

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Equal Opportunities and Equality and Diversity Policy is designed to implement the commitment of Gas Logic to Equality and Diversity and Equality of Opportunity.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The success of Gas Logic and that of its employees depends very largely on the employees themselves, and so we look to them to play a part as we continue to play ours.

Gas Logic is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and learning to all our employees, job applicants, learners, sub-contractors, customers and suppliers. Gas Logic opposes all forms of unlawful discrimination in employment and against learners on the grounds of the following 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equality Act 2010: gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, age or disability. We will apply employment policies that are fair, equitable and consistent with the skills and abilities of our employees and the needs of the business. We look to our employees for support in implementing these policies to ensure that all employees are accorded equal opportunity for recruitment, training and promotion and, in all jobs of like work, on equal terms and conditions of employment.

Gas Logic will not condone any direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation in the conduct of our business with the public or our employees. Acts of victimisation, harassment or discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, age or disability are disciplinary offences.

3.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

All stakeholders (including learners, staff, contractors and partners) are subject to this policy and those related to it. It applies to all staff but is specifically directed to those employees involved in recruitment, training and promotion/marketing.

4.0 EQUALITY AND THE LAW

The Equality Act 2010 introduces the term 'protected characteristic' to refer to aspects of a person's identity explicitly protected from unlawful discrimination. The Act also introduces a Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality and foster good relations. This policy is designed to implement these requirements and meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Appendix A provides further information on these legal requirements.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

Gas Logic take every possible step to ensure that individuals are treated appropriately and fairly and that objective criteria are used in all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Job descriptions and person specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions other than in exceptional circumstances.

Gas Logic will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering 'flexible working' requests permitted by law and any other request for a variation to standard working practices. Gas Logic will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Gas Logic will not discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion, but may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address identified under-representation of any group in particular types and levels of job.

Gas Logic staff and learners should not discriminate against or harass any other person (staff, learner or member of the public) whilst in employment or learning.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN LEARNING

Gas Logic aims to create a training environment where learners can participate fully, give their best and achieve their full potential in a climate free from victimisation, discrimination or harassment.

Gas Logic take every possible step to ensure that individuals are treated appropriately and fairly and that objective criteria are used in all aspects of learner admissions, choice of programme of study and progression, assessment decisions, grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Gas Logic is here to help you achieve your ambitions, whether through learning or employment. We will provide where possible the support that you need, either through our own services or referral to another organisation which can better meet your needs.

We will encourage the integration and inclusion of disabled learners into Gas Logic Centres. Candidates will be offered individualised programmes of development to assist to achieve their personal learning goals. All reasonable adjustments will be made to support disabled learners throughout learning and assessment.

7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual Responsibilities

All staff and learners are expected to:

- Treat all individuals fairly, with dignity and respecting different styles, skills and cultures
- Promote a work and learning culture in which diversity is highly valued and embedded
- Ensure zero tolerance of all forms of discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment
- Take steps to resolve personal conflict as early, fairly and amicably as possible

Recruitment Responsibilities

Staff involved in the recruitment of prospective employees and learners are expected to:

- Implement the 'equal opportunities in employment' as stated in section 5.0 above.
- Ensure that this policy is made available to any prospective or actual employee and that it is referred to in any recruitment materials.
- Take positive steps where possible to encourage applications and employment to improve equality and diversity.
- Ensure that any recruitment or promotion is open and fair.
- Ensure awareness and implementation as far as possible of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission's Code of Practice for Employment.

Management Responsibilities

All Managers are expected to:

- Ensure that equality and diversity is promoted consistently well across all areas of Gas Logic.
- Work towards widening participation and retention of learners in non-traditional occupations where possible.
- Ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand equality and diversity in their job role.

Training Responsibilities

All staff involved in the delivery of training are expected to:

- Work to raise success rates of all learners.
- Ensure that there are high success rates of all learners regardless of gender, disability and learning difficulty and any other protected

characteristic.

- Ensure that all learners are aware of this policy, its requirements and implementation including the complaints process.
- Take all opportunities to embed equality and diversity into the curriculum (through specific sessions, use of training materials and resources, case studies which widen participation etc.)
- Ensure that every opportunity is taken to reduce and elimination any form of harassment, victimisation and discrimination and work to support any learners who has identified an issue.

Promotion Responsibilities

All staff involved in the promotion and marketing of Gas Logic are expected to:

- Take opportunities to reflect the principles of equality and diversity through the use of a wide range of images and case studies reflecting the whole population.
- Take opportunities to promote Gas Logic as an equal opportunities employer.
- Ensure that no recruitment or promotion activity acts as a barrier to applications from prospective employees or learners.

8.0 TRAINING

Learners and staff will receive regular training and/or email updates relating to equal opportunities and equality and diversity. We will regularly review our policies and practices to ensure we continually implement best practice and remove any barriers that could restrict access to individuals or groups.

9.0 GRIEVANCES

It is the responsibility of **all staff, learners, and employers** of learners to work together towards combating all forms of discrimination. This includes reporting all incidents of discrimination using Gas Logic procedures. Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and may be regarded as misconduct. For staff at Gas Logic, for example, this may result in disciplinary action. For learners, this may involve disciplinary action, including suspension or withdrawal from the training programme. For employers, this may involve cessation of a learning contract.

If you believe you have been discriminated against in any way you can use the Grievance Procedure. If you are a member of staff there are informal and formal routes including policies you can access to resolve any concerns and to get a quick and just resolution. Your complaint will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly.

10.0 LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This equality and diversity policy should be read alongside the Employee Handbook.

Appendix A. Legal framework

The Equality Act 2010 introduces the term 'protected characteristic' to refer to aspects of a person's identity explicitly protected from unlawful discrimination. Nine are identified:

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

However, other aspects of a person's identity, background or circumstance can cause them to experience discrimination, for example a person's socio-economic status, class or background. Gas Logic is committed to advancing equality and eliminating discrimination on these and other grounds. The Equality Act 2010 introduces a Public Sector Equality Duty, in force from April 2011, which requires Gas Logic and employers to give due regard to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations.

'Advance' involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- a) remove / minimise disadvantages experienced by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- b) take steps to meet needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who don't share it
- c) encourage persons with a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activities where participation by such persons is disproportionately low

'Foster good relations' includes having due regard to tackle prejudice and promote understanding

The Duty covers eight of the nine protected characteristics (only the first 'arm' of the new duty, to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, applies to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships).

The Equality Act 2010 recognises the following types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination, including associative and perception discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Discrimination arising from a disability
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly, or less favourably than another person, because they have a protected characteristic. This often arises because of assumptions, stereotyping or prejudice. Direct discrimination also covers **association discrimination or perception discrimination**. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with a person who has the protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic. **Indirect discrimination** occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied that appears to affect everyone equally but which in fact puts people who share a protected characteristic at a disadvantage. **Harassment** occurs when someone behaves in such a way that their conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an environment that is offensive, hostile, degrading, humiliating or intimidating for a person, where:

- this is related to a protected characteristic (except pregnancy and maternity or marriage and civil partnerships)
- this is of a sexual nature (sexual harassment)
- a person is treated less favourably because they have either submitted to or rejected sexual harassment, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment (this is known as 'consequential harassment').

Discrimination arising from a disability occurs when a disabled person is treated less favourably than others because of something connected to their impairment.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments occurs when an organisation fails to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person, to avoid the disabled person being placed at a substantial disadvantage when compared with a non-disabled person.

Victimisation occurs when a person experiences disadvantage because they have supported someone in making a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, or because they personally have made an allegation of discrimination.

(N.B. Appendix A has been adapted from Christine Rose (2011) The New Equality Act 2010: What does it mean for the learning and skills sector?)

Signature

M. K. K. K.

Date

15 – 3 – 16

Position

Director