

Hartlepool Adult Education

Equality and Diversity Policy

Author: Kristie Burt

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**Victoria Buildings
6-8 Tower Street
Hartlepool
TS24 7HD**

www.haded.org.uk

01429 868616

[Facebook.com/HartlepoolAdultEducation](https://www.facebook.com/HartlepoolAdultEducation)



Delivering Learning and Skills in Hartlepool

Equality and Diversity Statement

Hartlepool Adult Education is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity and ensuring that all its services are fully accessible. We recognise that people may be disadvantaged due to a range of circumstances and we will actively work to engage with all our employees to understand, reduce and ultimately eliminate this disadvantage.

Equality and diversity is embedded in everything we do and this is reflected in the Single Equality Scheme.

Commitment to Quality

Hartlepool Adult Education is committed to maintain and improve the quality of its provision through the processes of continuous improvement and quality assurance. Embedding effective quality processes are rigorously implemented to foster a culture of continuous improvement in all facets of the Service.

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Scope of Policy

Hartlepool Adult Education Service (the Service) is a multi-functional organisation operating in a local, sub-regional and regional context.

This policy is applicable to all staff, volunteers, learners, partners, subcontractors and applicants.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff, volunteers and learners should treat each other, visitors, contractors, sub-contractors, service providers, suppliers, former staff and learners and any other persons associated with the functions of the Service.

The Service will ensure that all of our learners, employees and visitors, as well as those who seek to apply to work or study with us or who have previously worked or studied with us, are treated fairly and are not subjected to unlawful discrimination by the Service.

Policy Statement

The Service is committed to providing provision which embraces diversity and that promotes equality of opportunity.

As an employer, the Service is committed to equality and valuing diversity within its workforce.

The goal of the Service is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by the operating values, are embedded in the day-to-day working practices with all learners, customers, colleagues and partners.

The Service will provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination on grounds of gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion, age, disability, HIV positivity, working pattern, caring responsibilities, trade union activity or political beliefs – or any other grounds.

This will be demonstrated by a commitment to:

- Mainstreaming equality into the Service's strategic and planning agenda;
- Complying with its legal obligations;
- Having an effective data monitoring and analysis process that supports this policy;
- Involving staff, learners and other stakeholders in the development and delivery of our equality objectives;
- Ensuring that managers and staff undergo appropriate equality training for their role;
- Promoting equality and diversity through internal and external communications
- Ensuring staff and learners' support services are, as far as reasonably possible, accessible to all;
- ensuring that both existing staff and learners, as well as those who seek to apply to work or study with the Service, are treated fairly and that individuals are judged solely on merit and by reference to their skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and potential;
- Ensuring that staff, learners and their unions' representatives are provided with appropriate forums e.g. Equality and Diversity Forum and staff network groups, to discuss equality and diversity issues and raise any concerns;
- Ensuring that all contractors and service providers operating on behalf of the Service are aware of this policy and expected to adhere to it.

Every person working for the Service has a personal responsibility for implementing and promoting these principles in their day-to-day dealings with everyone – including members of the public, other staff and employers and partners. Inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Council's Equality and Diversity and Bullying and Harassment Policies and Procedures.

It should also be noted that this document is related specifically to the Service and does not replace or surpass any other Council Policy or Procedure, but works in parallel within the Council's Policy and Procedural context.

Embedding Equality and Diversity into the Culture

The Service believes that everyone has a duty to ensure equality and diversity legislation is followed and implemented. Recognising, embracing and valuing difference leads to improvements for all, including:

- A more vibrant staff and learner population;
- A better working and studying environment;
- Attracting and retaining the very best staff and learners;
- Improving the status of the Service.

Legislation

The Equality Act 2010, which came into force on 1st October 2010, is a single document that provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all; to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation; and to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The Equality Act covers the same groups that were protected by existing equality legislation e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. These are now called protected characteristics. The Act is a framework of protection for people discriminated against because they are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Service also has responsibility beyond that of an educational establishment as it is part of the Council. The Service therefore must ensure it meets the public sector Equality Duty, which came into force across Great Britain on 5 April 2011. This duty means that the Service must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to employees. It also requires that the Service has due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Duty are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination);
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality;
- Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

Commitment beyond Legislation

The Service is committed to both meeting and exceeding the obligations under current legislation. By doing more than what is required by law, and building on the Service's existing reputation for diversity and ensuring that all staff and learners are equipped with the knowledge to sustain and enjoy a fully inclusive working environment.

Specialist staff networks, forums and events are just some of the ways in which the Service keeps community connected and engaged with diversity issues.

Staff Learning and Development

The Service recognises the important of engaging with and providing developmental opportunities so that all staff can contribute to the achievement of principles set out within this document. Staff have access to learning and development products covering all equality areas.

Staff are also able to participate in the wider Council's equality agenda and participate in specific interest groups. These groups can consider the impact of provision/working life in relation to age, disability, gender, race, transgender, sexual orientation, work-life balance and wellbeing. These groups can also contribute directly to SBC strategic objectives and explore the ways in which the council operates by raising concerns and promoting best practice.

Induction

Equality and Diversity forms an integral part of the Council's Induction Programme. All new employees have to attend the corporate induction where they are made aware of their responsibilities under the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Implementation

The Service community as a whole, shares responsibility for the successful application of this policy, whilst specific responsibility falls on managers and advisors who are professionally involved in staff and learner support, development and supervision.

The Service is committed to developing initiatives to support all minority groups that have been disadvantaged in the past and to help address some of the imbalances which still exist between its staff and learner populations and the wider community. The Service will not, however, permit "positive" discrimination.

The Service will seek to ensure that all staff, volunteers and learners have equal access to the full range of organisational facilities and that adjustments to working and learning practices are considered wherever reasonably possible in order to accommodate a more diverse community.

Any staff member, volunteer or learner who believes that s/he may have been the victim of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation shall have full right of protection under the Service's Policies and Procedures. The Service is committed to finding resolution for complaints under this policy.

The Service will work in partnership with its recognised trade unions and specific interest groups as well as external organisations where appropriate to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination.

Service Commitment

The Service is committed to raising awareness of equality and diversity amongst Hartlepool citizens, employees and employers, ensuring that all learners, volunteers and staff are treated with dignity and respect, within a safe and secure environment, free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

The Service will achieve this by:

- Encouraging the full participation of learners in all aspects of their learning;
- Working towards inclusive learning by ensuring a high degree of flexibility to match the needs of individual learners with the delivery;
- Identifying and removing any discriminatory practices, procedures and customs and replacing them with systems which are fair and equal to all;
- Developing the curriculum to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that there are a variety of programmes available at a wide range of locations and at a range of different times;
- Ensuring that publicity is representative, captures the imagination of hard to reach learners and attracts those learners who are underrepresented in adult learning;
- Increasing the educational achievement for those from low income or disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Ensuring that equality of opportunity is built into all aspects of provision, including business planning and self-assessment process, and is identified within the strategic plan with regard to priorities areas;
- Actively promoting equality and diversity among staff, volunteers, learners, employers, parents and other partners;
- Ensuring that all staff receives training in equality and diversity and any additional training or support is identified in achievement and development reviews;
- Making sure training in equality and diversity is effective so that managers, associate providers, staff, volunteers and learners understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity;

- Making sure that all learners, volunteers and staff are protected from harassment, bullying and discrimination, including those based with employers, and at other sites, external to the providers;
- Managing any incidents or complaints relating to equality effectively and efficiently;
- Setting challenging targets and using data to monitor, analyse and improve engagement and performance by different groups of learners;
- Taking action to reduce any significant variation in outcomes for different groups of learners, to maximise their potential;
- Having strategies in place to safeguard learners such as apprentices and vulnerable adults, who are based with employers, from harassment, bullying and discrimination.

Responsibilities

Due to the sensitive nature of issues which can arise, everyone involved in, or with knowledge of a potential issue relating to the associated policies and procedures, must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and treat all information in accordance with their role.

In the interests of fairness and equality all parties must ensure, throughout the process, that no conflicts of interest or bias occur.

Managers

Are responsible for ensuring their staff and volunteers have access to, and an awareness of, policies and procedures which are applicable to them, that these are communicated and there is a clear understanding of the standards of performance expected.

It is accepted by all parties that line managers play an important role in the day-to-day supervision of their staff and volunteers and they should seek initially to rectify problems through informal discussions without invoking formal procedures.

Staff

Are responsible for:

- Adhering to policies and procedures;
- Co-operating and participating fully with all stages of the procedure;
- Undertaking their duties in accordance with the behaviours and attitudes set out in the Council's appraisal scheme;
- Knowing the standards of work performance expected and seeking clarification if unsure;
- Recognising problems with meeting the standards required and bringing this to the attention of their manager at an early stage;
- Taking ownership of their own personal development by identifying their own development needs and undertaking any additional training recommended by their supervisor or line manager;
- Attending all appropriate meetings, completing and providing copies of all relevant documentation.
- Positively promoting British Values, Equality and Diversity and anti-discrimination

Reporting

Non-observance of the policy, and associated procedures, should be reported immediately to a more senior member of staff, ensuring that the management team have been informed in case action is required.

All complaints or issues which arise relating to bullying, harassment or discrimination must be immediately reported to the Head of Service unless there is a conflict of interest in which the complaint and/or issue must be cascaded to the Assistant Director Economic Growth & Regeneration.

Monitoring

The policy and associated procedures will be monitored and reviewed systematically in line with the Services quality mechanisms to ensure that the continuous improvement of its provision is embedded, and that the quality of the provision is being safeguarded and improved in line with its vision.

British Values

As part of this Policy and associated policies and procedures, Hartlepool Adult Education are committed to the values known as 'Fundamental British Values'.

We promote these values as we believe they give students a sense of moral and social responsibility, and an understanding of how they can contribute positively to society.

Democracy

Democratic processes can be found in:

- Learner Voice process.
- Learner Representatives.
- Adult Education Governing bodies such as Regeneration Services Committee and Independent Strategic Board.
- Enrichment activities.
- Staff forums.
- Student Satisfaction Surveys.

Individual Liberty

Individual liberty at Hartlepool Adult Education is protected by:

- The Council's Equality and Diversity Policies and Procedure.
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policies and Procedures.
- UK Law.

The Rule of Law

The Rule of Law can be seen through:

- Learner Code of Conduct.
- Learner Induction.
- Complaints and Compliments Procedure.
- Rules, regulations and policies.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance

We will help you to understand mutual respect and tolerance through:

- Promotion of Prevent, and Equality and Diversity within Learner Induction.

- Group tutorial programme.
- Equality and Diversity Programmes.
- Pastoral Support Services.
- Enrichment activities
- Sports Teams
- Initial and end-of-year surveys

Acceptance of different Faiths and Beliefs

You will appreciate diverse faiths and beliefs and what they bring to our society through:

- Enrichment activities.
- Awareness campaigns.
- Special Recognition Awards.
- Volunteer Recognition Awards.
- Prayer room (Meeting Room 3).
- Festival of Learning Awards Ceremony.
- Open Days.
- Community Engagement Events organised by Adult Education's and Equality Diversity Communication Lead.