**Purpose**

Our commitment to fairness and social justice is at the heart of our values. We believe that everyone must get a fair and equal chance to succeed.

We recognise that some people and communities may need extra help to reach their full potential, particularly when they face multiple layers of disadvantage and discrimination. We will work to prevent and eradicate discrimination and inequality as we recognise that there is a proven business case for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

**Scope**

Our policy is an integral part of our role as employer, learning provider, partner organisation and community resource. It will apply to all matters relating to learners and staff.

There is the legislative driver of meeting the Equality Act 2010 and the Section 149 Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Act sets out a Duty on us to:

* Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
* Advance equality of opportunity
* Foster good relations

Under the Act the relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or marriage/ civil partnership status.

Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics; therefore, the Act policy protects **everyone** against unfair treatment.

We recognise that other factors not covered by legislation can lead to unequal treatment, for example having caring responsibilities therefore, this policy goes further than the characteristics covered by the Equality Act.

## Responsibility for Implementation and Review

The Lifelong Learning and Skills Management Team are responsible for determining the equality and diversity priorities for the service.

All staff are responsible for embedding the commitments in this policy statement within all their practices.

These principles also apply to services that are contracted out on our behalf which we will support to achieve our vision and policy objectives.

## Our Vision and Values

## Our vision and values align directly with Sheffield City Councils corporate priority to embrace equality, fairness and inclusion:

*We aim to deliver an inclusive and high-quality education to the people of Sheffield, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. We strive to improve the life chances of Sheffield citizens by empowering tolerance and mutual respect, achievement and progression, aspiration and ambition; everyone matters.*

* *Learners are at the heart of what we do, enabling opportunity and success*
* *We provide high-quality education delivered with integrity and trust*
* *By working as one we achieve together*

**Policy Objectives**

We are committed to achieving greater equality by giving learners the best possible opportunity. This includes tackling deprivation and discrimination, increasing accountability to the wider community and ensuring high quality provision.

**We will contribute to this by:**

* Setting and meeting targets on learning participation for the number of people living in the most deprived areas of the city.
* Setting and meeting targets on learning participation for the number of adults from disadvantaged or marginalised groups.
* Raising the levels of learner satisfaction, retention, and achievement.

**We will achieve this by:**

* Locating learning provision in the most deprived areas and neighbourhoods of the city.
* Working with local communities to plan and offer learning provision that reaches disadvantaged or marginalised groups.
* Using effective publicity to focus on the number of people from underrepresented groups to encourage them to apply for learning programmes and job opportunities.
* Ensuring full and fair consideration for all applicants for learning programme opportunities.
* Providing appropriate and relevant support arrangements for learners from disadvantaged or marginalised groups.
* Raising the level of achievement for those from traditionally poor achieving groups through implementation of effective support.
* Taking steps to ensure that satisfaction levels amongst learners from disadvantaged or marginalised groups are as least as high as all other groups.
* Working with the LLS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group to turn objectives into achievements and continually improve performance.
* Refer to the SCC Race Equality Commission report to ensure the curriculum remains fit for purpose, creating equity for all learners to qualify good progression routes into HE, FE and employment.

**Consultation**

We will involve and consult communities on our policies and practices as widely as possible by:

* Assisting learners and potential learners, especially those from disadvantaged sections of the community to fully take part in our services.

### Access and Culture

We aim to have a culture where everyone is respected and diversity is valued.

We will:

* Promote images that show diversity and publicity. Our learning materials will show positive images and use language to counteract prejudice and discrimination.
* Provide information in a range of formats e.g. large print, other languages, via interpreters for those whose first language is not English and sign language for BSL users.

**Communication**

We will ensure that all of our employees are up to date, informed, understand the Equality Policy and receive any professional development and support needed.

All of our learners will be informed about the Equality Policy, their rights and responsibilities under this and related procedures. This will happen at the start of learning during induction and throughout their time with us.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

We all have a right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect. We are also responsible for ensuring that our own actions and behaviours are fair and that we respect the dignity of others.

## Monitoring and Review

We will regularly review our procedures to ensure that they are removing barriers or eliminating potentially discriminating practice.

Regular review ensures our policies and procedures are more aligned to business needs and reflect any changes to legislative requirements.

Monitoring and evaluation will be through business planning for the section.

There will be a formal review of the policies, procedures and action plans on an annual basis.

We will ensure that equality and diversity is included during business reviews such as self-assessment reporting and any development planning for OFSTED, Education and Skills Funding Authority (ESFA) or Regeneration Projects. We will use Equality Analysis to ensure equal outcomes and to reduce adverse impact.

We will monitor the use and impact of our services to:

* Improve the take up by, and achievement levels of disadvantaged groups.
* Identify gaps and disparities in learning provision.
* Identify the need for changes.
* To better target resources to address discriminatory practice.