

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

POLICY

It is the policy of GTS Solutions CIC to ensure that all employees, contractors and learners are treated with dignity and respect and that they will not be discriminated against on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation in line with the Equality Act 2010.

GTS Solutions CIC is committed not only to its legal obligations but also to the positive promotion of equality in all aspects its business and aims to provide an environment free from fear and discrimination where diversity, respect and dignity are valued.

All employees, contractors and learners will be made aware of the provisions of this policy.

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The headings of **age**, **disability** (which includes mental health and people diagnosed as clinically obese), **gender reassignment** (people who are having or who have had sex change, transvestites and transgender people), **marriage** or **civil partnership**, **pregnancy** or **maternity**, **race**, **religion** or **belief**, **sex** or **sexual orientation** are known as 'protected characteristics.

DEFINITION OF DISCRIMINATION

Types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another on grounds relating to a protected characteristic.
- Associative discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another because they are associated with another person with a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a rule or policy that applies to everyone disadvantages a person with a protected characteristic.
- Harassment occurs through behaviour deemed offensive by the recipient, employees may find something offensive even when it's not directed at them.
- Harassment by a third party occurs through harassment by people not directly employed by the company, such as contractors.
- Victimisation occurs through discrimination against someone because they made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act Legislation.

- Discrimination by perception occurs through direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic, even if they don't.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO EMPLOYEES

GTS Solutions CIC will not discriminate on the basis of a protected characteristic in the allocation of duties between employees employed at any level with comparable job descriptions.

GTS Solutions CIC will put in place any reasonable measures and/or adjustments within the workplace for those employees who become disabled during employment or for disabled appointees.

All employees will be considered solely on their merits for career development and promotion with equality of opportunity for all.

All employees will be provided with appropriate training regardless of any protected characteristic.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO LEARNERS

GTS Solutions CIC will ensure learners have equal access to all training courses irrespective of any of a protected characteristic.

GTS Solutions CIC will ensure that all learners undertaking a training course are fully aware of the contents of this policy via the training course induction

MONITORING

GTS Solutions CIC will ensure that all aspects of this policy are kept under review and are operated throughout the organisation.

Where it appears that employees, contractors or learners are not being offered equality of opportunity, circumstances will be investigated to identify any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage certain employees, contractors or learners and, if so, whether these are justifiable.

GRIEVANCE

Any complaints of discrimination, of any type, pursued through the Appeals and Complaints Procedure will be thoroughly, sympathetically and quickly investigated.

GTS Solutions CIC emphasises that discrimination is unacceptable conduct and may lead to disciplinary action through the normal disciplinary process, which may result in a warning, suspension or dismissal of an employee, termination of a contractor's contract or removal of a learner from a course.

DISABILITIES

This Disability Policy sets out GTS Solutions CIC commitment to disabled Associates/Delegates and employees, providing a framework to contribute to the on-going development of an enabling environment for Associates and Delegates and Employees.

Responsibilities

GTS Solutions is responsible for the wellbeing of disabled associates and delegates.

Legislation

The disability equality legislation outlines a number of required duties. The Equality Act 2010 incorporated all nine separate pieces of equality legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. GTS Solutions CIC is required to:

- *Eliminate unlawful discrimination*
- *Eliminate harassment of disabled people*
- *Promote equality of opportunities between disabled people and other people*
- *Involve disabled people in the formulation of actions*
- *Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people*
- *Encourage participation by disabled people in public life*
- *Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment*

The Equality Act 2010 uses a wide definition of disability which includes those with physical or mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, AD(H)D, medical conditions, mental health difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, M.E. and 'unseen disabilities' (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, heart conditions, diabetes). The formal definition included in the Act is:

"A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities"

The definition of "day to day activities" includes mobility, manual dexterity, lifting, hearing, eyesight, speech, memory, and the ability to concentrate, learn or understand. The Act defines "substantial" as being more than trivial and "long-term" as being more than twelve months or likely to last twelve months. An impairment which would substantially affect a person, but which is controlled by medical treatment or prosthesis, is still covered by the definition of disability.

The definition includes cancer, HIV/AIDS and Multiple Sclerosis effectively from the point of diagnosis.

Discrimination and harassment is not limited to those people who are themselves disabled but also applies to those associated with disability i.e. a carer for a disabled child.

Staff Recruitment and Development

GTS Solutions CIC offers a variety of training opportunities to meet the requirements of all staff. These are normally held in accessible venues with consideration of the needs of staff with disabilities. All staff attending a training programme are asked whether they have any access requirements, reasonable adjustments or requirements that need to be accommodated.

Associates/Delegates with Disabilities

GTS Solutions CIC welcomes applications from disabled people and those with specific learning difficulties. We encourage applicants to declare a disability or specific learning difficulty either on application or any time thereafter in order that they can be made aware the support that is available to assist them to achieve their potential in university study. Information provided to GTS Solutions CIC is held in confidence, is shared with colleagues only with Associates/Delegates' permission and disability is in no way linked with decisions regarding offers of places.

Reasonable Adjustments

GTS Solutions CIC will consult with the awarding body to make reasonable adjustments when a disabled student or member of staff may be placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled. Examples of reasonable adjustments for Associates/Delegates include making appropriate arrangements in such activities as:

Learning and Development

Examinations and assessments

Adjustments may include specific examination arrangements, provision of additional support for learning, adjustments to assessment practices and specific access issues such as the use of guide dogs.

Similarly there is an obligation to make reasonable adjustments for disabled Associates/Delegates or potential Associates/Delegates to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. Adjustments may include:

Reallocation of duties

Altering working hours

Changing work location

Modifying equipment e.g. providing an adapted keyboard or telephone

Consideration of other roles

Monitoring

GTS Solutions CIC encourages associates and delegates to declare any disability either at application, during study or at employment in order that the GTS Solutions can understand what the potential requirements and needs of associates and delegates with disabilities may be.

GTS Solutions CIC recognises the importance of self-declaration but also accepts that some disabled Associates/Delegates are reluctant to state that they are disabled.

Confidentiality

All information given to GTS Solutions CIC by disabled associates and delegates will be treated with respect and confidence and in accordance with Data Protection legislation. A disabled student or member of staff may volunteer a disability and ask that the information is kept confidential. The responsibility of the staff member informed is to ensure that the disabled person is aware that this is likely to have an effect on any reasonable adjustments which may be required and to document this.

Stuart Nicoll

Managing Director

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