opportunity to work, develop and learn in an inclusive environment which values and supports equality and diversity. Through this review City Skills will ensure that this policy is accurate and works in line with law and best practice.

# Associated Policies

To ensure that City Skills employees, learners/apprentices, and potential employees feel they are of have been treated fairly with their time with City Skills. City Skills would recommend that the following policies are sourced should they wish to make a complaint:

* Bullying and Harassment
* Disciplinary Policy
* Grievance Policy

**APPENDIX 1**

**Types of discrimination**

The point below will give a brief overview to the different types of discrimination that either an individual or group can come up against in their professional of personal life.

* **Direct discrimination** – This is a result of a person being directly discriminated or treated in a less favourable way due to their individual protected characteristic.
* **Indirect discrimination** – This is the act at which criteria, or a provision is implemented to be detrimental to an individual or group that share a particular protected characteristic compared to someone or group who do not.
* **Harassment** – This is deemed where there is unwanted behaviour, that is related to one of the protected characteristics:

1. **Has the sole purpose or desired effect to violate a person’s dignity, through methods such as intimidation, creation of a hostile or offensive environment, or humiliation/**
2. **The person experiencing feels that they are experiencing such experiences as described above.**

* **Associate discrimination** – This act of discrimination is where a person is being discriminated or harassed because of an association with another person who has a protected characteristic.
* **Perceptive discrimination** – This is the direct act of discrimination or harassment based on the person’s perception that the person has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not have that protected characteristic.
* **Third party harassment –** this is the act when an employee is being harassed by third parties, such as, external stakeholder, learners/apprentices, or subcontractors.
* **Victimisation –** This is a result if someone being treated less favourably than others, this includes where an employee has supported an employee to make a complaint because of unlawful discrimination or given evidence
* **Failure to make reasonable judgements** – This is where arrangements that are designed not to disadvantage a person because of their disability and reasonable adjustments have not been put into place to overcome the disadvantage. For City Skills learners/apprentices, additional information can be found in the Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

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| **Policy review area** | **Operations** |
| **Lead Manager** | **Human Resources** |
| **Approval Level** | **Board** |
| **Start Date** | **Sep-22** |
| **Review Cycle** | **1 year** |
| **Next Review** | **Sep-23** |
|  |  |
| **Approved By** | **Rich Holmden** |