

Equality and Diversity Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out Norton Webb Limited's approach to equality and diversity. Norton Webb Limited is committed to facilitating equal opportunity and to providing a proactive and inclusive approach to equality which supports all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture and values diversity.

Norton Webb Limited values diversity and recognises that our organisation is greatly enhanced by the different range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures represented within the Norton Webb community. This approach brings valuable insight to us and enhances the work that we do.

Norton Webb Limited is an inclusive organisation which is committed to providing equal opportunities to our workforce, customers and learners. This includes: equality of pay, recruitment, training and development of all stakeholders, and to proactively tackling and eliminating discrimination.

Equality and Diversity at Norton Webb Limited

At Norton Webb Limited, we consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all.

We consider diversity to mean celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences - by embracing this in all of our activities, we acknowledge that variety and difference are intrinsic to the success and future development of our business.

Equality and diversity are not interchangeable but interdependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

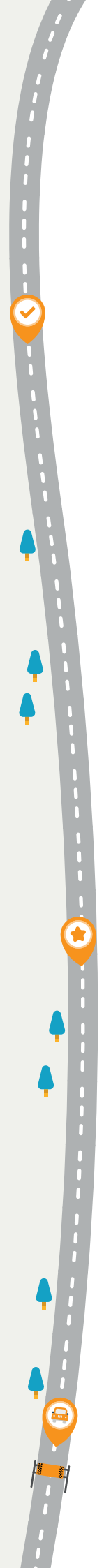
Scope

The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to:

- Actual and prospective learners ('learner' is used as a common term to also denote client and customer where appropriate).
- Employees (all employees, whether part-time or full-time or on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to associated persons such as volunteers, agency staff, contractors and others employed under a contract of service).
- Employers (external partners who are in receipt of and/or providing work-based Norton Webb Limited services).

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

Everyone is personally responsible for upholding this policy and we expect all individuals to behave with dignity, courtesy and respect and to act in a non-discriminatory manner at all times.



This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to our work (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues), or which may impact on Norton Webb Limited's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to Norton Webb Limited).

As part of Norton Webb Limited's employee induction, employees are expected to read and familiarise themselves with this policy, ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with, and to complete the Employee Declaration form.

Norton Webb Limited's Commitment

Every individual is entitled to an environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all.

Norton Webb Limited will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination, harassment, or victimisation committed against an individual or visitor because of a protected characteristic. By law, the following are classified as protected characteristics:

- Sex.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin).
- Disability.
- Sexual orientation.
- Religion and or belief.
- Age.

Discrimination on the basis of an individual's work pattern (e.g. part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working), which is unjustifiable, will also not be tolerated.

All individuals will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential by taking advantage of training, development and progression opportunities.

Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit, will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

Norton Webb Ltd are a Disability Confident employer and are committed to ensuring the inclusive and accessible recruitment of both staff and learners, and providing reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled people who access or provide our services.

Subject to statutory provisions, no individual will be treated less favourably than another because of their belonging to a protected group - this includes equality of pay for all employees.

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If an individual believes that they may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, they should consider

the appropriateness and feasibility of informal resolution. If this is not possible, the individual may make a complaint which will be dealt with through the agreed procedures for complaints and grievances or, where appropriate, the procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment. For types of discrimination, please see the Annex at the end of this policy.

Allegations involving learners and employers will be dealt with using the agreed procedures for handling bullying and harassment as detailed in the Norton Webb Harassment Policy. Learners or employers who are found to have breached this policy may have their relationship terminated with Norton Webb Limited; this includes any funded training which they may be receiving.

An employee found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under Norton Webb Limited's Discipline Policy. Employees may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

Promoting Good Practice

Norton Webb Limited will take active steps to promote good practice in regards to equality and diversity. In particular, we will:

- Subject our policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect protected groups, and to identify whether our policies help to achieve equality of opportunity or have an adverse impact.
- Ensure the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on a protected characteristic, whether actual, perceptive or associative.
- Promote an inclusive culture, good practice in teaching, excellent learning and assessment, and good management practice through the development of best practice policies and training.
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

Training and Educating Employees

All employees undertake equality and diversity training at Induction and revisit this training yearly. The training received is continually reviewed to ensure that the most appropriate and up-to-date training is given.

Periodic updates surrounding key concepts are communicated monthly via the internal communication channels. Monthly focus topics are also distributed via these communication channels to raise awareness and promote discussion in all areas under the wider safeguarding and equality agenda. These areas include: radicalisation, mental health issues, disability awareness, positive relationships, and staying safe on the internet, all of which will educate employees alongside giving greater knowledge to be passed onto learners.

There is reference to equality and diversity in all team meetings which are carried out on a quarterly basis. Equality and diversity (along with safeguarding) is one of the areas covered in the regular questions asked of learners during their monthly training meetings with tutors.

Legislative Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Civil Partnership Act 2004
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010

The Public Sector Equality Duty also applies where we are working on behalf of the public sector.

The above list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed regularly.

Under the above equality legislation, it is unlawful to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone and treat them less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic they have, or are thought to have (perception discrimination), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (discrimination by association).
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.
- Subject someone to harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic.
- Victimise someone because they have made, or intend to make, a complaint or allegation or have given / intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination.
- Discriminate against someone in certain circumstances because of a protected characteristic after the working relationship has ended.

ANNEX - Types of Discrimination

There are various types of discrimination prohibited by this policy. The main types are:

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. By way of example, refusing to promote a pregnant employee on the basis that she is shortly due to go on maternity leave would be direct discrimination on the protected characteristic of the employee's sex. Other types of direct discrimination are:

- **Associative discrimination** - this is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, an employee is discriminated against because their son is disabled.
- **Perceptive discrimination** - this is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. For example, where co-workers believe the individual is gay. This type of discrimination applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied, which appears to be the same for all, but which has a disproportionate, adverse effect on one group of people. This is discrimination even though there was no intention to discriminate. For example, a requirement for UK based qualifications could disadvantage applicants who have obtained their qualifications outside of the UK; therefore, this could amount to indirect discrimination on the grounds of race.

Victimisation

Victimisation is where an employee is treated less favourably than others because they have asserted legal rights against Norton Webb Limited or assisted a colleague in doing so. For example, victimisation may occur where an employee has raised a genuine grievance against Norton Webb Limited and is demoted or disciplined as a result.

Harassment

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”. It is important to remember that it is not the intention of the harasser but how the recipient perceives their behaviour which determines whether harassment has occurred. Please see Norton Webb Limited’s Harassment Policy, for further details of how Norton Webb Limited will deal with bullying and harassment.

Norton Webb confirms that this policy applies to any projects where ESF funding or ESF matched funding is applicable.

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