

Equality and Diversity Policy

Commitment

PLC is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all those involved within PLC whether staff, learners, visitors, contractors or clients. This commitment is to ensure that people's individual qualities are recognised and celebrated; and that people are treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that some groups can experience discrimination and we will ensure that, as a company, we promote equality of opportunity by recognising and celebrating diversity, continuing our proactive equality strategies and plans and complying with all equality legislation. This policy applies to all irrespective of:

- Age
- Marital and Civil Partnership status
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender identity
- HIV/Aids status
- Nationality
- Race /ethnicity
- Religion or belief, or non-belief
- Sexual orientation
- Social economic status

PLC has endorsed the commitment to equality through various initiatives, for example, the initiation of equality training for all staff, training to ensure equality in recruitment and selection, and the declaration of our commitment to equal opportunities in all job advertisements. The policy applies to all PLC practices and processes, which include learner recruitment and widening participation, recruitment and selection of staff, terms and conditions of employment, promotion, training, conditions of work, pay, treatment at work and termination of employment.

Contractors, Visitors, Public Organisations and Other People not employed by PLC

PLC will ensure that all contractors and visitors are made aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and all relevant regulations to ensure that they treat individuals with dignity and respect. Where these are breached PLC reserves the right to take appropriate action.

Contractors will be expected to have within their own organisations an equal opportunities policy and equality action plans in place to provide evidence of staff monitoring and fair recruitment and selection practices to ensure diverse sections of the community are fairly represented.

Accessibility and Communication

PLC will strive to make all its facilities accessible to staff and learners regardless of any seen or unseen impairments. PLC appreciates that the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requires it to meet the need of a widely diverse group of people and follows the guidance available to ensure compliance. We also recognise that it is essential to put procedures in place to handle complaints in the most positive way.

Consultation

We will continue to consult with community groups and organisations to ensure that we develop innovative ways of recruiting individuals either as staff or learner. In addition, we will continue to carry out consultation exercises to ensure that we adequately promote and celebrate people's individual qualities within PLC. We will also continue to carry out adequate consultation on our policies, practices and procedures to ensure we fulfil our commitment to promote equal opportunities within PLC

Monitoring

To ensure that all our policies, functions and procedures comply with equal opportunities legislation and that they do not have adverse impact on any group within PLC, we will continue to carry out monitoring exercises.

All job applicants and people applying to join PLC as learners complete an confidential equal opportunities monitoring form, which forms part of monitoring the effectiveness of our equal opportunities in staff and learner recruitment. Where inequality is discovered, positive action will be taken to address the imbalance.

Equality Statement:

(a) Disability

PLC is committed to challenging disability discrimination and inequality in all its practices and activities. The SMT affirm. PLC will implement best practice and compliance with legislation and provide supportive measures that will meet the specific needs of disabled staff; learners, contractors and visitors. PLC accepts and applies the definition of disability in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. PLC will provide reasonable adjustments where possible to enable staff, learners, contractors and visitors to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Where necessary a risk assessment may be undertaken and/ or external specialist advice sought.

PLC will respect the wish for confidentiality by disabled people. Therefore, any support measure implemented will be mutually agreed and acceptable to the individuals concerned. We will consult regularly with disabled staff and learners and, where appropriate, external organisations, to inform policy development and change practice where necessary.

(b) Race

PLC is committed to challenging discrimination on the grounds of race and inequality in all its practices and activities. SMT affirm their responsibility for implementing race equality in all activities. PLC will ensure commitment to fulfilling the requirements of Equality Act and PLC will do everything in its power to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.
- Promote equality of opportunity.

- Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.
- Assess the impact of its race equality policy on learner and staff of different racial groups.
- Monitor its workforce and ensure people from ethnic minorities are treated fairly.
- Assess its policies and programmes as they affect ethnic minorities, and deal with any possible adverse impact.

(c) Gender PLC is committed to challenging Gender discrimination and inequality in all its practices and activities. SMT affirm their responsibility for implementing Gender equality in all activities, PLC will give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment which is unlawful. Inclusive of the Equal Pay Act 1970 (EqPA)
- Promote equality of opportunity between men, women and trans people
- To promote work life balance

This duty applies to all PLC functions not just in education provision, employment and service delivery but, for example, in budget setting, course validation, procurement and strategic planning. We will also comply with the equality legislation for transgender individuals in accordance with the Gender Equality Duty. PLC will support transgender staff and learners throughout the transition process. PLC will recognise people's gender before they are in possession of a Gender Recognition Certificate. We will comply with the following regulations: Gender Recognition Act (GRA) 2004 Civil Partnership Act 2004.

(d) Religion and Belief, or non-Belief

PLC is committed to challenging discrimination on the ground of religion and belief or non belief. SMT affirm their responsibility for ensuring equality on the ground of religion and belief or non belief in all activities

It recognises that it is a fundamental human right to hold a religion or belief or non belief and that right should be treated with respect. With the understanding that people can experience discrimination or be treated differently because of their religion, belief (s), or non-belief, where practicable, PLC will ensure people can practice their religion or belief (s). PLC complies with the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and will ensure that:

- Learners and staff who hold a religion or belief or non belief are treated equally and fairly.
- Learners and staff are made aware and are sensitive and tolerant of other people's religion and belief and non beliefs.
- Where practicable, consideration will be given to learner and staff requirements to pray in any particular form based on the nature and depth of their personal belief and practice. We will also give consideration to learners and staff who need time off for festivals that are part of their religion or belief.

(e) Sexual Orientation

PLC is committed to challenging discrimination and inequality with regard to sexual orientation in all its practices and activities. SMT affirm their responsibility for implementing equality for everyone regardless of sexual orientation in all activities. PLC will not tolerate any form of discrimination against anyone including people who are Lesbians, Gay or

Bisexual. To achieve this end, we will work to comply with all regulations relating to sexual orientation including:

- Employment Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) regulations (2010)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- The Adoption and Children Act (2002)
- Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations (2015)
- Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations (2015)
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Civil Partnerships Bill 2004

(f) Age

PLC is committed to challenging discrimination and inequality with regard to age in all its practices and activities. SMT affirm their responsibility for implementing equality for everyone regardless of their age in all activities. PLC complies with the Employment Equality Act (Age) Regulations which came into effect on 1 October 2006. Age equality and retirement policies and procedures have been put into place. PLC recognises that people can be discriminated against because of their age and will not tolerate any form of age discrimination. PLC will continue to appreciate the valuable contributions made by staff and learners of all ages in terms of quality of experiences brought to learning, teaching, research, support services, consultancy, enterprise, administration, professional services and management.

As part of their managerial responsibilities, all managers have a professional as well as legal obligation to eliminate age discrimination. All individuals will be personally accountable for their behaviour, actions and/or lack of actions in cases of complaint and or harassment. All individuals involved within PLC must recognise that ageism is harmful and undermines the contributions that young people and older people can make to an organisation. PLC will take necessary positive action to recruit younger and older people to ensure an age balance workforce and to ensure we do not miss out on the valuable range of contributions that staff and learner of different ages can bring to the University learning environment and workforce.

Promoting Dignity At Work And In The Learning Environment

PLC is committed to promoting practices that take into account the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. It recognises that discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment may be experienced in a number of ways, including day-to-day interaction with colleagues, peers and visitors. The aim is to promote a positive environment and reduce stress, illness and absenteeism and prevent any individual from being forced to give up work or studies because of perceived issues in this area.

In line with legislation, we will carry out monitoring processes. The information for monitoring will be handled confidentially and made available to SMT to inform future planning and positive action where necessary. The categories for monitoring purpose are as follows:

- Age
- Religion
- Disability
- Gender

- Race/ ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Numbers of internal/ external candidates
- Those not shortlisted, with reasons
- Those shortlisted, with reasons
- Those offered posts, with reasons
- Those rejected for posts, with reasons
- Advice offered to rejected candidates

Staff Development and Training

All staff will be given the opportunity to develop themselves and undertake appropriate qualifications relevant to their post and/ or progression opportunities. To comply with good practice, we will monitor staff take up of courses for personal development and progression. Staff involved in the recruitment of learners or staff will be provided with training on the Assessment of Prior Learning and equal opportunities good practice. All staff joining PLC are required to undertake training in equality and diversity where their duty to promote equal opportunity in every aspect of their activities is highlighted.

Staff Appraisal

We monitor appraisal practices to ensure that they comply with equal opportunities policies. Appraisals will be concerned with skills or aptitudes relevant to the job performance and areas where staff development and support are required will be identified.

Equal Pay

PLC believes that male and female staff; those from other minority racial groups; those with or without disabilities; those of different sexual orientations and different religious beliefs or non-beliefs; and those of different ages should receive equal pay for same or broadly similar work, work related as equivalent and for work of equal value. In this context 'pay' includes not only remuneration but also other benefits of employment such as promotion and training opportunities and access to facilities provided within the employment package from time to time.

Responsibilities – Staff and Learners

The co-operation of everyone within PLC (staff, learners, contractors, clients and visitors) is essential to the success of this policy. Staff teams are expected to carry out their activities in a fair and consistent way ensuring that their procedures and practices comply with equal opportunities policies and regulations as they perform their day to day duties. Learners are also expected to promote dignity and respect in all their engagements with other learners and staff as they undertake their studies and activities.

Procedures for dealing with complaints

PLC is committed to dealing with complaints from staff, learners, visitors, clients and contractors in a fair, just, timely and transparent manner. PLC offers support and advice for learners and staff who feel they have been discriminated against.

Review of Policy

- **This Policy will be subject to periodic review at a minimum of every two (2) years or when there are significant changes to equality and diversity legislation**

Relevant legislation:

- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 , as amended
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.
- Equal Pay Act 1970, 1975
- Equality Act 2006
- Equality Bill 2005
- Education Act 1986
- Education Reform Act 1988
- The Equal Treatment Directive (2004/113/EC) 74
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Gender Recognition Bill 2008
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Act 2000. Amendment Regulations 2003
- Sex Discrimination Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

This is not an exhaustive list and changes will be made to this list as we know of any legislative or other relevant changes.

Some Useful Definitions Direct Discrimination:

Direct discrimination is when someone is treated less favourably or put at a disadvantage. Examples of direct discrimination could include during the recruitment process, when someone is not employed because they identify with or belong to one of the equality groups.

Indirect Discrimination:

Indirect discrimination is the use of provision, criterion or practice that is apparently neutral but places some people at a disadvantage compared to others, unless this can be justified. Such an example is where a Chief Executive applies a „no headwear policy to all staff due to not wanting delivery drivers wearing baseball caps. This policy, although applied to all staff, disadvantages his Sikh Staff who wear turbans for religious reasons (ACAS Guidance).

Victimisation:

Victimisation is when a person is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or are intending to make a complaint about harassment or discrimination. For example, if a member of staff gives evidence at a discrimination tribunal and subsequently an opportunity for promotion or training is denied them because of their having given evidence and the organisation refuses to take reasonable steps to prevent this from happening, then they would be liable. Individuals who victimise may also be ordered to pay compensation.

Harassment:

Harassment is when a person's conduct has the purpose or effect of either violating another's dignity or creating an offensive environment for them. It may be intentional bullying, which is obvious or violent, but it can also be unintentional or subtle and insidious. It may involve such things such as the use of nicknames, teasing, tormenting, name calling or other behaviour which may not be intended to be malicious but nevertheless is upsetting.

Hate crimes:

The term "hate crime" can be defined as any crime committed against a person, a group or the property of a person or group where the motivation for the crime is hatred of, or prejudice against, their gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, non religion, disability or age. Hate crime may manifest itself in a number of ways, which may include offensive literature, damage to property, verbal abuse and threats, malicious telephone calls, threatening behaviour, offensive graffiti, sending offensive e-mails and assault.

Intolerance:

Intolerance covers behaviours that can, intentionally or unintentionally, manifest themselves as hate crimes. Academic freedom is an important component of academic life and flourishes best where there is respect for a wide range of view and beliefs. This includes working with individuals to illuminate radicalisation and extremism. PLC is working with the Government's drive to Prevent and use channel as a force to dis-encourage such thinking and behaviours amongst learners and staff.