

Brightlink Learning

Equality and Diversity Policy

Scope of Policy

As an employer and a provider of education, business consultancy and learning and project management, Brightlink will implement policies and procedures that meet the needs of associates, employees, learners and communities by promoting and modelling restorative approaches and inclusion and by addressing inequalities.

Brightlink strives to eliminate discrimination of any kind and work with communities and individuals to help build skills and find strength and resources to empower them to overcome the disadvantages that exist in society which have resulted in some groups being treated less favourably than others.

Brightlink has a responsibility to encourage and nurture potential within its workforce and body of learners. Brightlink will provide opportunities to all to achieve their potential in a safe and secure environment that is free of discrimination.

Brightlink is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in relation to gender, age, disability, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and marriage/civil partnership.

All managers, staff, associates, contractors, volunteers, visitors, learners, families, partner organisations, stakeholders and others involved or engaged with Brightlink have the responsibility to behave in a manner that respects and supports the ethos of restorative approaches and our commitment to inclusivity, fair opportunities, transparency, high support and high challenge for learning and employment. This duty refers to individuals when they are representing Brightlink in any place and includes use of the internet and electronic communication devices such as email, mobile phones, games consoles, social networking sites etc. regardless of ownership of any communication device or network.

Policy Statements

Brightlink willingly accepts its key responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and other unlawful conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity by removing or minimising disadvantages, taking steps to meet needs, modelling restorative behaviours and encouraging participation in public life where participation is disproportionately low.
- Foster good relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. The Equality Act, 2010, recognises that inequality and discrimination still persist and introduces further rights and new obligations.

This Policy is underpinned by several key principles:

- Staff, volunteers and learners who work with Brightlink must be free from discrimination.
- Learners, associates and staff must be supported to enable them to achieve their potential, in an environment which removes or minimises disadvantage, takes steps to meet their needs and which encourages participation on a strengths basis. The wellbeing of learners, associates, and staff is central so they feel good about themselves and respect others.
- While working with Brightlink our learners, associates and staff will develop the skills they need to enable them to progress successfully throughout their lives.

- A commitment to restorative approaches and modelling transparency, collaboration, high support and high challenge to ensure that we foster good relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- A commitment to the social model of disability where we look at removing the barriers someone could face because of their disability or learning difficulty to promote inclusion.

In order to fulfil its responsibilities under this policy, Brightlink will:

- Identify a responsible manager.
- Publish a Brightlink Strategic Equality Plan as a means of improving the experience of staff and service users and taking our strategy forward by achieving any goals or targets. Progress against this plan will be updated yearly.
- Engage with stakeholders and learners who are representative of all of the protected characteristics when setting and reviewing our equality objectives.
- Allocate appropriate resources to support the implementation of this Strategic Equality Plan.
- Monitor data relating to equality issues within Brightlink and its work on a yearly basis. This data will be analysed fully and actions plans developed to overcome any patterns of under-representation, under-performance or dis-satisfaction.
- Consider positive action measures allowed by law to rectify disadvantages in employment or provision revealed by monitoring.
- Carry out impact assessments to examine policies, procedures and practices to ensure equality is embedded within these policies and that there is no negative impact against the protected characteristics. Targets set during EIA meetings will be used to reduce differential impact or share positive impact.
- Ensure that a programme is implemented to promote diversity and foster good relations among Brightlink staff, associates, learners and stakeholders.
- Develop appropriate materials to raise awareness of equal opportunities and inclusivity across Brightlink provision to ensure that all staff, learners, visitors and stakeholders are aware of the issues involved and their responsibilities.
- Take steps to ensure that procedures are in place so that allegations of discrimination and bullying and harassment are dealt with quickly, investigated fully and in a timely manner, and that individuals are supported through the process.
- Ensure that staff and service users are protected from third party harassment and take appropriate action against individuals on Brightlink premises and working on behalf of Brightlink who wilfully behave unlawfully or undermine the ethos of restorative approach, inclusivity and commitment to fair opportunities for learning and employment.

In addition as a provider of education, training and interventions, Brightlink will make every effort to:

- Produce materials that are accessible, inclusive and understandable.
- Develop materials and opportunities to ensure that our staff, associates, volunteers and learners are aware of their responsibilities under equality legislation and develop behaviour in line with the principles of inclusivity. This will raise awareness of people's differences and actively break down any barriers that come from a lack of understanding of these differences.
- Develop inclusive training for all learners.

- Ensure that Brightlink premises are accessible.
- Have a procedure for dealing with formal complaints related to equal opportunities.

In addition as an employer Brightlink will make every effort to:

- Deliver training to ensure that all employees or workers on Brightlink premises are made aware of the Policy and have the knowledge and skills to work within it.
- Pursue good practices in all aspects of employment including advertising vacancies; recruitment and selection; terms and conditions of employment, considering reasonable adjustments; training; personal and professional development and investigating reasons for ending employment.
- Investigate issues raised in relation to any gender pay gap and implement actions to reduce it.
- Encourage people from groups currently under-represented in our workforce to obtain and retain employment with us.

Equality and Diversity Statement

In accordance with Brightlink procedures, an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on this policy annually.

Health and Safety Implications

There may be circumstances where there appears to be a conflict between equality issues and the health and safety of employees and service users. In particular, certain health conditions or disabilities may restrict access to some interventions, training or areas of Brightlink premises or delivery because risks will remain at an unreasonable level even when reasonable adjustments have been made. All cases will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Location and Access to the Policy

This is available from the Brightlink website and may be out of date if printed.

Date approved: July 2014

Date last reviewed: September 2017

Next review date: September 2018

Accessible to Learners: Yes