



## Equality and Diversity Policy

**Version 2026/2027**

|                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Last Review Date</b> | June 2026 |
| <b>Next Review Date</b> | June 2027 |
| <b>Reviewed By</b>      | Jas Mann  |

|                                               |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Amendments Made Since Last Review Date</b> | None - content reviewed – rebranded |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

## 1. Policy

LearningPlus is committed to eliminating discrimination and creating an inclusive culture based on merit where everyone – Learner or staff member – has an equal chance to succeed. People who come from a diverse range of backgrounds with different life experiences and perspectives can generate greater creativity in anticipating the needs and wishes of staff and Learners and other customers.

The purpose of the Equality and Diversity policy is to ensure we provide equality and fairness for all our staff and Learners and to demonstrate our commitment to not discriminate in any area of our employment practices and teaching learning and assessment practices as they relate to the “protected characteristic” whether directly or indirectly.

The Policy incorporates all the relevant employment and equality legislation, is underpinned by the LearningPlus’ Core Values, and applies to all current and prospective staff and Learners. Sub-contractors are expected to work within the spirit of this policy.

## 2. Principles

Every member of staff and every Learner is entitled to work in an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. LearningPlus will not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment whether direct or indirect. Nor will LearningPlus tolerate any form of victimisation or other forms of unacceptable behaviour.

LearningPlus will seek to reflect the diverse local community in and around the areas served by its training, ensuring it delivers its core values and mission statement in respect to staff and Learners.

Staff development and promotion opportunities are available to all staff, with mandatory updates underpinning our Equality and Diversity Policy. Learners are supported within its training provision to promote equality and diversity.

Decisions affecting staff conditions will be based solely on their job-related ability and merit.

Decisions affecting Learner learning will be considered by the relevant teaching staff in relation to the Learner’s programme of study.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the working and learning environment to enable staff and Learner’s access to equal opportunities and to ensure we comply with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to enable access to education for all.

Any breaches of this policy may potentially lead to disciplinary proceedings.

An impact assessment will be carried out where there is a significant change to work and/or teaching and learning practices against the “protected characteristics” to ensure that LearningPlus fulfils the duties outlined within this policy. This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly, and an Action Plan will be developed to address any areas of weakness.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

**The Senior Executive Team** are tasked with the responsibility of creating a respectful college environment, with an inclusive culture that genuinely supports people’s differences and values diverse contributions. They are tasked with upholding the highest standard of personal behaviour

and conduct by leading by example, and for the setting and enforcing of standards in LearningPlus, thereby providing an atmosphere where staff and Learners feel free to declare their personal characteristics.

**Managers/Team Leaders** are responsible promoting a positive work environment that respects and values all people, in addition to ensuring staff are trained to understand, respect, value, and apply equality and diversity. Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for applying the LearningPlus' policies, practices, and procedures fairly and consistently, highlighting and addressing any practices which appear to be discriminatory. Planning work should consider the access requirements of different groups of people including reasonable adjustments, caring responsibilities, and cultural differences.

**Staff/Tutors** are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the Equality and Diversity policies and the "protected characteristics", in so doing ensuring that acts or omissions do not impact on others in this group. Staff are expected to participate in training, briefings, awareness raising sessions, and to report any instance of discrimination or unfair treatment to their line manager. Staff are expected to behave in accordance with this policy and the LearningPlus' Core Values and to respect and value the rights of colleagues and Learners to keep their sensitive personal information private, not disclosing such information without the expressed permission of the person concerned.

**Learners** are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the Equality and Diversity Policy, and the "protected characteristics", in so doing ensuring that acts or omissions does not impact on others in this group. Learners are expected to participate in training, briefing and awareness raising sessions, and to report any instance of discrimination or unfair treatment to their tutor/personal tutor. Learners are expected to behave in according with this policy and the LearningPlus' Core Values and respect, value, the rights of people to keep their sensitive personal information private and disclosing such information without the expressed permission of the person concerned.

**Human Resources** will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and action plans to promote equality and diversity as they relate to employment, promotion, training, policy, practice, guidance, and procedure. This will be done in conjunction with the appropriate leads in the respective area.

#### 4. Definitions

**Equality** refers primarily to statutory compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the actions LearningPlus takes via its policies and procedures to prevent direct and indirect discrimination.

**Direct Discrimination** occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have, are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

**Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a condition, rule, policy, or practice applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share protected characteristics. However, if the rule can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, it may not amount to indirect discrimination.

**Discrimination by Association** this direct discrimination occurs when someone is associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

**Discrimination by perception** is direct discrimination that occurs because someone thinks an individual possesses a particular protected characteristic.

**Victimisation** occurs when someone is treated less favourably due to the making of or supporting a complaint about discrimination.

**Diversity** refers to the variety of differences between people in an organisation. Differences include visible and non-visible factors such as background, culture, personality, work style, size, accent, language, and so on. LearningPlus recognises that one size does not fit all in planning and interaction with staff and Learners. The activities and actions of LearningPlus in promoting a diverse staff community that is reflective of the local community, the city, and the Learners takes this into consideration.

## **5. Equality Monitoring**

LearningPlus will encourage all staff, prospective staff, and Learners to provide personal information so that we are able to monitor the composition of the business and the impact policies might have on those staff members and Learners with protected characteristics. Human Resources will produce an annual equality report in April of each year (as it relates to staff), whilst Learners' statistical data will be produced by the Quality and Curriculum Manager.

## **6. Protected Characteristics**

Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity that are safeguarded by law to prevent discrimination and promote equality. Under the Equality Act 2010 in the United Kingdom, there are nine protected characteristics, and these characteristics represent areas where individuals have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity. By recognising and respecting these characteristics, LearningPlus works towards creating an inclusive and equitable environment for everyone, free from prejudice and unequal treatment.

The nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 in the United Kingdom are:

- **Age**
  - **Disability**
  - **Gender reassignment**
  - **Marriage and civil partnership**
  - **Pregnancy and maternity**
  - **Race**
  - **Religion or belief**
  - **Sex**
  - **Sexual orientation**
- 
- **Age:** LearningPlus will aim to promote age diversity by challenging age stereotyping; valuing the benefits of a mixed age workforce and Learner population; considering the language used; and considering how work and study programmes can meet the needs of staff and Learners.
  - **Disability:** LearningPlus will focus on accessibility by – as far as reasonably possible – considering flexible arrangements within its policies and procedures; challenging stereotyping; providing information in flexible formats; anticipating and planning events, presentations, and training to allow inclusivity and accessibility; and providing opportunities for advancement.
  - **Sex:** LearningPlus will promote gender equality. Some examples include a balanced presentation of gender in materials, a fair mix with regards to positions within LearningPlus, equal pay, study programmes, adjustments for home and work life balance, and supporting employees who become pregnant or adopt a child or children (including arrangements for Learners or employees with existing childcare needs). The protection and rights of intersex and gender nonbinary individuals are also covered by this.

- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** LearningPlus will not treat someone less favourable because they are or as assumed to be single, married, in a civil partnership, divorce, widowed, separated, or in a different relationship. For example, employment benefits will be available to staff irrespective of their marital status, work activities will not be assigned unfairly, and Learners study programmes will be available to all irrespective of marital status.
- **Race:** LearningPlus will promote equality and diversity and will, for example, challenge behaviour and treatment that does not value race, colour, nationality, ethnic, or national origin. It will also provide equality and diversity awareness training for staff and reflect diversity in both the Learner and the staff population.
- **Religion or Belief:** LearningPlus recognises an individual's freedom of belief and their right to protection from intolerance and persecution. All staff and Learners will therefore be treated irrespective of their religious or spiritual belief in accordance with the core values of LearningPlus college. LearningPlus will raise awareness of cultural issues, and all staff must be prepared to accept – and wherever possible accommodate – different cultural customs and beliefs.
- **Sexual Orientation:** LearningPlus respects the sexual orientation of staff and Learners and will challenge negative stereotypical views in respects to staff, Learners, visitors, or their associates – whether actual or perceived – with respect to orientation. This includes but is not limited to heterosexuality (opposite-sex orientation, i.e. 'straight'), homosexuality (same-sex attraction, i.e. 'gay' or 'lesbian'), bisexuality and pansexuality (attraction to both binary genders – i.e. male and female –, to more than one gender, or to individuals regardless of gender identity), and asexuality (low or absent desire for sexual activity).
- **Gender Reassignment:** LearningPlus acknowledges the potential barriers which staff members and Learners may encounter because of their gender status. Intersex or gender nonbinary staff and Learners are not covered automatically under this umbrella. As a result, LearningPlus will take positive steps to support staff that plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment (regardless of all sexual reassignment) and ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect. Working with Human Resources and with appropriate advice, LearningPlus will develop a supportive plan for staff members and, in the case of a Learner, work with an identified linked tutor who will provide the necessary support required.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** LearningPlus are dedicated to promoting an inclusive environment that supports individuals during pregnancy, maternity, and parenthood. We understand the unique challenges faced by expectant and new parents and are committed to ensuring their rights and dignity are upheld. This includes compliance with all legal protections, offering appropriate workplace adjustments, and fostering a culture of respect and understanding. LearningPlus does not tolerate discrimination or unfair treatment on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity.