

Equality & Diversity Policy

Introduction

Consultancy and Facilitation Ltd (C&F) welcomes people from diverse backgrounds in its commitment to develop their knowledge and skills to their full potential. C&F is committed to a working environment which provides equal and fair opportunity, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, race, colour, religion, belief, disability, mental status, age, national or ethnic status. We hold this under the Equality Act 2010 and our moral obligations in society. There are 9 protected characteristics under this Act: - Race - Religion and belief - Sex - Sexual Orientation - Gender Reassignment - Age - Disabilities (physical, learning and mental) - Marriage and Civil Partnership - Pregnancy and Maternity.

C&F will encourage high performance and cooperation from individuals, whilst recognising and accepting needs and differences. C&F will utilise the talents of employees and a network of associates to maximise performance and strive to ensure that the company is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Aims of the policy

To challenge inequality, prejudice and discrimination against learners, customers and employees, from other employers, or members of the public.

To notify employees, associates and learners that reasonable adjustments will be made to meet learning and working arrangements to ensure equal access for those with different needs.

To consider any groups of learners or staff who may need adjustments made by way of their shared protected characteristic.

To establish and use good practice in promoting and booking courses, in the development and dissemination of learning materials.

To identify other policies which may impact or be impacted by the needs of equality and diversity in order to better accommodate our learners, associates and staff members. This policy hopes to increase awareness of the need for Equality over and above the moral impetus.

To establish and use good practice when communicating within C&F members, potential members, clients and learners

To identify and use a method of recording and monitoring the ethnic, gender and disability composition of our workforce and our learners, so that we can learn and grow ensuring that we are providing equal opportunities to all parties.

Responsibilities of the Managing Director (MD) are to:

To ensure that all employees and learners are treated without discrimination according to the details and the spirit of this policy.

To monitor the compliance with the policy through the Self-Assessment Report and to ensure that any identified actions are carried through.

To act as chairperson in the disciplinary or grievance process where a learner or employee has failed to comply with the responsibilities outlined in this policy.

To maintain an up to date Equality and Diversity Policy that reflects equal opportunities law. Allowing any person who discloses that they have a disability or other protected characteristic in the recruitment stage to have a guaranteed interview if they meet all of the required criteria for the job role.

When requested, the MD will be able to identify:

- the race, disability, gender and age distribution of our workforce
- whether they are full or part time
- an indication of the likely representation on sexual orientation and religion and belief with anonymity
- an indication of any issues for transsexual staff, based on engagement with transsexual staff or equality organisations
- gender pay gap information
- information about occupational segregation
- grievance and dismissal information for people with relevant protected characteristics
- complaints about discrimination and other prohibited conduct from staff
- details and feedback of engagement with staff and trade unions
- quantitative and qualitative research with employees e.g. staff surveys
- records of how we have had due regard to the aims of the duty in decision-making with regard to our employment, including any assessments of impact on equality and any evidence used
- details of policies and programmes that have been put into place to address equality concerns raised by staff and trade unions.

Company Responsibilities

To monitor the ethnic and gender composition of its existing workforce and learners. C&F will monitor people with disabilities and learning needs within the same groups.

To provide an employee training programme so that everyone within the company understands their rights and responsibilities and what they can do to create an environment free of bullying and harassment.

To inform learners of the appeals procedure at the start of their training so that if they feel they are being discriminated against they understand how to make a complaint or a suggestion for improvement.

To ensure that during the recruitment process each candidate receives equal treatment. This is done with monitoring and policies such as staff vetting and disclosure, criminal convictions and safer recruitment.

To review the effect of its working practices annually and whether these could be considered discriminatory. This includes the number of hours to be worked, the times of working and the places at which the work is carried out.

To ensure acts of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation against employees, learners or customers are treated as disciplinary offences.

To ensure marketing, course information, training material, information produced for customers/C&F members will be accessible, impartial and free from bias or stereotypes.

To use booking forms that will allow learners with disabilities, learning difficulties or for whom English is not a first language to provide information about their needs. Reasonable adjustments will then be made to meet their needs.

To review all company policies and procedures to ensure that it does not contravene the Equality and Diversity Policy, whilst ensuring that health and safety are not compromised.

Staff responsibilities

To identify any issues relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation whether to themselves or to our customers and report them to the MD.

To attend training relating to the implementation of this policy and to comply with its guidance and the spirit with which it is meant to be applied – to create an agreeable and productive working and learning environment.

Harassment Procedure

C&F has a zero-tolerance policy to sexual harassment. If an employee, learner or customer feels that there is a problem with harassment then they are encouraged to first speak with the person involved. This is often sufficient to stop the problem, however, if the problem persists or if the employee, learner or customer feels unable to deal with the issue then the disciplinary and grievance procedure will be used accordingly.

Compliments, Complaints, Suggestions, Queries and Procedures

All employees, associates and learners will be made aware of how they can give a compliment, make a complaint, raise a query or make a suggestion. They can use company e-mail, phone the office or speak with a member of staff by phone or in person. The information will then be passed to the MD for action.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment” which has the substantial and long-term effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities. C&F recognises it is unlawful to discriminate in matters of employment and training / assessment opportunities on the basis of learning difficulties and disabilities. Moreover, C&F recognises the fact that it must be more committed to helping society which is tolerant and inclusive. This is further supported and underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 which protects disability as one of the 9 characteristics.

C&F is committed to broadening the rights of people with disabilities and ensuring no person is treated less favourably whether they are the learner, a customer, a member of staff, associate or a visitor. C&F will make reasonable adjustments where practical to meet the needs of disabled employees and learners (C&F will preserve the confidentiality of the learners, employees as to the reasons for adaption unless authorised by learners/employees to do so). C&F will check and monitor any publicity and training material presents appropriate and positive messages.

All prospective work placement providers will be informed of the C&F policies on Equal opportunities. Employees and associates of C&F should do everything reasonably practical to ensure visitors are aware of the C&F disability policies and procedures.

Our performance regarding Disability will be reviewed and reported via the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). C&F will monitor complaints, appeals, employees and learner numbers, achievement and employer feedback to identify if C&F’s procedures are having a detrimental effect on its workforce and learners.

Racial Equality

C&F values the diversity brought into its workforce by individuals and believes that the company will benefit from engaging staff and learners from a variety of racial, ethnic and national backgrounds, thus allowing it to meet the needs of a multicultural society. We aim to fulfil the public duties on race equality set out in the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

C&F will treat all employees, associates, clients, learners with respect and dignity. C&F will seek to provide a positive working and learning environment, free from racial discrimination or victimisation. C&F aims to also include equality of opportunity, promote good relations between people of different racial groups and encourage minority groups to participate in all types of learning activities. C&F will check that any publicity and training material presents appropriate and positive messages.

C&F's performance regarding Racial Equality will be reviewed and reported via Self-Assessment Report (SAR). C&F will monitor complaints, appeals, staff and learner numbers, achievements and employer feedback to identify if its procedures are having a detrimental effect on its workforce or learners.

Complaints Policy and Procedures

C&F values complaints as it provides valuable feedback in its continuing bid to develop high quality services that helps customers, staff, associates, learners and visitors. It installs confidence that the complaint will be treated professionally, timely and efficiently without any repercussions.

Sex and Gender

C&F allows any person to work or study with us provided they have the right qualifications and attitudes. Women and men are equal on the pay scale for equivalent jobs. Women who become pregnant are treated in accordance with their rights and are not penalised for being female and starting a family.

Sexual Orientation

Alongside its commitment to equality and diversity, C&F will challenge homophobic attitudes and will ensure that the same sex partners are not made to feel uncomfortable within C&F. No person will be discriminated against on the grounds of sexuality in terms of employees or learner recruitment, support and achievement.

Sexual Harassment

C&F will not tolerate sexual harassment which is a form of discrimination. C&F deems sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual attention, unnecessary touching or unwanted physical contact, being lewd, over suggestive or over familiar, any suggestions or remarks that sexual favours may further one's career or refusal may hinder that. It also includes insults or joke of a sexual nature, refusal to cooperate or a lack of cooperation with other persons because of their gender.

C&F takes allegations over sexual harassment very seriously and all allegations will be investigated, impartially and confidentially. Discipline will be taken against any person found to be in breach of this policy on sexual harassment.

It is important that if a learner, employee, associate, customer or visitor become alleged victims of sexual harassment the behaviour, time, place and details of the occurrence is noted for future reference. Once a complaint has been made an independent and objective investigation will be carried out by C&F.

Religion

C&F will ensure that no person is discriminated against on the grounds of their belief or religion. The company welcomes employees, associates, learners, clients and visitors from a broad encompassing background relating to religion. As is reasonably practical the C&F will endeavour to assist those learners, employees, associates, clients, visitors, with complying with the rituals such as afternoon prayer.

Ageism

C&F will not discriminate against any employee or potential employee, associates and or learners based on their age [Employment Equality (Age) regulations, 2006]. This consideration includes employee training and being open to discussion of not forcing employees to retire before the age of 65 (although C&F is not bound to accept such requests) There is no upper age limit on unfair dismissal and redundancy rights. All employees and associates should be aware that it is a breach of disciplinary rules to discriminate, harass or victimise on the grounds of age.