



Vision
Training
North
East

Equality & Diversity Policy

Version: 2.4
Last Review: November 2025

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JAS', is written over a light yellow rectangular background.



Policy Name	Equality & Diversity Policy
Policy Owner	Equality & Diversity Lead
Copy Type	External Copy

Approvals

First Approved	February 2014
Governance Approved	Y
SMT Approved	Y

Applicable To /Accessible By

Employees	✓
Learners/Apprentices	✓
Employers	✓
Website Access	✓

Reviews

Scheduled Review Cycle	Annual
Responsible Manager(s)	Equality & Diversity Lead Welfare Lead
Last Review Date	November 2025
Next Review Due By	November 2026
Current Version Number	2.4



Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Policy Statement

Vision Training (North East) Ltd is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, valuing diversity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in employment and service delivery.

We will ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and relevant statutory codes of practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

As both an employer and a training provider, we are committed to creating an inclusive environment in which:

- Everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- Differences are valued as strengths.
- Equality of access, participation, and achievement are embedded in all we do.

We recognise the diversity of our workforce, learners, and the communities we serve as a key asset that enhances learning, innovation, and quality.

2. Purpose

Our aim is to create a culture that respects, values, and celebrates differences, that promotes dignity, equality, and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and achieve their potential, free from discrimination or bias.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination on the grounds of: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, and Sexual orientation.

All employment and service decisions will be based on merit, skills, and ability. Every employee and learner will be supported to succeed through fair access, inclusive practices, and reasonable adjustments where required.

3. Definitions - Guidance

3.1. Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single legal framework to protect individuals from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

It covers employment, training, and the provision of services.



3.2. Protected Characteristics

Protected characteristics are:

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

3.3. Types of Discrimination

There are different types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination: Less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- Associative discrimination: Discrimination due to association with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination: Discrimination based on perception that someone has a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination: A policy or practice that applies to everyone but disadvantages people with a protected characteristic.
- Discrimination arising from disability: Unfavourable treatment connected to a person's disability without justification.
- Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.
- Sexual harassment: Unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- Victimisation: Unfair treatment because an individual has made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act.

Note: There is no longer a separate Equality Act claim for third-party harassment. However, Vision Training (North East) Ltd will take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment by third parties in accordance with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.



3.4. Reasonable Adjustments

We will make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce disadvantages faced by disabled employees, learners, or service users. This includes the anticipatory duty for learners, ensuring accessibility of learning environments, materials, and assessment arrangements.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all directors, employees, learners, volunteers, and employers who engage with Vision Training (North East) Ltd.

5. Equal Opportunity, Diversity and British Values

5.1. Equal Opportunity

All employment and service delivery practices will meet or exceed the Equality Act 2010 and EHRC statutory Codes.

We aim to ensure a working and learning environment where:

- Dignity and respect for all are actively promoted.
- Individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued.
- Discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying, or intimidation are not tolerated in any form (see Prevention of Bullying, Victimisation and Harassment Policy).
- All decisions are based on merit, qualifications, and ability.
- Everyone is supported to achieve their best potential.

We will not treat any job applicant, employee, learner, or service user less favourably because of any protected characteristic. No person will be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be objectively justified. This applies to all aspects of employment, training, and service delivery (recruitment, promotion, transfers, benefits, facilities, and learning opportunities).

We are also committed to taking reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, in line with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.

Concerns about equality, discrimination, or harassment can be raised with a Line Manager, the Welfare Lead, or a Director, informally or through the Comments, Commendations and Complaints Procedure.



5.2. Diversity

We will:

- Deliver services that promote equal access, participation, and opportunity for all learners and employers.
- Encourage diversity to enhance creativity, achievement, and best practice.
- Support employees and learners to express needs and views in a respectful, inclusive environment.
- Make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment, and premises to enable full participation.

5.3. Promoting Fundamental British Values

We actively promote Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, and Mutual Respect & Tolerance throughout training delivery and organisational culture. These values underpin our approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Directors** – Ensure legal compliance; set strategy; monitor equality data and objectives.
- **Senior Management Team** – Monitor key E&D data across the learner journey; align this policy with strategies and plans.
- **Quality Lead & Welfare Lead** – Promote and monitor E&D in teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum planning, ILPs (accounting for prior learning and balancing employer priorities with learner goals), SMART targets, and resources.
- **Line Managers** – Ensure induction and ongoing E&D training; implement policy and procedures.
- **Personnel Lead** – Collate and report E&D data across recruitment and learner journeys (in line with UK GDPR).
- **Enrolment Team** – Signpost this policy at induction and explain learner responsibilities.
- **Tutors/Assessors** – Signpost the policy; implement fair practice; embed E&D in sessions, assessments, reviews, ILPs, targets, and resources.
- **Employers & Learners** – Uphold E&D principles in workplace practice and interactions.
- **All Employees** – Model appropriate conduct; follow this policy; challenge discrimination in all forms.



7. Policy Implementation – Procedures

7.1. General implementation

We will:

- Meet responsibilities in equality legislation, EHRC Codes, and company policies.
- Make equality a mainstream consideration in policies, plans, and procedures.
- Set and monitor equality objectives for employment and service delivery.
- Tackle bullying, harassment, and intimidation.
- Take proportionate positive action where lawful to address disadvantage.
- Apply the Social Model of Disability.
- Provide multiple accessible routes to our services and information.
- Work with local communities and partners to tackle disadvantage.

7.2. Recruitment, Selection and Promotion of Employees

All potential employees will be given equal opportunities through the recruitment and selection processes. This will be attained by:

- Advertise widely; ensure materials are inclusive and non-discriminatory (unless a lawful occupational requirement applies).
- Ensure job descriptions/person specs are necessary, justifiable, and non-discriminatory.
- Provide accessible application formats on request.
- Criminal records: ask only what we are legally entitled to know under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and DBS filtering rules; ignore spent/filtered matters unless the role is legally exempt.
- Remove personal details (e.g., date of birth, sex) from shortlisting packs where practicable.
- Train interviewers; avoid questions unrelated to role requirements.
- Aim to recruit a workforce that reflects our Centre.

7.3. Training of Employees

- E&D training is mandatory at induction and via regular updates.
- Provide appropriate training to enable effective performance for all.
- Support employees to understand any action plans relevant to their roles.

7.4. Users of our services (Employers, Apprentices/Learners)

- Ensure service users understand this policy and their responsibilities.
- Promote services fairly and ensure equal access to training opportunities.
- Ensure marketing materials comply with equality law.



7.5. Selection of Learners

- No learner will be refused because of a protected characteristic.
- Where funding eligibility is not met, we will signpost to suitable alternatives (e.g., different levels, qualifications, or training).

7.6. Complaints and Discrimination

- We will not ignore grievances from disadvantaged groups.
- Employee complaints are investigated under the Grievance Procedure; proven breaches may be managed under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Service user complaints are handled through the Commendations, Comments and Complaints Procedure.
- Where harassment or victimisation is proven, appropriate action will be taken (internally or via employers, as applicable)

External advice: Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)

- Phone: 0808 800 0082 | Textphone: 0808 800 0084
- Web form: equalityadvisoryservice.com
- Post: FREEPOST EASS HELPLINE FPN6521

7.7. Other Plans and Strategies

We will reflect equality aims in all relevant organisational plans and strategies.

7.8. Promote equality and diversity within partnership working.

We will collaborate with partners to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination and disadvantage, learning from others' best practice.

7.9. Discrimination Guidance

For full EHRC guidance see: equalityhumanrights.com

Employees must seek advice from a Director if unsure whether a decision engages protected characteristics or any of the points below:

1. No direct discrimination (unless objectively justified for age).
2. No indirect discrimination without objective justification.
3. No discrimination arising from disability without justification (where disability is or should reasonably be known).
4. No associative discrimination.
5. No perceptive discrimination.
6. No victimisation.



7. No harassment.
8. Make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people.

7.10. Monitoring Equality & Diversity Data

We will collect, store and report on equality and diversity data that records the learner journey and outcomes, meeting our responsibilities to GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

7.11. Activities that promote Equality and Diversity

The Welfare Lead supports tutors by:

- Delivering bi-monthly E&D/Welfare activities in whole-team meetings for staff development and cascade to learners.
- Embedding E&D throughout lessons and the apprenticeship journey.
- Publishing an E&D calendar (awareness days/weeks/months) with session ideas.
- Sharing topical E&D updates (e.g., Engage).

We comply with the EHRC Statutory Codes of Practice (Employment; Services, Public Functions & Associations) and current EHRC guidance.

7.12. Other Policies

Other policies that are relevant to this policy include (but are not limited to):

- *Prevention of Bullying, Victimisation & Harassment, including Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Policy*
- *Commendations, Comments and Complaints Policy*
- *Grievance Policy*
- *Disciplinary Policy*

COMMON ADDENDUM

POLICY REVIEW

The Policy & Procedure Lead is responsible for managing the annual review of the policy.

The manager(s) indicated on the first page are responsible for completing the annual review of the policy and communicating all necessary changes to the Policy and Procedure Lead. The owner will then sign off the policy once updates are complete.



The review can be delegated to another manager as part of their Professional development. However, the policy owner retains full responsibility for ensuring the policy:

- Complies with current legislation
- Meets the centre's responsibilities as
 - a lead independent training provider
 - a partner in line with funding and awarding bodies' requirements
- Supports stakeholders in implementing the policy effectively.

The Quality Lead ensures that all employees acknowledge policy updates through the Quarterly Policy Monitoring Form.

POLICY ACCESS, COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION

Internal, all employees

All policies are accessible via the VTNE shared folder. Managers must communicate relevant policies to their teams and ensure employees:

- Read the policies during induction
- Receive guidance on responsibilities and implementation
- Receive necessary training, e.g. Health & Safety
- Sign to confirm their understanding

Policy updates are communicated via email, intranet, and team meetings.

The Data and ICT Lead ensures policies are accessible to learners and employers, either online or by request.

Promotion of the policy to learners and employers (where applicable)

Tutors: Ensure learners understand their responsibilities and deliver related activities (e.g., safeguarding, welfare).

Employer Engagement Lead: Promotes relevant policies to employers and ensures they understand their responsibilities.

Monitoring and Reporting

Line managers monitor policy compliance within their teams and address any issues as they arise. Employees have a clear process for reporting any concerns, which should be communicated by line managers.

1. DEFINITIONS FOR POLICY PURPOSES

Please note that not all terms may be used within this policy.



Vision Training (North East) Ltd

Candidate(s): A person individual who has expressed an interest in a programme with Vision Training (North East) Limited but is not yet registered.

Learner(s): A registered learner on a short course or an apprentice learner registered on an apprenticeship with Vision Training (North East) Limited.

Employer(s): The employer of a registered learner or candidate.

Employee(s): A person employed by Vision Training (North East) Limited.

The Centre: Vision Training (North East) Limited's Training Centre in Stockton-on-Tees and any current satellite offices.

Stakeholders: A member of one or more of the above groups relevant to the policy.

