



Skills and Training Services (STS)

Local Operating Procedure

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Version Control Sheet

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Introduction

Skills and Training Services is committed to ensuring the equal treatment of all employees 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Serco Country Standard Operating Procedures: SMS CSOP-P1-14 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance on legislation and good practice in managing equal opportunities throughout our activities. This policy sets out Skills and Training Services’ commitment towards the development of inclusive and supportive learning and working environments which are free from discrimination, where there is mutual respect and equality for all, and where differences are celebrated and respected.

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

Scope

This policy applies to our employees, learners (apprentices or non-apprentices), customers and suppliers. It applies to anyone working with Skills and Training Services 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.

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

Skills and Training Services will endeavour to ensure 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 the following 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 they have a particular protected characteristic when they do 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 Skills and Training Services, e.g., a learner.
Victimisation	Where an individual is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a 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 employee is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Responsibilities

All employees have responsibility under this policy. Managers are expected to promote equal opportunities in their areas of work.

All employees have a responsibility to always work co-operatively with others. Individual members of staff can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, Skills and Training Services for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees 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, or bullying may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that Skills and Training Services meet the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010. The Senior Leadership Team will lead by example, demonstrating the principles of equality and diversity and seek good practice from managers.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff have a clear understanding of Skills and Training Services' approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), identifying staff development as necessary; Bullying, harassment and discrimination are effectively tackled; EDI is embedded in all activities, and they lead by example in treating all staff and learners with dignity and respect and by being fair and reasonable in the attitudes and behaviours.

Human Resources will ensure that [procedures for the recruitment](#) and promotion of staff encompass best practice at all times within equal opportunities, legislative requirements, will monitor and act on employee protected characteristics data, and provide equality and diversity training for staff.

Delivery and coaching staff will demonstrate the principles of equality and diversity and how Skills and Training Services are fair and supportive to all people, irrespective of who they are. Delivery and coaching staff will deliver materials to learners which avoid stereotyping or discrimination. All staff will ensure that the policy is implemented and understood, their behaviours consider the uniqueness of others, and everyone is treated with respect, courtesy, and dignity.

Employees will work harmoniously with all other employees, learners, customers, and other stakeholders, and uphold the high standards expected of equality and diversity. Staff will report any concerns about equality issues so that management can take action to rectify and provide a supportive environment for staff, learners, and other relevant stakeholders.

All Skills and Training Services learners are expected to adhere to this policy, which seeks mutual respect for all and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs and offers learners equality of opportunity regardless of protected characteristics.

Employment practices

All employees have a personal responsibility to adhere to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining harmony in the workplace. Skills and Training Services will actively promote equal opportunities to ensure that all employees receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential skills, and abilities. Employees will be recruited and selected, promoted, and trained based on objective criteria.

Any form of discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated. Skills and Training Services will treat unfair discriminatory conduct or harassment by any employee as a potential disciplinary offence which could lead to dismissal.

Grievance and disciplinary procedures

Skills and Training Services will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy by learners or staff.

If an employee or learner feels that they have been treated unfairly or subjected to direct or indirect unfair discrimination, they can raise the matter through the [grievance procedure](#). Every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution. If an employee or learner makes a complaint of unfair discrimination, they will be protected from any victimisation in any form.

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. Please refer to the Serco [Country Standard Operating Procedure - Talent Acquisition, Screening & Vetting](#).

Training and Development

Skills and Training Services will train managers on its policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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.

Skills and Training Services will provide a range of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities for staff and managers, 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 staff will have equal opportunity.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform their line manager and the Serco Human Resources department. For employment purposes, disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an employee's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It covers physical disability, some medical conditions and mental illness.

The line manager and/or Serco Human Resources department will then arrange to discuss with the employee what "reasonable adjustments" to their job or working conditions or environment might assist them in performing their duties. The employee 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 circumstances where it will not be reasonable or reasonably practicable for the organisation to accommodate proposals put forward by the employee. In this case, consultation about suitable alternative arrangements would take place.

Skills and Training Services arrange appropriate learning support for learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities and who need tailored support to succeed in their studies. This is outlined in the Skills and Training Services Learner Support Policy.

Equality in Teaching and Learning

Skills and Training Services is committed to providing outstanding teaching and support services to all learners and stakeholders. To achieve this aim, EDI must be embedded in the culture. Skills and Training Services will, therefore, commit to advancing equality as an employer and education provider to go beyond legislative compliance to ensure everyone is able to participate fully, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics.

Skills and Training Services recognise that facilitators, coaches, and assessors have an important role to play in embedding equality and diversity into the learning experience. Skills and Training Services 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. However, any incidents of unwanted behaviours must be recorded and followed up to full resolution via the Skills and Training Services Complaints and Appeals Policy.

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

Equal Pay

Serco is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes all employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. To achieve this, Serco will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.