Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	
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Policy prepared by	Director of Quality, Compliance & Excellence
Approved by	Educationwise Board
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Purpose

Educationwise is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion across learning, employment and organisational practice.

We aim to provide an environment where learners, employees and stakeholders are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and where barriers to participation, progress and opportunity are identified and addressed.

Equality does not always mean treating everyone in exactly the same way. Different people may require different support or reasonable adjustments to access the same opportunities and achieve meaningful outcomes.

Inclusive practice is the responsibility of everyone at Educationwise.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Learners and apprentices
- Directors and Board members
- Associates and contractors
- Agency and temporary workers
- Volunteers
- Applicants for employment or learning
- Employers and workplace mentors
- Subcontractors and delivery partners
- Suppliers and other stakeholders where relevant

It applies across:

- Apprenticeships
- Adult Learning Provision
- Commercial provision
- Subcontracted provision
- Recruitment and employment
- Online and remote learning
- Workplace learning
- Face-to-face activity
- Assessment
- Information, advice and guidance
- Organisational decision-making

For this policy, **Adult Learning Provision** includes programmes currently funded through Advanced Learner Loans and any future adult education funding streams delivered by Educationwise.

Legal framework

Educationwise will meet its responsibilities under applicable equality and employment legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- Employment Rights Act 2025 and relevant provisions as they come into force

Educationwise will review this policy where legislative changes affect its responsibilities.

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unlawful discrimination because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Educationwise also recognises that individuals may experience barriers that do not themselves constitute protected characteristics.

These may include:

- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Caring responsibilities
- Neurodiversity
- Limited prior attainment
- English and mathematics needs
- Digital exclusion
- Health and wellbeing
- Personal circumstances
- Previous educational experiences
- Geographic or workplace barriers

Educationwise will consider these wider circumstances when planning learning and support.

Our approach to inclusion

Educationwise's approach is based on **universal excellence and targeted precision**.

This means providing a consistently strong core learning experience for all learners, with additional:

- Support
- Reasonable adjustments
- Adaptation

- Intervention
- Stretch and challenge

where individual need, starting point or ambition requires it.

Barriers may be identified at the beginning of a programme or emerge during the learner journey.

Support will therefore remain responsive throughout learning rather than being based only on information available at enrolment.

Our commitment

Educationwise will:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Identify and remove unnecessary barriers
- Make reasonable adjustments where required
- Support participation, progress and achievement
- Promote respectful and inclusive behaviour
- Consider equality and inclusion within curriculum design and delivery
- Support inclusive employment practices
- Respond appropriately to discrimination or harassment
- Consider the impact of decisions on different groups
- Use learner, staff and employer feedback to improve practice
- Review outcomes to identify significant gaps or inequalities

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Educationwise will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

This applies to behaviour:

- In person
- Online
- In teaching or training
- In the workplace
- At Educationwise events
- Through communication or social media connected to Educationwise activity

Concerns will be considered fairly and appropriate action will be taken.

Discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and may occur where somebody is treated unlawfully because of a protected characteristic or where a policy or practice places a group at a particular disadvantage without lawful justification.

Harassment

Harassment may include unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Educationwise will take proactive and proportionate steps to prevent sexual harassment within employment.

From 30 October 2026, Educationwise will comply with the strengthened statutory duty to take **all reasonable steps** to prevent sexual harassment of employees and the relevant protections concerning harassment by third parties.

Preventative action may include:

- Clear standards of behaviour
- Appropriate risk assessment
- Staff information and training
- Accessible reporting routes
- Appropriate action when concerns arise
- Reviewing patterns and lessons from complaints or concerns

Victimisation

No person should be treated unfairly because they have raised, supported or provided information about a genuine equality, discrimination or harassment concern.

Inclusive learning

Equality and inclusion will be considered throughout the learner journey.

This includes:

- Initial enquiry and information, advice and guidance
- Onboarding
- Initial assessment
- Recognition of prior learning
- Learning and support planning
- Teaching and coaching
- Progress reviews
- Assessment
- Functional Skills
- Gateway and end-point assessment
- Progression and programme completion

Staff should identify barriers early and consider whether additional action or specialist support is required.

Understanding individual needs

Educationwise will use appropriate information and assessment to understand each learner's starting point and potential barriers.

This may include:

- Learner discussions
- Initial assessment
- English and mathematics assessment
- Prior attainment
- Recognition of prior learning
- Skills assessment
- Information provided by the learner
- Cognassist where appropriate
- Employer information where relevant and appropriate
- Emerging needs identified during the programme

A particular assessment tool or diagnosis is not required before every form of support can be considered.

Learners are encouraged to share information that may help Educationwise provide appropriate support.

Reasonable adjustments and accessibility

Educationwise will make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners and employees where required.

Adjustments will be considered individually and may relate to:

- Teaching and learning
- Assessment
- Communication
- Learning materials
- Digital systems
- Timetabling
- Physical access
- Workplace learning
- Equipment or technology
- Examinations or end-point assessment

Adjustments relating to formal assessment will follow the requirements of the relevant Awarding Organisation or Assessment Organisation.

Support will be reviewed to consider whether it remains appropriate and whether it is having the intended impact.

Further requirements are set out within the **Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy** and **Learner Support Policy**.

Inclusive teaching and learning

Tutors and coaches are expected to:

- Know their learners
- Create respectful learning environments
- Use inclusive language and examples
- Adapt teaching where appropriate
- Provide suitable support and challenge
- Consider accessibility when designing or using resources
- Identify emerging barriers
- Avoid assumptions about ability or potential
- Support learners to participate and progress
- Escalate additional support or safeguarding needs appropriately

Inclusive practice should be evident in everyday teaching rather than treated as a separate activity.

Quality assurance will consider the impact of inclusive practice on learners.

Stretch and challenge

Inclusion includes meeting the needs of learners who require additional challenge as well as learners requiring additional support.

Teaching and learning should reflect:

- Starting points
- Prior experience
- Individual ability
- Career goals
- Progress
- Potential

Learners should be supported to make meaningful progress beyond their starting points.

Transition points

Educationwise recognises that transition points can create additional barriers for some learners.

These may include:

- Starting a programme
- Changes in employer or role
- Returning from a Break in Learning
- Functional Skills assessment
- Gateway preparation
- End-point assessment
- Completion
- Progression into employment or further learning

Additional planning or support will be considered where required.

Socio-economic disadvantage and practical barriers

Educationwise recognises that financial hardship and wider personal circumstances can affect participation and progress.

Where appropriate and available, support may include:

- Flexible approaches to learning
- Signposting to financial or external support
- Accessible learning resources
- Support with digital access
- Adjustments to learning arrangements
- Referral to appropriate internal or external services

Support will reflect individual circumstances and available resources.

Safeguarding and inclusion

Safeguarding and inclusion are closely connected.

Some learners may face increased barriers to recognising, reporting or receiving support for harm.

Staff should remain alert to safeguarding concerns and follow the **Safeguarding and Prevent Policy** where required.

An equality or inclusion concern that indicates possible harm, abuse, exploitation or other safeguarding risk must be reported through safeguarding procedures.

Employers and workplace inclusion

For apprentices, inclusion extends into the workplace.

Educationwise will work with employers where appropriate to:

- Support reasonable adjustments
- Identify workplace barriers
- Promote inclusive working practices
- Support learner participation and progress
- Address concerns affecting the apprenticeship

Where contacting an employer could place a learner at risk, safeguarding advice will be considered before information is shared.

Adult Learning Provision

The principles of this policy apply fully to Adult Learning Provision.

Support and assessment arrangements may differ according to the learner, programme and funding requirements.

Learners will not be required to complete a particular diagnostic assessment solely because they are participating in Adult Learning Provision.

Support will be considered according to individual need.

Employment and recruitment

Educationwise is committed to fair and inclusive employment practices.

Recruitment, development and employment decisions will be based on relevant:

- Skills
- Experience
- Qualifications
- Performance
- Role requirements

Educationwise will:

- Avoid unlawful discrimination within recruitment
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees
- Promote fair access to development opportunities
- Maintain appropriate routes for employees to raise concerns
- Take appropriate action in response to discrimination or harassment
- Consider equality when developing employment practices

Managers should seek People and Culture advice where required.

Staff development

Employees will receive equality, diversity and inclusion information or training appropriate to their role.

This may form part of:

- Induction
- Safeguarding training
- Teaching and learning development
- Management development
- Recruitment training
- Wider continuing professional development

Development may cover:

- Equality responsibilities
- Inclusive practice
- Reasonable adjustments
- Discrimination and harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Inclusive communication

- Recognising and addressing barriers

Training will be refreshed according to role, risk and changes in legislation or organisational practice.

Learner responsibilities

Learners are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Respect differences
- Behave professionally
- Avoid discriminatory, harassing or abusive behaviour
- Follow the Learner Code of Conduct
- Raise concerns where they experience or witness inappropriate behaviour

Concerns raised in good faith will be taken seriously.

Employee responsibilities

Employees must:

- Follow this policy
- Treat learners, colleagues and stakeholders fairly and respectfully
- Challenge or report inappropriate behaviour where appropriate
- Consider equality and inclusion within their role
- Make or support agreed reasonable adjustments
- Complete required training
- Seek advice where they are unsure
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality

Managers have an additional responsibility to respond appropriately when concerns are raised.

Senior Leadership Team responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Provide leadership on equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure responsibilities are embedded across the organisation
- Review significant equality risks and themes
- Support appropriate resources and action
- Ensure significant concerns are addressed
- Review the effectiveness of this policy

Quality and Compliance

Quality and Compliance activity will consider whether inclusive practice is having a positive impact.

This may include:

- Learner outcomes
- Participation

- Retention
- Achievement
- Progress
- Learner voice
- Quality assurance findings
- Support and reasonable adjustments
- Complaints and concerns
- Destination and progression information

Where data is available and appropriate, Educationwise will consider whether significant differences exist between relevant groups.

The purpose of monitoring is to identify barriers and improve practice, not simply to report data.

Employers, subcontractors and partners

Educationwise expects employers, subcontractors and partners working with learners to support the principles of this policy.

Subcontractors must maintain suitable equality and inclusion arrangements appropriate to their provision.

Equality and inclusion may form part of:

- Due diligence
- Contract management
- Quality assurance
- Employer reviews
- Learner feedback
- Subcontractor monitoring

Significant concerns will be addressed proportionately.

Procurement and suppliers

Equality considerations may be taken into account within procurement and supplier arrangements where they are relevant and proportionate to the service being provided.

Educationwise will not impose unnecessary requirements on suppliers where there is no meaningful equality impact.

Information, advice and guidance

Learners will have access to impartial information, advice and guidance throughout their learner journey.

IAG should:

- Support informed decision-making
- Avoid stereotyping
- Recognise individual aspirations

- Consider support needs and barriers
- Support appropriate progression
- Be accessible to the learner

Raising a concern

Educationwise encourages concerns about discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment to be raised promptly.

Learners

Learners can:

- Speak to their tutor or another member of staff
- Raise a formal complaint through the **Learner Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedures**
- Contact the Complaints Lead where appropriate

Employees

Employees should use the appropriate internal employment or grievance process and may seek support from their line manager or People and Culture.

Employers and other stakeholders

Employers and stakeholders can raise concerns through Educationwise's complaints arrangements.

Safeguarding

Where a concern indicates harm, abuse, exploitation or another safeguarding risk, Educationwise's safeguarding procedures must be followed.

Whistleblowing

Where a concern meets the requirements for a protected disclosure, it may be raised through the **Public Interest Disclosure Policy**.

Concerns will be handled sensitively and information will only be shared where necessary and appropriate.

No person should experience unfair treatment for raising a genuine concern.

Monitoring and evaluation

Educationwise will review the effectiveness of equality, diversity and inclusion through appropriate evidence, which may include:

- Participation
- Retention
- Achievement
- Progress
- Destinations
- Learner voice

- Staff feedback
- Employer feedback
- Complaints
- Reasonable adjustments
- Learning Inclusion Support
- Teaching and learning quality
- Recruitment and workforce information
- Subcontractor assurance

Where relevant data is available, differences between learner groups will be considered to identify:

- Gaps in participation
- Differences in retention or achievement
- Barriers to progress
- Differences in experience
- Areas requiring additional support or improvement

Findings may inform:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Quality Improvement Plan
- Curriculum planning
- Staff development
- Risk management
- Learner support
- Employer or subcontractor action

Data and confidentiality

Equality information will be collected, used, stored and shared in accordance with Educationwise's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy.

Sensitive personal information will only be accessed or shared where there is a legitimate need.

Equality monitoring information will be reported at an appropriate level and individual confidentiality will be protected.

Related policies and procedures

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Learner Support Policy
- Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy
- Learner Code of Conduct Policy
- Learner Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Information, Advice and Guidance Policy
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy
- Data Protection Policy

- Privacy Policy
- Recruitment and safer recruitment arrangements
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Training and Continuous Professional Development Policy
- Relevant People and Culture procedures
- Inclusion Statement

Monitoring and review

The Senior Leadership Team will review the implementation of this policy through existing quality, people and governance arrangements.

The annual review will consider:

- Relevant legislative changes
- Learner and staff experience
- Participation, retention and achievement
- Reasonable adjustments and support
- Complaints and concerns
- Quality assurance findings
- Learner and employer feedback
- Workforce and recruitment themes where appropriate
- Significant gaps or inequalities identified through organisational data

The policy will be updated sooner where a significant legislative, regulatory or organisational change requires it.