

Career Connect POLICY DOCUMENT Equality and Diversity

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VERSION HISTORY

Ver	Date	Inits	Reason for change
5	02/13	DK	For ISO 9001
6	24/08/15	FSN	Updated to Career Connect
7	13/01/16	DK	Reviewed for job role changes.
8	9/12/16	FSN	Updated for Job Titles
9	15.06.17	DK	Two Ticks now Disability Confident standard
10	18.12.17	DK	Public Sector Equality duty
11	28.02.18	ZD	Annual review and update of procedure

POLICY OWNER

Quality & Workforce Development Committee

SCOPE

Career Connect is an organisation that recognises and embraces equality and diversity.

This Equality and Diversity policy sets out its commitment to placing equality and diversity at the centre of every aspect of its work. It applies to all employees, visitors, volunteers and those delivering services under the auspices of Career Connect.

This policy provides a framework for ensuring that the principles of equality and diversity are mainstreamed throughout the business and that positive action is taken to ensure their implementation in terms of:

- Employment within the organisation
- Provision of services to young people, their families and adult clients

All other Career Connect policies & procedures will pay due regard to the principles contained in this policy.

AUTHORITY

Career Connect is committed to equality and diversity and is responsive to the framework of relevant legislation, contractual arrangements and direction from the Career Connect Board. Our policies and processes support and embed

inclusivity into all that we do. We aspire to maintain our commitment to best practice and surpass the minimum legal requirements which follow:

Framework of Legislation which underpin this policy:

- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Work and Families Act 2006
- Gender Equality Duty Statutory Code of Practice 2006
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Regard for Public Sector Equality Duty

STATEMENT OF POLICY

As a service provider:

Career Connect is fully committed to making equality and diversity a reality for the customers it serves. We will do everything possible to involve customers to ensure that they have access to services, and that these services are effective irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity, or any other individual characteristic that may limit a person's opportunities in life. We aim to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not through inclusive delivery and effective workforce management.

We value the diversity of the local area and want services to be fully accessible, relevant and meaningful to all customers. Services and information will be available in accessible formats upon request, which includes the provision of interpreters and materials in other formats such as other languages, Braille or large print.

The service will continue to challenge stereotyping and support individuals considering opportunities in non-traditional areas. Our modes of delivery will be accessible so that all services can be understood and used by those with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as those less familiar with or able to access web-based technology. Equality and diversity will be integral to the development of the service and we will monitor take-up of services – and the outcomes achieved – by these groups.

Career Connect as an employer

We believe that equality and diversity should be mainstreamed throughout the organisation, it makes good business sense. We are an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies

and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

We will ensure that our existing employees and applicants to the organisation are treated fairly and equally. We will strive through the effective implementation of our HR policies and procedures to become an exemplar employer. Every employee is entitled to dignity and respect and procedures are in place to ensure that under no circumstances will any form of discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment be tolerated.

Our recruitment processes promote diversity and selection for employment, promotion, training and development will only be on the basis of aptitude and ability. A recruitment and Selection policy is available to all managers involved in the recruitment process along with HR support to ensure the advertising and selection process is objective and fair. Career Connect strives to attract a diverse range of disabled and BME applicants to ensure a workforce which mirrors the local communities it serves and will do this through advertising vacancies through a number of publications/social media platforms in a range of areas across the North West and England as well as other geographical areas that are appropriate to where the services are delivered, so that we attract a wide range of suitable applicants. We also look to these communities for staff recruitment and consultation about how Career Connect can best work for them. This commitment extends to the make up of our Board.

Through an ongoing staff development equality programme, which reaches beyond induction, we will ensure that all our employees are equipped to tackle all forms of discrimination and to promote equality and diversity in all aspects of their work, both internally and across the partnership.

As an approved 'Disability Confident Employer' (previously known as the Two Ticks standard), we are committed to making reasonable adjustments in the workplace so that all staff and potential employees are given every opportunity to enjoy a healthy working life with Career Connect. Flexible working also allows many staff to manage their work life balance, which is of particular value for those with care responsibilities.

Monitoring is an essential aspect of the development of equality and diversity at Career Connect. Monitoring arrangements are in place for applications to jobs, promotion, training and development, grievances, disciplinary actions, performance appraisal, dismissals and other reasons for leaving. We also apply these principles equally in a TUPE situation.

The performance of Career Connect against its key equality performance indicators will be reported annually to the board.

Types of Discrimination

Direct - Is when someone is treated differently/ at a disadvantage because of their gender, marital status, gender reassignment, ethnic or national origin, nationality, race, colour, sexual orientation, religion, belief, trade union membership, part-time or fixed-term status, age or disability.

Harassment - Where unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct occurs which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Indirect – Is less obvious and can occur where there is a policy, practice, procedure or workplace rule which applies to all workers, but particularly disadvantages an individual because of gender, marital status, gender reassignment, ethnic or national origin, nationality, race, colour, sexual orientation, religion, belief, trade union membership, part-time or fixed-term status, age or disability.

Victimisation - Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint about disability discrimination.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENTS

1. AGE

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity;
- ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities; and
challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people

2. DISABILITY

We will:

- provide 'reasonable' adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of interpreters and materials in other formats such as other languages, Braille or large print.

3. RACE

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs;
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents; and
- actively promote race equality in the Company.

4. GENDER

We will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about women and men;

- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women and men;
- offer equal access for women and men to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same; and
- provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

5. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals; and
- promote positive images of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

6. RELIGION OR BELIEF

We will:

- ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible; and
- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

7. PREGNANCY OR MATERNITY

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of pregnancy or maternity;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy or maternity of our employees; and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' pregnancy or maternity.

8. MARRIAGE OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of marriage or civil partnership;
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees; and

- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account the needs of our employees' marriage or civil partnership.

9. EX-OFFENDERS

We will:

- prevent discrimination against our employees regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).

10. EQUAL PAY

We will:

- ensure that all employees, male or female, have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

Disablement

Employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the Charity of any 'reasonable adjustments' which they consider to be necessary or which they consider would assist them in the performance of their duties.

Consideration will be given to any proposals and an Occupational health assessment or further information may be required from the individuals GP/Consultants to help the Charity understand the barriers the employee is experiencing and to put the appropriate adjustments in place. Other services may be called upon such as (but not limited to) Access to Work and The Risk Business.

The legal requirement is to make adjustments that are 'reasonable'. This duty falls to the organisation as a whole. We will involve the employee through any discussions about adjustments but it must be noted that resources (including finances and equipment) of the whole organisation will be taken into account when deciding what is 'reasonable'.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in our Company as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Company. Breaches of our equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Career Connect working with partner agencies or subcontractors

Career Connect promotes its values on equality and diversity in its dealings with partner agencies, contractors, suppliers, as part of any contract for services with providers that the company funds (within existing legislation).

IN THIS WAY CAREER CONNECT CAN EXTEND ITS IMPACT ON ERADICATING DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTE REAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FOR ALL. ROBUST MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT NEW PROVIDERS CAN EVIDENCE THEIR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PRACTICE. RESPONSIBILITY

- A designated member of the Career Connect Leadership Team has overall responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of this policy and underpinning procedures are implemented.
- HR are responsible for developing and reviewing related quality procedures which ensure equality within the workforce and will provide through the Workforce and Quality Committee, 6 monthly monitoring reports to maintain an appropriate staff profile, reflective of the diverse communities it serves.
- Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff implement relevant quality procedures/ work instructions and have access to appropriate learning opportunities which meet their personal development needs.
- Individual contract teams are committed to monitoring performance targets for vulnerable and underachieving clients, with a particular focus on learners with LDD/ SEN and those from BME communities.

All employees, volunteers and those delivering services on behalf of Career Connect are responsible for implementing this equality and diversity policy; any behaviour exhibited by clients or visitors which contravenes this policy will be challenged.

Raising Complaints

Career Connect is committed to creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive, where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the listed protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or another colleague in a relevant position of seniority.

You may raise a formal using the grievance procedure.

A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy.

External complainants should be addressed to the Data Controller at Career Connect, Walker House, 7th Floor, Exchange Flags, Liverpool L2 3YL alternatively via e-mail: data.controller@careerconnect.org.uk.

The complaint must:

- identify the alleged person;
- give specific examples of the actions or conduct that the employee believes constitutes discrimination or harassment; and
- include times, dates and names of any witnesses.

All complaints will be dealt with in a serious, sensitive and confidential manner, so that the matter can be resolved as quickly as possible for all concerned.

Malicious or false allegations of a breach of this policy will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

If there is good reason to believe that an individual's complaint has not been fully addressed, they will have the right to escalate their complaint to the Chief Executive.