

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

Medway Adult Education is a community where everyone can contribute and be appreciated for who they are. All staff, learners and representatives help to make our talented community what it is. We strive to provide an inclusive, respectful and considerate environment where you are supported to accomplish your goals.

Medway Adult Education is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all and take equality & diversity responsibilities seriously. By promoting awareness of our beliefs, values and behaviours to staff, learners and other individuals, we ensure that all of those who we work with will be treated with the respect and dignity regardless of their skills, needs, limitations, beliefs, culture or values. It is our belief that every individual has the right to equal access to training and no individual should be denied the opportunity to have a career and work towards achieving their goal.

This policy includes recruitment and promotion, and provides guidance and encouragement to employees at all levels to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, part-time and fixed term contract status, age, sexual orientation or religion.

2. Definition of Discrimination

(a) Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Both forms of discrimination must be avoided.

(b) Direct discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favorably than another on grounds relating to sex, race, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

(c) Indirect discrimination occurs where a requirement is imposed which can be complied with by a smaller proportion of persons of a particular sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion, than persons in another group and which is not objectively justifiable in the given situation. Examples include:

- seeking job applications only from persons under 27 years of age and with five years' post-graduate experience;
- demanding technical qualifications for a job which are not strictly necessary;
- sending only full time employees on training courses.

3. Statement of policy

Our vision of equality is one where we:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences in age, gender identity, race, background, disability, sex or sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and identified as protected characteristics.
- Create a range of opportunities that enable as many people as possible to access our services, participate fully and achieve their goals
- Provide safe and inclusive places to learn and work
- Actively promote positive attitudes and good relations between people of different groups
- Recognise we all have a role to play in challenging discrimination, prejudice and unfair behaviour, whatever their origins
- Work together to promote equality, diversity and inclusion

4. Recruitment and Employment of Staff

(a) Advertisements for posts will give sufficiently clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post. Information about vacant posts will be provided in such a manner that does not restrict its audience in terms of sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion.

(b) Recruitment literature will not imply a preference for one group of applicants unless there is a genuine occupational qualification which limits the post to this particular group, in which case this must be clearly stated.

(c) All vacancies will be circulated internally.

(d) All descriptions and specifications for posts will include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.

(e) All selection will be thorough, conducted against defined criteria and will deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job. Where it is necessary to ask questions relating to personal circumstances, these will be related purely to job requirements and asked to all candidates.

(f) MAE will not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion in the allocation of duties between employees employed at any level with comparable job descriptions.

(g) MAE will put in place any reasonable measures and/or adjustments within the workplace for those employees who become disabled during employment or for disabled appointees.

(h) All employees will be considered solely on their merits for career development and promotion with equal opportunities for all.

5. Enrolment and Retention of Learners inc Apprentices

(a) Processes for the enrolment of learners and apprentices onto training programmes and/or courses, including initial diagnostic activities and assessment of eligibility, will not preclude any individual on the basis of a protected characteristic

(b) Enrolment processes will capture information relating to LLDD so that a Support Plan can be put in place where required and in agreement with the learner or apprentice. This will incorporate any reasonable adjustments and special considerations to enable fair access to teaching, learning and assessment. Medway Adult Education staff working with the learner or apprentice will be briefed on the support agreed and ensure that the learner or apprentice is not disadvantaged

(c) Learners and apprentices will be given access to this policy and they will be briefed on action to take if they have an equality and diversity concern

(d) Equality and diversity and this policy will be discussed with apprentice employers to ensure there are processes in place to protect apprentices and raise related issues

(e) Any reasonable adjustments and special considerations needed for on-programme or end-point assessments will be discussed with learners or apprentices so that appropriate action can be taken

6. Promotion and Engagement

(a) The policy is shared with all staff, learners and apprentices

(b) The policy is included within learner and staff handbooks

(c) The policy is published on the Medway Adult Education website

- (d) Equality and diversity is discussed at apprentice and employer review meetings and in training and development
- (e) New staff are briefed on this policy and its implementation, and trained in equality and diversity during induction
- (f) Existing staff are re-briefed on this policy and its implementation, and re-trained in equality and diversity every two years, with an annual update
- (g) Training is monitored through the Medway Adult Education EBS system and within the Performance and Development Review process
- (h) Staff with teaching and learning responsibilities are trained in embedding equality and diversity into their practice and the content of their delivery with learners and apprentices
- (i) All learners, apprentices and staff are provided with the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence and to deal with equality & diversity issues in a professional manner
- (j) Staff complete and observe internal training & events in line with organisation policies
- (k) Learners/apprentices complete Equality & Diversity training as part of their curriculum
- (l) Medway Adult Education ensures that staff are aware of the issues that can affect minority groups and other learners affected by disabilities
- (m) Medway Adult Education takes reasonable steps to ensure suitable resources are made available and are used effectively to support equality & diversity For learners/apprentices
- (n) Learners/apprentices are briefed on this policy and how to raise a related issue, and trained in equality and diversity during induction
- (o) Courses are provided at various levels, so learners/apprentices have a choice that is commensurate with their ability, and with delivery to suit their needs
- (p) Ambition is fostered and progression is encouraged, whether into further courses, higher education or continued employment

(q) Learners/apprentices are prepared for continued employment, or further progression, with the aim of producing well-rounded individuals who can fit in with and contribute to society

7. Engagement with employers

(a) Equality and Diversity and this policy will be discussed with employers that MAE work with to promote engagement and ensure that appropriate workplace policy and procedures are in place to protect learners and apprentices.

(b) The Business Development Manager when initiating partnerships with employers to support teaching and learning at Medway Adult Education will discuss this policy and ensure principles are aligned.

8. Monitoring

(a) It is the responsibility of the Quality and Curriculum Manager to ensure that all aspects of this policy are kept under review and are operated throughout the organisation.

(b) Where it appears that learners, apprentices, applicants and employees are not being offered equal opportunities, circumstances will be investigated to identify any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage certain employees and, if so, whether these are justifiable.

9. Grievances and victimisation

(a) MAE emphasises that discrimination is unacceptable conduct which may lead to disciplinary action under the organisation's Disciplinary Procedure.

(b) Any complaints of discrimination will be pursued through the organisation's Grievance Procedure.