Equality and Diversity Policy

# Control of document Adult Community Learning Senior Leadership Team

# Policy Aims & Intention

ACL is committed to Equality and Diversity by taking positive action to promote dignity and respect of all those engaged with the service. We aim to provide a service that responds to different needs and circumstances, enabling everyone to achieve their potential.

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| **Responsibility** | Vice Principal Quality and Compliance |
| **Date of acceptance** | July 2007 |
| **Last Review Date** | August 2022 |
| **Next Review Date** | August 2023 |
| **Audience** | All Managers, academic and support staff, volunteers,  Learners, and other service users. |

# The Policy

For the purpose of this document the use of the term learner is inclusive of apprentices.

The following acts provide a statutory framework defining unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, and place on institutions a duty to promote equality and diversity:

* Care Act 2014
* Civil Partnerships Act 2019
* Human Rights Act 1998
* Equality Act 2010, including:
* Equal Pay
* Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2010 amendment)
* Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006, revised 2010
* Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003
* Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
* Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2007
* Gender Recognition Act 2004 (2020 amendment)
* Protection from Harassment Act 2007 (2019 amendment)
* Race Relations Act 1976 (2000 amendment)
* Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
* Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (2013 amendment)
* Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
* Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001(2020 amendment)

We aim to eliminate all forms of discrimination and institutional barriers, which might be disadvantaging current or prospective learners or staff within our Service, and to take positive action to remedy any forms of discrimination in all aspects of Adult Community Learning life.

In particular the Service is committed to ensuring all learners and staff are given equal opportunities and treated fairly on a day to day basis regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation. These are known as protected characteristics, as well as those that are disadvantaged due to reasons of socio-economic, financial hardship and/or rural isolation.

There are four main types of discrimination.

[Direct discrimination](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-direct-and-indirect-discrimination)

This means treating one person worse than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, a promotion comes up at work. The employer believes that people’s memories get worse as they get older so doesn’t tell one of his older employees about it, because he thinks the employee wouldn’t be able to do the job.

[Indirect discrimination](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-direct-and-indirect-discrimination)

This can happen when an organisation puts a rule or a policy or a way of doing things in place which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one. For example, a local authority is planning to redevelop some of its housing. It decides to hold consultation events in the evening. Many of the female residents complain that they cannot attend these meetings because of childcare responsibilities.

[Harassment](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-harassment-and-victimisation)

This means people cannot treat you in a way that violates your dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. For example, a man with Down’s syndrome is visiting a pub with friends. The bar staff make derogatory and offensive comments about him, which upset and offend him.

[Victimisation](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-harassment-and-victimisation)

This means people cannot treat you unfairly if you are taking action under the Equality Act (like making a complaint of discrimination), or if you are supporting someone else who is doing so. For example, an employee makes a complaint of sexual harassment at work and is dismissed as a consequence.

Equality and Human Rights Commission: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/your-rights-under-equality-act-2010>

**In taking positive action to promote equality and diversity and to combat discriminatory practices, the following should be taken as guidelines for the Service:**

**Information Advice and Guidance**

Any guidance given to learners must be non-discriminatory and impartial and staff should ensure that enquirers are not discouraged from taking non-traditional courses.

Special attention should be given to the continuing support required by learners who are in a minority and may be in an isolated position.

Equality & Diversity is included within Learner Induction. Additional information is also available on the VLE plus website, and for employers taking on apprentices, in the Employer Toolkit.

## Publicity and Recruitment of Learners

The publicity and recruitment policies of the Service should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that:

* Course publicity including the website promotes the Service policy for Equality and Diversity
* Staff Induction includes the E&D policy, all staff complete the mandatory ECC training on E&D within 6 weeks of starting.
* The service continually assesses impacts on structural and operating model changes to ensure it continues to meet its statutory obligations.
* Publicity reaches people in a variety of socio-economic groups, ethnic groups, and those with a requirement for alternative formats, including access to information via the internet, in accordance with Essex County Council Policy.
* Equality and Diversity is considered and positively promoted in teaching, learning and assessment including when recruiting, delivering apprenticeship training, and working with employers and apprentices.
* Positive action takes place to increase engagement with those that are disadvantaged.
* The online course listing includes a discrete section drawing the attention of prospective learners to services such as childcare provision, fee concessions, and provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, additional learning support, Discretionary Learner Support fund, Community Learning Bursary Fund and 19 + Advanced Loan Bursary Fund and the compliments and complaints procedures. Additional documentation is made available to all learners via the Web site and Learner induction.
* Accessible documentation can be provided and made available upon request, dependent on budget position and ECC policy.
* Liaison with local communities and employers provides greater information, about learning and/or employment opportunities to all potential learners who would not traditionally participate in adult education
* All staff concerned with giving information and advice fully apply the requirements and principles to positively promote access to learning to all sections of society and not to discriminate on any grounds whatsoever.

## Course Provision

The Service is committed to ensuring wherever possible that:

* Its provision is accessible to all those who wish to participate
* This provision is relevant to the community, voluntary sector organisations, employers, and their employees.
* Its curriculum is responsive to the needs, interests, and educational aspirations of local people
* Recruitment is open and accessible
* Its curriculum provides opportunities for progression
* Learner feedback is used to inform curriculum offer and quality improvement.
* The policy applies across curriculum irrespective of type of programme, duration, cost, and learners it engages with.

The Service should:

* Design, manage and staff courses within the framework of the Service Equality and Diversity policy
* Regularly review the curriculum offer
* Continue to develop courses for non-traditional learners
* Continue to offer courses in different modes, times, locations
* Continuously review the nature and extent of provision, together with accessibility and use of resources, whether in the form of materials, people, and venues.
* Ensure that facilities, premises, and services are accessible to all and where appropriate make reasonable adjustments to meet learner need.
* Undertake Equality Impact Assessments when required to investigate the impact of changes to policy, practice and/or function. Identifying potential negative impacts and make recommendations for improvements that are considered and implemented where possible.

**Learner Recruitment Patterns**

The Service will undertake to collect and regularly review data relating to:

* Recruitment of learners from all equality strands across all areas of provision and geographical locality, and where appropriate to analyse data for Service improvement.
* Learners in receipt of concessionary rates and those not in receipt of concessionary rates
* Allocation of Discretionary Learner Support Funds and Community Learning Budget Bursary Funds, and 19+ Advanced Loans Bursary
* Additional learning support

**Staff Commitment**

ACL Service staff should undertake to pay due regard to:

* ACL Charter
* ECC Code of Conduct
* ACL Policies:
  + Admissions
  + Learning Support
  + Disability Policy
  + Exam Disability Policy
  + Adult Safeguarding
  + Children and Young people Safeguarding
  + Fitness to Learn policy
  + Positive Behaviours Policy
  + Computer Use
  + ECC Data Protection
  + Exclusion
  + Fee
  + Harassment and Bullying Policy
  + ECC Health and Safety Policy
  + Staff Development Policy

**In-Service Training**

The Service should observe the following:

* In-service training courses should be organised avoiding discrimination and promoting equality and diversity for all ACL Service staff
* Staff should be kept informed of in-service training opportunities
* In-service training should be held wherever possible in accessible premises, and at times, which make it possible for all relevant staff to attend, also taking into consideration working patterns, caring/domestic responsibilities, and transport matters
* Sample, review and analyse development opportunities undertaken by staff

## Employment

* All staff are employed by Essex County Council and have a duty to comply with Essex County Council policies.
* Essex County Council Policy deals with Equality and Diversity in Employment and Recruitment

**Monitoring, Evaluating and Effectiveness of Policy**

All Managers will consult with and advise staff on the implementation of this policy and notify the Safeguarding and EDI Senior Officer of progress/improvements and/or issues to inform the ACL Single Equality Scheme and the annual Self-Assessment process.

The ACL Service will undertake to complete an annual programme of Equality Impact Analysis in accordance with Essex County Council agreed procedure. All completed Equality Impact Analysis recommendations will be received by the ACL Leadership team for consideration and implementation as appropriate and shared with the relevant Corporate Function.

It is a requirement for all Service Management and Team meetings to include Equality and Diversity item on each agenda and to inform the Safeguarding and EDI Senior Officer of any good practice, support needs, data concerns or any other issues that may impact on the aims and objectives of the ACL Single Equality Scheme.