

## 1. learndirect's equality and diversity vision

**learndirect** is committed to treating everyone fairly, we respect and value the diversity of our learners, clients, employees, suppliers, partners, employers 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. Scope and purpose

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-based **learndirect** services)

The words 'individual(s)' and 'everyone' are used in this policy to denote all those above.

**learndirect** 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.

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

We wholly support the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and related duties which are consistent with our Vision and principles. We 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.

The purpose of this policy is to describe 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, 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.

## 3. Equality of opportunity and outcome in learning/employment

### 3.1 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.

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Additionally:

**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. 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 'Managing with PACE' Management Development Programme.

In accordance with the company's commitment to the Positive about Disability scheme, a job interview is guaranteed to all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy.

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 **learndirect** services only to employers who support our commitment to equality and diversity and comply with related requirements. We expect employers to ensure fair access to **learndirect** programmes and work-based opportunities and to strive to monitor staff participation and performance.

## 3.2 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.

Additionally:

**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 **learndirect**, we will contact the learner's referral agency and/or signpost to more suitable provision.

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Where barriers to learning cannot be minimised to such an extent to make learning with **learndirect** 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.

## 3.3 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.

Additionally:

**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.

## 3.4 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

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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.

Additionally:

**For learners:** We have a separate Code of Conduct 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. Where learners are following work-based training in employers, they will also be subject to their employer's disciplinary procedure(s).

**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.

## 3.5 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 **learndirect** 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 **learndirect** and these will be analysed to assess levels of satisfaction and to identify any improvements.

Additionally:

**For learners:** Where appropriate, we will set Company Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) and require our supply chain 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 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.

**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.

## 4. Responsibilities

We will:

1. Provide learning and working environments that respect difference and protects the diversity of those working within them
2. Raise individual awareness of the importance of equality and diversity and good relations between people of different groups
3. Develop the awareness and skills of individuals to promote fairness, inclusivity and good relations
4. Instill in everyone high expectations of achievement and progression and value positively the achievements they have made
5. Ensure that everyone is enabled to achieve positive outcomes, whatever their background
6. Ensure fair and equal access to learning and recruitment and take action to promote equality
7. 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
8. Consult with and involve individuals on their experience of learning and working with **learndirect**
9. Embed equality impact evaluation into key business projects, critical policies and procedures and business improvement processes
10. 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:

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

## 5. Complaint/grievances

We will make all individuals aware of the steps to follow should they wish to raise a concern, grievance or make a complaint. We will aim to fully resolve any concerns or problems as quickly as possible and if we cannot resolve or put right straight away we will explain why and say what we can do.

**For learners:** The quickest and easiest way for a learner to raise a concern or make a complaint is to do so via their tutor, trainer, assessor or centre manager.

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Where a learner is learning through one of our supply chain partners, this will initiate their own procedure first and the learner will be advised of who will take responsibility for resolving their concern or complaint and how long this should take.

Where a learner does not feel able to do this, the following options are available to all learners:

Call us on 0800 101 901 (the **learndirect** helpline is open Monday – Friday 9am-6pm, and Saturday 10am-4pm)

Contact us online by completing a short web form.

See [www.learndirect.com/help/contact-us/](http://www.learndirect.com/help/contact-us/)

Write to us at 'FREEPOST' **learndirect** (no stamp required)

**For employees:** If you wish to make a complaint or raise a concern of unlawful discrimination, you should follow the company's Grievance Resolution Procedure. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment please refer to the company's Dignity at Work Policy. The company will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance which it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Any employee (found to be) breaching this policy will be regarded as behaving in a manner that constitutes an act of misconduct and will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

**For employers:** If you wish to make a complaint or raise a concern of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment and/or unacceptable behaviour by a **learndirect** employee, you should:

Call **learndirect** on 0800 101 901 (the **learndirect** helpline is open Monday – Friday 9am-6pm, and Saturday 10am-4pm)

Contact us online by completing a short web form.

See [www.learndirect.com/help/contact-us/](http://www.learndirect.com/help/contact-us/)

Write to us at 'FREEPOST' **learndirect** (no stamp required)

## 6. Review and related policies

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.

This policy is linked to:

**learndirect** Equality and Diversity Vision 2013

**learndirect**'s Learner Promise

**learndirect**'s Employee Dignity at Work Policy

**learndirect**'s Code of Conduct

**learndirect**'s Grievance Resolution Procedure

**We are committed to promoting equality for all. If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact us:**

By letter at: FREEPOST **learndirect** By telephone on: 0800 101 901

By email at: [translations@learndirect.com](mailto:translations@learndirect.com) Online at: [www.learndirect.com/help/contact-us/](http://www.learndirect.com/help/contact-us/)