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Equality Policy

August 2018

1. Scope

1.1. This policy applies to Firebrand

1.2. For the purposes of this document, “Learners” should be taken to refer to any individuals participating in our training and services

2. Policy Statement

2.1. Firebrand recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the organisation to ensure that no employee, job applicant or customer receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) on the grounds of the Protected Characteristics.

2.2. The Protected Characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender/ gender reassignment
- Marriage/ civil partnership
- Pregnancy/ maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

2.3. Our aims are to create an organisation that is free from discrimination, one that treats all staff, learners and stakeholders with tolerance, respect and dignity.

2.4. Firebrand aims to recruit and retain a diverse work force that reflects the communities in which it operates.

□□ We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.

□□ All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

□□ Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass learners or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the organisation’s services.

2.5. This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

3. Our Commitment

3.1. Firebrand is committed to the following principles:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and learners are recognised and valued.
- Every employee and learner is entitled to work in an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all.
- No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace, which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- We will promote equality and diversity among our staff, employers, stakeholders and learners and commit to continually raise achievement levels for all of our learners irrespective of their background or protected characteristics.

3.2. Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

3.3. This policy is fully supported by senior management, the policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

4. Responsibilities of Management

4.1. Management will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Each manager will ensure that:

- Staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy.
- Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- Records are maintained.

5. Responsibilities of Staff

5.1. Responsibility for ensuring that there are no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and

the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices.

In particular, all members of staff should:

- Comply with the policy and arrangements.
- Not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so.
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- Inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

6. Related Policies and Arrangements

6.1. All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity.

6.2. We are also committed to giving ex-offenders equal and fair treatment in applying to work within Firebrand

6.3. The organisation's policies will be reviewed annually.

7. Equality Training

- 7.1. Regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues and will be repeated as necessary.
- 7.2. Equality information is included in induction programmes for both staff and learners.
- 7.3. Updates on the policy are highlighted in the Quality Calendar.
- 7.4. The policy is accessible to all staff via Octopus.

8. Examples of Discrimination

8.1. **Direct Discrimination** happens when an employer treats someone less favourably than another person against one of the protected characteristics. For example, a female job candidate who possesses the best qualifications and the most experience not getting an interview for a job whereas a male with fewer qualifications does get an interview.

8.2. **Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a rule or policy disadvantages a group of people more than another, for example an employer insisting that employees or potential employees must not wear hats or headgear.

8.3. **Discrimination by Association** happens when someone discriminates against a person because they associate with another person with a protected characteristic. For example not offering someone a job even though they have all the necessary competencies because their partner is disabled.

8.4. **Perceptive Discrimination** means direct discrimination against someone who is thought to have a protected characteristic, for example a person who is being verbally abused for being homosexual even though he/she is actually heterosexual.

8.5. **Harassment** is unwelcome comments or conduct which violates an individual's dignity and/or creates an intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. For example spreading malicious rumours or making derogatory personal remarks about a person.

8.6. **Third Party Harassment** occurs when an employee is being harassed by someone that does not work for the organisation (a customer, contractor, client or visitor). The employer will become legally responsible if they know an employee has been harassed on two or more occasions and fails to take reasonable steps to protect the person from further harassment.

8.7. **Victimisation** involves treating someone less favourable because they have a claim/assisted a person in making a claim of discrimination, bullying or harassment. For example ignoring, excluding or being uncooperative, this may cause distress and impact on a person in being able to fulfil their role.

8.8. **Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourable because they are pregnant. For example, a woman who works in a store in which heavy lifting of boxes is sometimes required asks her manager if she can be excused. The manager refuses even though another person was excused from heavy lifting after surgery. The woman is forced to leave her job.

9. Monitoring

9.1. The organisation deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.

9.2. The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.

9.3. There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.

9.4. We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying & Harassment.

9.5. Where appropriate equality impact assessments will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the company policies and our services / products may have on those who experience them.

9.6. The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.

9.7. If monitoring shows that the organisations, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the organisation, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues.

9.8. Where possible, we will also monitor performance of our training programmes against protected characteristics to ensure that we are achieving equal performance across all of our learners. This will be reviewed regularly and updated as part of our Annual Self-Assessment process.

10. Grievances/ Discipline

10.1. Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via our Grievance or Harassment Procedures.

10.2. Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt through SRG Disciplinary Procedures.

11. Associated Policies

- Employee Grievance Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Handling Policy and Procedure

Authorisation & Document Control

Document Title	Equality Policy		Status	V.2	
Classification	Internal	Last Review	August 2017	Next Review	August 2018
Location	S:\Apprenticeship\Quality\Policies & Procedures\2017				

Authorisation	Responsible Person or Body
Document Owner	Barbara Turner, Quality Manager
Authorised By	Kiely Makepeace, Operations Director

Version History

Version	Author	Issued	Summary of Changes
Draft	Barbara Turner	June 2017	Proposal for approval and branding (replacement for existing policy)
V.1	Barbara Turner	June 2017	Version release
V.2	Barbara Turner	August 2018	Annual Review