


Serco Ltd

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Apprenticeships)

Document details

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Signature	

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Serco Country Standard Operating Procedures:

Doc Ref:	Title	Location
SMS CSOP-P1-14	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	MySerco

Overview

Serco is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all members of their apprenticeship delivery teams and learners, specifically those with the following protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender
- Age

Overview

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance on legislation and good practice in managing equal opportunities throughout our apprenticeship activities. This policy sets out Serco's commitment towards the development of inclusive and supportive learning and working environments for all our apprentices and delivery team members where all individuals have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and gain a feeling of self-esteem and respect for and from all others.

We are fully committed to promoting, maintaining and supporting equality and diversity in all aspects of our work. We firmly express our opposition to all forms of inequality and discrimination.

Scope

This policy applies to our apprenticeship delivery teams, apprentices, customers and suppliers. It applies to anyone working with Serco's apprenticeship team at any point in time. Everyone should expect to be treated equally according to need, with dignity and respect and without being subject to discrimination or harassment.

Serco work positively and progressively to ensure that no policy, practice, procedure or action puts any group of people at an unfair advantage or supports discrimination.

We will endeavour that no one with a protected characteristic is directly or indirectly subjected to unfavourable treatment. In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, the legislation covers an additional five broad areas.

Associative	Where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
Perceptive	Where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.
Harassment	This is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
Third Party	Where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed by a third party, not employed by Serco.

Victimisation

Where a member of the apprenticeship delivery team or an apprentice is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied an apprenticeship training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so. However, an individual is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Serco is committed to the removal of barriers for all members of the apprenticeship delivery team and the apprentices we work with. Barriers might be physical, but they can also be attitudinal and all members of the apprenticeship delivery team have a duty to respond proactively if they become aware of any barriers which might impact negatively on another person and this policy is designed to put that commitment into practice and support members of the apprenticeship delivery team when working with apprentices, employers and each other.

This policy forms the basis of our commitment to equality and diversity with the intention of promoting best practice. Our intention is to ensure that each step of the apprentice journey recognises and values diversity and promotes equality of opportunity to our apprentices and wider partners. Stakeholder surveys, alongside internal audits and reports to governors enable an ongoing review to see where improvements can be made, including an analysis of recruitment, progression, retention and completion data of those individuals with protected characteristics.

Serco will:

- Promote an ethos of inclusion and commitment to equality of opportunity
- Ensure that the apprenticeship delivery team, apprentices and employers are aware of the policy (shared at induction and available online) and their role in promoting equality and diversity.
- Ensure that all members of the apprenticeship delivery team complete equality and diversity training on an annual basis
- Provide an accessible learning environment, which is supportive of individual diversity
- Support apprentices with additional needs to access learning and achieve on their apprenticeship. This might include a support plan for learners with additional needs
- Share the complaints procedure that should be used if an apprentice or member of the apprenticeship delivery team believe that they have been discriminated against

Responsibilities

All members of the apprenticeship delivery team has a responsibility under this policy which mirrors the Serco SMS Policy. Managers are expected to promote equal opportunities in their areas of work.

All members of the apprenticeship delivery team has a responsibility to work co-operatively with others at all times. Individuals can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Serco for any act of unlawful discrimination. Members of the apprenticeship delivery team who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against others are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under Serco's disciplinary procedures. Discrimination,

harassment, bullying or harassment may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

- Serco's apprenticeship senior management team along with the Head of ESE will ensure that the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 are met. The Senior Management Team will lead by example, demonstrating the principles of equality and diversity and seek good practice from managers.
- Managers will establish good working relationships with all members of the apprenticeship delivery team and respond to any issues that are raised in terms of an individual's concerns. Managers will manage delivery teams in an equal, fair and appropriate way to ensure no form of favouritism, discrimination or unfair advantage is permitted.
- Serco Human Resources will provide guidance and support to ensure that procedures for the recruitment and promotion of members of the apprenticeship delivery team encompass best practice at all times within equal opportunities, legislative requirements, monitor and act on employee protected characteristics data, and provide equality and diversity training for members of the apprenticeship delivery team.
- Apprenticeship delivery team members will demonstrate the principles of equality and diversity and how we are fair and supportive to all people, irrespective of who they are. Apprenticeship delivery team members will deliver training materials to apprentices which avoid stereotyping or discrimination.
- Recruitment materials for apprenticeships will recognise and celebrate diversity, highlighting support which is available for learners. This will also outline requirements for the apprenticeship relating to professional experiences and development, but not personal or individual characteristics.
- Opportunities to reflect and discuss issues surrounding equality and diversity are integrated into learning materials. Additional information relating to advice and guidance for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) is provided at face to face workshops. Regular email updates, outlining support for learners (those with ALN and more generic support and guidance) will be shared each term to ensure that apprentices are aware of support options available to them.
- Onboarding processes, including diagnostic tests, are not used to preclude a learner, but to personalise any support requirements that they might have.
- Members of the apprenticeship delivery team will work harmoniously with all other employees, apprentices and other stakeholders, and uphold the high standards expected of equality and diversity. Members of the apprenticeship delivery team will report any concerns about equality issues so that management can take action to rectify and provide a supportive environment for apprenticeship delivery team members, apprentices and other relevant stakeholders.
- The apprenticeship delivery team, including facilitators and coaches, will integrate issues about equality and diversity, safeguarding and Prevent into training sessions and ensure that apprentices and employers understand their role within this as part of the apprenticeship, as well as the procedures in place to support this if they have needs or concerns.
- All Serco apprentices are expected to adhere to this policy, which seeks mutual respect for all and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs and offers apprentices equality of opportunity regardless of protected characteristics.

Employment practices

All members of the apprenticeship delivery team have a personal responsibility to adhere to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining harmony in the workplace. Serco will actively promote equal opportunities to ensure that the apprenticeship delivery team members receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential skills and abilities. Members of the apprenticeship delivery team will be recruited and selected, promoted and trained on the basis of objective criteria.

Any form of discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated. Serco will treat unfair discriminatory conduct or harassment by any member of the apprenticeship delivery team as a potential disciplinary offence which could lead to dismissal.

Grievance and disciplinary procedures

Serco will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the Equality and Diversity Policy by apprentices or members of the apprenticeship delivery team.

If a member of the apprenticeship delivery team or an apprentice feels that they have been treated unfairly or subjected to direct or indirect unfair discrimination, they can raise the matter through Serco's apprenticeship grievance procedure. Every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution. If a member of the apprenticeship delivery team or an apprentice makes a complaint of unfair discrimination, they will be protected from any victimisation in any form.

Apprentices who believe there has been a breach of this policy may complain through Serco's apprenticeship complaints policy available at: <https://www.serco-ese.com/media/1004/complaints-and-appeals-policy-v2.pdf?1637835094>

Apprenticeship Delivery Team Recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant experience, abilities and qualifications. Serco is committed to applying equal opportunities at all stages of recruitment and selection.

Advertisements will encourage application forms from all suitably qualified and experience individuals. When advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community, Serco will, as far as reasonably practicable:

- Ensure advertisements are not confined to those publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants of a particular group

- Avoid prescribing any unnecessary requirements which would exclude a higher proportion of a particular group
- Ensure that the experience levels as a criterion of any specific job is justifiable.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. All applications will be processed in the same way. The staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application.

Applicants are able to request alternative forms of interview and selection tasks, if their needs, including an impairment or other protected characteristic, creates potential barriers which would impact on their ability to participate. For example, interviews can be conducted online but without cameras if a candidate struggles with face to face interaction because they are neurologically diverse. Staff responsible for interviewing and shortlisting will discuss this with the candidate and where possible, offer alternative arrangements to the candidate.

Training and Development

Serco will train managers on its policy on equality and diversity and will help them identify discriminatory acts or practices or acts of harassment or bullying. Line managers will be responsible for ensuring they actively promote equal opportunity within the teams for which they are responsible.

A range of CPD activities for members of the apprenticeship delivery team, both at induction and during employment, to ensure equality and diversity is central to their understanding of workplace activities and people management.

Access to training, development or promotion will not be discriminatory and all members of the apprenticeship delivery team will have equal opportunity.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Members of the apprenticeship delivery team who are disabled should inform the relevant apprenticeship programme manager who will then arrange to discuss with the individual what reasonable adjustments to their role or working conditions or environment might assist them in performing their duties. The individual will also be encouraged to suggest any amendments that they believe would be helpful to them. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals and where reasonable and reasonably practicable, such adjustments will be made.

There may, however, be circumstance where it will not be reasonable or reasonably practicable for the organisation to accommodate proposals put forward by the individual member of the apprenticeship delivery team. In this case, consultation about suitable alternative arrangements would take place.

We arrange appropriate learning support for apprentices with learning difficulties and / or disabilities and who need tailored support in order to succeed in their studies. Our *Learner Support Policy* and *Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration policy* are available on our website at [Serco Education - training education and business professionals \(serco-ese.com\)](https://www.serco-ese.com/serco-education-training-education-and-business-professionals).

Apprentices without ALN but who are new to academic study can also access support and guidance relating to assignment writing, research, and study skills. Serco recognises that learners on apprenticeships have diverse academic backgrounds, which might include considerable time away from education. By embedding study support, apprentices are more likely to recognise what they are capable of and remain on their apprenticeship.

Serco recognises and values diversity within the workforce and all employees have access to community networks supporting and raising the profile of diverse needs including disability and inclusion (Serco Unlimited), culture, ethnicity and diverse background (Serco EMBRACE) and InatSerco (LGBT+). These support staff in terms of developing an inclusive ethos and empowering them to value diversity within their work.

Equality in Teaching and Learning

We recognise that facilitators, coaches and assessors have an important role to play in embedding equality and diversity into the learning experience. We provide training and support to enable them to fulfil this function to the best of their ability. For example, facilitators and coaches are encouraged to deal with issues as they arise in the learning experience and to tackle prejudice, stereotyping and negative behaviours.

We arrange appropriate learning support for those learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and who need tailored additional support in order to succeed in their studies.

Equal Pay

Serco is committed to equal pay in employment. Male and female members of the apprenticeship delivery team should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, Serco will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.