

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Policy

Employment, Business and Skills (EBS) is part of the Regeneration, Planning and Delivery in Waltham Forest Council. It is the council's direct deliverer of employment opportunities, skills and business support. EBS is guided by Waltham Forest Council equalities duties which is demonstrated in the 2021 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Strategy publication : <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/council-and-elections/about-us/our-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy>.

Our Vision: To create and target opportunities that connect our residents and learners with high-quality jobs, qualifications and supports our businesses, to raise the level of skills for life, work and wellbeing.

1. Introduction

Employment, Business and Skills is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all learners / clients and staff. EBS seeks to remove barriers and provide equal and fair access to learning and employment opportunities for local people regardless of their race, heritage, gender, religious or non-religious belief, nationality, family background, age, disability or sexuality. The service aims to provide a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and prejudice and where learners / clients and staff are able to fulfil their potential.

EBS recognises that supporting learners / clients from a distance can bring about certain barriers and ensuring these cohorts of learners / clients feel inclusive is paramount in respect of delivery style and learner outcomes.

EBS values the rich diversity of local communities and aims to provide services that reflect and meet the needs of individuals and groups within these communities.

EBS has a statutory duty to promote equality under the following legislation:

- The Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Equality Act 2006
- The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.
- The Public Sector Duty and Equality Act 2010

This policy is to support the service to be an outstanding place of learning and a provider of choice where equality, diversity and inclusion are valued and promoted. It enables us to meet the expectations and requirements of learners / clients and staff to promote wider uptake of and participation in and meet our statutory obligations. This policy also takes account of the requirements of the Employment Equality Regulations relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age, and other relevant legislation.

In addition, EBS upholds the policies and procedures of Waltham Forest Council. Waltham Forest Corporate Equalities Plan (CEP) translates the London Borough of Waltham Forest's equalities policy into action and demonstrates how it will be delivered to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties and policy objectives.

All learners / clients, staff (including partners) and governors are expected to behave in a manner consistent with this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff (including sub-contractors delivering teaching, learning, placement / experience opportunities on behalf EBS)

- It applies to learners, carers and volunteers who may be working with children (i.e. those aged under 16), young persons (i.e. those aged 16 to 18 at risk of abuse sexual violence or sexual harassment)
- It applies to all vulnerable adults as defined by section 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and/or those persons aged over 18 who because of mental or other disability, age or illness are or may be unable to take care of themselves.
- It applies to any learner / client who may be unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation, the service encounters through its teaching and learning activities as well as through its community based and outreach learning activities, workshops and online provision.
- However, it is important to be aware that following amendments to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, adults are no longer categorised as vulnerable because of their personal attributes, characteristics, or abilities. An adult is only considered 'vulnerable' if they receive a health, personal or social care service from a professional. Personal services would include, for example, help with financial matters, feeding, washing, or dressing. Adults with certain disabilities may also be categorised as vulnerable depending on 3 legislation and care that sits alongside the individual.
- This policy seeks to support the above and to offer assurances to both staff, learners / clients, carers, volunteers, and visitors that, through its implementation, the Service seeks to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe from harm when in contact with learners and staff (whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity through volunteering).
- This policy alongside Equality and Diversity (following the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998) will take positive steps to prevent discrimination, also adhering to the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 will take due diligence, engage in early help and closely monitor the following priority groups of learners.

2. Equal opportunities in Employment, Business and Skills

Objectives:

EBS is committed to:

- Actively promoting equality of opportunity and providing fair and equal access to its services.
- Developing learning, employment opportunities and programs which meet the needs of the diverse communities in Waltham Forest and London.
- Eliminating all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Building a workforce that reflects the diverse communities of Waltham Forest.

3. These objectives will be achieved by:

- Creating an environment where all learners / clients are valued equally and the needs of individuals are met.
- Providing information and materials in a range of formats that are accessible and include positive and representative images of learners / clients.
- Offering a program that meets the needs of local people and communities.
- Opposing all forms of discrimination and harassment.
- Monitoring how well the learner / client profile, service wide and at course level, reflects the diversity of local communities in terms of gender, age, ethnic group and disability.
- Ensuring assessment procedures are fair
- Monitoring how well learners / clients succeed in terms of gender, age, ethnic group and disability.
- Reviewing accommodation in line with DDA requirements and providing learning / client programs in accessible premises where possible.
- Working with partners to recruit learners / clients from under-represented groups and further developing widening participation strategies and activities.
- Providing timely and appropriate assessment and support to learners / clients with additional support needs.
- Collecting learner / client views on equality diversity and inclusion issues
- Monitoring and reviewing learners' / clients' complaints with reference to equality, diversity and inclusion and taking action on complaints.
- Monitoring the staff profile and building a workforce that reflects local communities.
- Providing training to staff on equality, diversity and inclusion issues.
- Reviewing and developing services in line with changing needs and priorities.
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments to monitor major policy changes for any adverse impact on people of different groups.

4. Roles and responsibilities

All staff and learners / clients have an individual responsibility to promote equality of opportunity and to challenge discrimination, prejudice and harassment.

All managers are responsible for ensuring that the standards established within this policy is adhered to within their area of responsibility and that the Waltham Forest Corporate Equalities Plan (CEP) is implemented across the service.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers who at all times:

- respect and value difference
- promote and advance equality and diversity
- promote an inclusive and supportive environment for learners / clients and staff
- empower people, treating them fairly and with respect and dignity
- work to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- implement statutory and other initiatives in support of our equality and diversity aims.

5 User accessibility

- Sites, facilities and information that are, as far as is reasonably practicable:
- safe and welcoming
- fit for purpose
- accessible
- conducive to learning and working.

5b) Access Arrangements for Examinations

All learners / clients have the opportunity to disclose any additional needs on the enrolment form. Learners are able to discuss any support needs before, during or after enrolment. Any special examination requirements will be considered in relation to the awarding body's regulations (eg, JCQ – Joint Council for Qualifications).

Learners / clients are encouraged to disclose any additional needs for access arrangements at the earliest opportunity possible to ensure Skills exams team have sufficient notice to make the necessary arrangements.

Under current JCQ regulations we are unable to accept third party reports for processing speed. Skills holds processing speed assessment sessions twice in any one academic year, with the external SENCO, which are by prior arrangement with the Learning Support Officer.

See EBS Inclusivity policy for detailed accessibility offer.

6 Contribution to equality and diversity will be demonstrated by:

- Increasing the numbers of learners / clients with a learning difficulty and / or disability on EBS provision.
- Providing appropriate support for learners / clients to achieve a qualification and or secure employment.
- Improved achievement rates for learners / clients with additional support needs.
- Increased participation by under-represented groups.

6b). Curriculum / programme accessibility

A curriculum / programme:

- that is accessible to all who meet any appropriate entry requirements
- that is inclusive and where everyone, particularly those with protected characteristics feel included
- where the diversity of our community and learner / client are reflected, valued and promoted
- where learner / client are appropriately supported
- where reasonable adjustments are put in place as needed to make learning and opportunities accessible
- where learner / client and a wide range of people are involved in the development of our curriculum / programme
- that promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs.

6c) Learner / client outcomes

- A learning and opportunities experience that is inclusive and free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation, extremism and radicalisation.
- where the diverse needs of our learner / client are, where possible, anticipated, understood and integrated into teaching / programmes to enhance participation, learning, employment and achievement

- where there is equality of outcomes across diverse groups that supports a diverse society, wellbeing and an ageing society.

6d) Employment experiences

A workplace:

- that is inclusive and free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, extremism and radicalisation
- where the diverse needs of employees are, where possible, anticipated, understood and actioned
- where the working environment is flexible, fair and supportive
- where the diversity of our workforce is valued
- where staff are appropriately supported to deliver an accessible curriculum / programme and high learner / client participation and performance
- where activities celebrate and promote the diversity of our staff body.

7. Breaches of this policy

Staff and learner / client are expected to work within the letter and spirit of this policy and in support of all aspects of the framework. Any member of staff or learner / client acting in an offensive or discriminatory manner, against the aims of the framework or otherwise breaching this policy will be dealt with under our staff or learner / client or disciplinary procedure as appropriate.

If someone observes a member of staff or a learner / client acting in an offensive or discriminatory manner, or otherwise breaching this policy or acting against the aims of the framework they should report this immediately to their line manager, the duty manager or lecturer.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out through:

- Performance monitoring
- Seeking and reviewing learner / client feedback.
- Monitoring complaints.
- The self-assessment process and quality improvement plans
- Lesson observations / learning walks and assessments.
- Equality impact assessment.

We set and review objectives on an annual basis through our self-assessment process, reporting them to Governors, funders and stakeholders. We are also subject to Ofsted inspections and Matrix standards awards.

8. Access to the policy

The policy will be published on the Skills website under EBS policies.

Equality Impact Assessment / Safeguarding Considerations: EBS is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and providing a supportive environment for all learners / clients staff and stakeholders. Our commitment means that this policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) any of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion or sexual orientation and meets our obligations under the Equality Act 2010

Name of Policy/Procedure	Learners / clients outcome
Equality Impact Analysis is not relevant to this function, give reasons and proceed to section 6c & 7.	
1. In what ways could this function have a negative impact on any of the groups above? What actions have been taken to eliminate these?	There could be resource limitations in helping learners to follow all the requirements of this policy. We would explore all the options available to us in order to support all users in their understanding and application of the procedure and make reasonable adjustments to the procedure if required, for instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting learners to feel included and acting on all negative feedback in relation to EDI
2. In what ways could this function have a positive impact on any of the groups above? How will this function be used to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups? Are there plans that will further advance equality?	This policy aims to be an open access and all-inclusive process. The annual review of EDI data will look to identify any patterns and trends and actions to address these.
3. What evidence supports your judgement eg. Observations, Consultations, expert opinions, quantitative or qualitative surveys. If the evidence is in the form of additional documentation where is this stored?	Comprehensive and up to date EDI data records.