

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

Our aim and commitment at Vocational Training Services is to work within the guidelines of the Equality Act 2010 and to ensure that no person, whether an applicant for employment, employee, customer (employer, learner, young person or adult), partner, stakeholder or member of the community, receives less favourable treatment because of their age, race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or beliefs, marriage or partnerships or pregnancy and maternity (the nine protected characteristics) and to recognise any barriers to inclusion and overcome them.

All employees, customers, partners and stakeholders have the right to be treated with dignity and consideration. This extends to the right to work in a healthy and safe environment, free from intimidation, discrimination, harassment, bullying either directly or indirectly by other employees. Vocational Training Services is committed to the implementation of this Policy and will actively pursue practices designed to promote fairness and to eliminate intimidation, discrimination, harassment and bullying.

The overall responsibility for the Policy lies with the Managing Director of Vocational Training Services, however all employees of Vocational Training Services are expected to comply with the policy, and to act in accordance with its objectives so as to remove any barriers to equality and fairness. Any act of discrimination by employees or any failure to comply with the terms of the policy may result in disciplinary action.

Vocational Training Services will comply with Government legislation and will support the Single Equality Schemes of relevant funding bodies.

1. Policy Aim and Objectives

(a) Aim

To oppose all forms of unfair discrimination, promote good practice, and ensure fair treatment and well-being for all, within the work environment.

(b) Objectives

- (i) Ensure all existing and potential employees are provided with equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment, recruitment, selection and promotion and training
- (ii) Ensure all individuals and groups are treated fairly and with dignity
- (iii) Ensure that no individual(s) or groups receive less favourable treatment than another, or is disadvantaged by requirements or conditions which cannot be otherwise justified
- (iv) Identify and eliminate any existing or potential practices, procedures and customs which unfairly discriminate and/or which may cause detriment to an individual
- (v) Ensure that all premises are accessible and available to all
- (vi) Ensure that equal access to all services and customer care initiatives are provided by VTS
- (vii) Ensure the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of monitoring to provide sufficient, accurate, current and specific data to assist future planning, and to enhance the process of effective evaluation and review.
- (viii) Ensure the continuation of culture change towards equal opportunities and acknowledgement of diversity within VTS by a commitment to this policy and a continual training programme for all employees.
- (ix) Ensure the implementation of agreed grievance, disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures and provision of support and advice networks in order to protect all employees and service users from discriminatory behaviour.

- (x) Increase the awareness and opportunity to apply for posts (vacancies) within VTS, from under-represented groups.

2. Policy Framework

- (a) The law requires that individuals shall not unlawfully discriminate, nor shall they help others to do so. To ensure compliance with both the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, the VTS Equal Opportunities Policy has been developed within a framework of legislation and codes of practice.
- (c) VTS will use these laws, regulations and policies to seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between all
- (d) All employees must observe the requirements of the Equal Opportunities Policy and apply it's principles without exception
- (e) This policy sets out the general provisions only and is not the definitive statement of the law.

3. Responsibility for Equal Opportunities

- (a) The Managing Director has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the VTS Equal Opportunities Policy. However, this does not preclude the day to day responsibilities of all line managers and other employee's.
- (b) VTS recognises that for the successful implementation of any Equal Opportunities Policy there are specific responsibilities of both the employer and employees which must be undertaken.

4. Monitoring and Review Procedures

- (a) Records will be maintained in order to provide a statistical database to monitor the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy and to review policies and practices as appropriate.

5. Guidance/Further Information

Further information on legislation, rights and responsibilities can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com

6. Offensive Material

(a) The Display and Use of Offensive Materials

Introduction

- (i) VTS recognises that all employees, potential employees and visitors to its offices have their own individual moral values and must be treated with dignity
- (ii) The display of any material which may be construed as offensive whether sexually suggestive or otherwise is not acceptable. This is regardless of whether or not the workplace is being used only by the same employee(s) who accept the material and where access is denied to, for example, visitors, cleaner, etc

Statement of Policy

- (iv) Materials such as posters, calendars, books or magazines, photographs, cartoons etc, which would cause offence, whether pornographic, sexist, racist or otherwise, must not be displayed in offices occupied by VTS or in personal storage areas
- (v) Films, videos or computer generated or networked material, which could cause offence, whether pornographic, sexist, racist or otherwise, must not be viewed in offices or premises occupied by VTS
- (vi) VTS computer hardware or any other equipment must not be used to view, display, manufacture, copy or edit any material which could cause offence.
- (viii) Prescriptive guidance on whether or not any particular material is offensive is not practical.

It is anticipated that such matters will be determined informally by those affected and line management where appropriate.

- (ix) Any complaint made against VTS will be dealt with in accordance with the VTS complaints/appeals procedure.

7. Review & Monitoring

VTS has developed an Equal Opportunities Action Plan which is subject to Senior Management review on an annual basis.