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Applicability:	This Operating Procedure is applicable across all Apprenticeship delivery.
Summary:	This Operating Procedure details the controls required for the management of documents and records that form part of Northern Apprenticeships compliance and quality procedure.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1 INTRODUCTION

Northern Apprenticeships is fully committed to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We treat everyone fairly, we respect and value the diversity of learners, clients, other employees, suppliers, partners, and all other people we work with. We strive to create a positive working environment to support learning and improve employment opportunities where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We will challenge any instance of inequality and will anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances so that everyone can achieve their full potential.

2 OBJECTIVE

The aim of this Equality and Diversity Policy is to integrate consideration of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day business of the organisation. This policy describes how we will put our vision and principles into practice and fulfil our statutory duties to promote equality, value diversity and eliminate discrimination so that all learners, employees and employers realise their potential.

Where learners are learning or training in subcontracted suppliers, when applicable, the 'local' (supplier's own) learner equality and diversity policy and arrangements will be applied and enforced first but where these do not exist or are incomplete, this policy will be applied.

This policy applies to:

- ✓ actual and prospective learners ('learner' is used as a common term to also denote client and customer where appropriate)
- ✓ employees (individuals who work –or have applied to work for the company either on a permanent, temporary, contractual or voluntary basis)
- ✓ employers (external partners who are in receipt of and/or providing work place learning services)
- ✓ The words 'individual(s)' and 'everyone' are used in this policy to denote all those above.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Northern Apprenticeships strives to ensure all individuals have equal opportunity to access learning and work and to realise their potential. **We will not tolerate any inequality** or any other actions that may limit ability to participate and succeed.

All employers are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt in line with Northern Apprenticeships disciplinary policy.

Objectives relating to fair and inclusive practices will be included in all employees' targets and will form an integral part of performance reviews throughout the year.

The policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the lawn, demographics and internal business requirements.

We recognise and celebrate the diversity of learners, our employees and other stakeholders. We are committed to ensuring all individuals feel safe, respected and listened to regardless of their backgrounds or personal circumstances. We will recognise and value individual differences and remove barriers that put people at a disadvantage.

We wholly support the requirements of the Equality and Diversity Act 2010 and related duties which are consistent with our vision and principles. Northern Apprenticeships will oppose and always challenge

any direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, child bearing or caring status, sexual orientation or marital or civil partnership status.

We will:

- Provide learning and working environments that respect difference and protects the diversity of those working within them
- Raise individual awareness of the importance of equality and diversity and good relations between people of different groups
- Develop the awareness and skills of individuals to promote fairness, inclusivity and good relations, ensuring all staff and customers are treated with dignity and respect.
- In still in everyone high expectations of achievement and progression and value positively the achievements they have made
- Ensure that everyone is enabled to achieve positive outcomes, whatever their background
- Ensure fair and equal access to learning and recruitment and take action to promote equality
- Make reasonable and practicable adjustments to enable individuals to participate in learning or work. Where this is not feasible, we will identify alternative options/solutions
- Consult with and involve individuals on their experience of learning and working with our organisation
- Embed equality impact evaluation into key business projects, critical policies and procedures and business improvement processes
- Create and maintain effective partnerships with employers, suppliers and partners and ensure that they support our commitment to equality and diversity

We will require all individuals:

- To communicate and behave with courtesy, kindness and respect and in accordance with our policies and procedures
- To inform us if they have any additional needs or are experiencing difficulties in learning or working with us
- To value and respect individual differences and the contributions of others
- To maintain a safe and secure learning and working environment
- To take responsibility for their own actions, personal development and performance
- To work to achieve their personal best and allow others to do the same
- To let us know immediately if they are unhappy with any aspect of learning or working with our organisation or have witnessed anything of concern.

4 POLICY

4.1 Access to learning and recruitment

We will strive to ensure that learning and recruitment opportunities are available to all. No individual will be excluded from a learning or recruitment opportunity on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, child bearing or caring status, sexual orientation or marital or civil partnership status. We will record and monitor individual participation/application and withdrawal/rejection of learning/recruitment opportunities to ensure equality of opportunity and fair representation.

In Addition:

- **For Learners:** We will support all learners as far as reasonably possible (but subject to funding and health and safety requirements) to pursue the learning programme of their choice and make all reasonable efforts to ensure physical access to the learning/workplace environment. In circumstances where this is not possible, we will identify alternative options/provision.
- **For Employees:** Wherever possible, all recruitment opportunities will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally and will include an appropriate short statement on equality of opportunity. Selection criteria (role profile) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable and non-discriminatory.
- Wherever practicable, more than one person will be involved in the short listing and interviewing process. All applicants and current employees invited to participate in a selection process will be asked if any assistance / adjustment is required to enable them to fully participate, including with completion of the application support for people whose English is a second language.
- All employees who are involved in the recruitment, selection or promotion process will receive training and support in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques as part of the company development programme.
- We will provide access to appropriate training and development to allow employees to carry out their roles. Each training and development need will be treated on its individual merits and in accordance with the needs of the business.
- **For Employers:** We will provide services only to managers who support our commitment to equality and diversity and comply with related requirements. We expect employers to ensure fair access to on and off the job learning programmes and work place opportunities and to strive to monitor staff participation and performance.

4.2 Disclosure and additional support provisions

Before starting and during learning/employment, **individuals will be given opportunity (in confidence) to disclose any disability or learning difficulty they may have.** This is to ensure we put in place additional or alternative support or adapted working practices where reasonably practical and possible. We will explain why this information is being sought and how it will be used. We will ask individuals to let us know of any personal commitments or barriers which can affect their commitment or time in learning or employment and offer help/alternative ways of working to minimise their impact.

In Addition:

- **For Learners:** Where a learner discloses a disability or learning difficulty, we will identify what additional or alternative support provisions need to be put in place in discussion with them.
- We will endeavour to secure and provide any additional support for the duration of the learner's learning programme where reasonably practical and possible and in full, agreed disclosure by the learner. Support could be in the form of additional/alternative assistance, provision of a specialist service, involvement of personal carers/support workers, provision of alternative or adaptive equipment or learning environment etc. Where it is not reasonably possible to provide required and sufficient (specialist) support to enable a learner to achieve with us, we will contact the learner's referral agency and/or signpost to more suitable provision.
- Where barriers to learning cannot be minimised to such an extent to make learning with our organisation viable, we will refer the learner to their referral agency and/or signpost them to alternative provision.
- We will explain where learners are eligible for government funding to enrol and receive additional or alternative support on learning programmes.

- All learners will have their learning and access needs assessed to identify suitable learning programmes that are relevant to their development objectives and goals.
- **For Employees:** Where an employee declares a disability, reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate this by making reasonable adjustments. The company may consider re-deployment and appropriate re-training to enable the employee to remain in employment where possible.
- **For Employers:** We will, where appropriate and with the learner's permission, share information on any disability, learning difficulty and/or barriers to learning and where appropriate require support/ provision from the employer to accommodate these in the learner's learning and employment

4.3 Induction and equality training

All individuals will receive an induction into their learning/employment and working environment. We will make everyone aware of our commitment to equality and diversity, arrangements in place to ensure all people are treated fairly and equally, standards of behaviour and how to make us aware of any dissatisfaction or concern.

In Addition:

- **For Learners:** During learning, we will remind learners of arrangements in place to ensure equality of opportunity and to promote diversity, give regular opportunity to disclose any disability or learning difficulty or adjust additional support provisions and support them to develop their awareness of equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- **For Employees:** All new employees are required to complete mandatory equality and diversity e-learning modules. All staff will be required to refresh their knowledge by completing **the e-learning modules annually** and familiarising themselves with any supportive equality guidance. **An additional e-learning module** will need to be completed by employees with people management responsibilities.
- **For Employers:** We expect employers to provide staff induction, training and information on equality and diversity arrangements in place within their organisation and what to do should a staff member wishes to make a complaint.

4.4 Learning and working environment

We are committed to creating open and conducive learning and working environments where everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We are opposed to and will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or unacceptable behaviour where this makes an individual feel intimidated or offended. We will ensure all individuals have clear routes to report incidents and/or concerns and for these to be managed fairly and fully.

We will strive to ensure all individuals feel comfortable to express their views, experiences and perceptions but in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner. Any form of prejudice, discrimination and/or stereotypical attitudes will be challenged and supported by training on equality and diversity practice

We will ensure that all our learning materials and public and internal communications reflect the diverse society in which we live and enable individual access to working or learning with us.

In Addition:

- **For Learners:** We will have a separate Bullying, Harassment and Disciplinary Policy for learners which sets out types of behaviour which is unacceptable and procedures which will be followed to respond to complaints and/or concerns and how people involved will be supported.
- **For Employees:** We have a separate Dignity at Work Policy for employees which explains how issues of bullying and harassment and complaints of this type will be dealt with.
- **For Employers:** We expect employers to have in place and to communicate procedures that deal with staff bullying, harassment, unacceptable behaviour and disciplinary.

4.5 Monitoring of learner participation, performance and satisfaction

All individuals will be asked to provide personal information on starting learning or working on their age, gender, ethnicity, disability and learning difficulty. This information is used for monitoring purposes only and will remain confidential to our organisation and (where relevant) funding agencies. If individuals so wish, they may decline to provide this information. We will undertake regular analysis of learner and employee group data to ensure any notable variation is addressed and any participation and/or performance gaps are reduced.

All individuals will be encouraged to give their feedback on their experience of learning or working with our organisation and these will be analysed to assess levels of satisfaction and to identify any improvements.

In Addition:

- **For Learners:** Where appropriate, we will set Company Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) and require our associates/partners to do the same to address identified variation or gaps between the participation and/or achievement of different learner groups.
- **For Employees:** We will encourage employee promotion but this will only take place as a result of objective assessment based on the specific abilities, skills and knowledge required for the post. We will exercise equal access to promotion and opportunities will be advertised on the basis that they are accessible to all employees including those that work full time, part time, from home (if applicable) and those that are office based.
- There may be situations where some specialist posts are only suitable for people with particular skills but consideration must still be given to all employees and a fair selection process adopted as some employees may have skills of which the company are unaware but to minimise this we will maintain a skills competency matrix and CPD logs
- **For Employers:** We will encourage employers to measure the participation, performance and satisfaction of their staff and support us in developmental work to promote and address under-representation.

5 DEFINITIONS

Document Definitions	
Term	Definition
CPD	Continuous Professional Development

6 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Document title	Reference
Learning and Assessment Policy & Strategy	PL00005