

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Our Commitment and Aims

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in our employment and apprenticeship recruitment practices and procedures, and to avoiding unlawful discrimination being suffered by our employees, job applicants, apprentices, learners, clients, and employers.

We will not discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, gender, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion, or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

We will not discriminate unlawfully against customers, contractors, suppliers, or visitors using or attempting to use the services that we provide.

This policy aims to assist us in putting this commitment into practice to ensure all Our apprentices and employees are treated fairly, respectfully and without prejudice so that you can maximise your full potential, and do not commit and/or are not subjected to unacceptable and unlawful acts of discrimination.

Our policy is implemented following the Equality Act 2010 and all other appropriate statutory requirements and has been compiled after consideration of all available guidance and relevant Codes of Practice.

We will strive to ensure that our work environment remains positive, free from harassment and bullying, and that everyone is always treated with dignity and respect in maintaining and sustaining equal opportunities in employment and learning.

We have a separate 'bullying and harassment policy and how complaints of this type will be dealt with once reported.

Promoting the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to learners and Apprentices

All learners and Apprentices complete a Health form (confidential - to be completed and handed back to the directors on induction day) which may highlight a need for reasonable adjustments.

Abbeydale produces a quarterly newsletter for all apprentices to highlight the diverse nature of the United Kingdom and how each characteristic should be respected. This newsletter also

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contains information on Safeguarding and Prevent plus a reminder of the Abbeydale Values adopted by the Abbeydale team.

A Code of Conduct is issued to ensure a professional and safe working environment. Policies and Procedures, including Safeguarding and Prevent, are issued and discussed.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion discussion is held for each apprentice and learner During a compulsory tutorial. Equality and diversity in the workplace are taught throughout the Veterinary Nursing curriculum in topics such as communication and nursing care.

All apprentices and learners are issued with a helpline contact list to be on their USB flash drive issued by Abbeydale to refer to throughout the course if needed.

Initial Assessments in Mathematics and English take place before the interview at Abbeydale to determine the current working level of English and maths, results are held on the Pass Functional Skills site and on the CRM at Abbeydale.

Examples of equality and diversity in action:

Promotion of PRIDE events by the British Veterinary LGBT+ group on social media

Advice and guidance on maternity pay and leave given by the BVNA

Information provided on Ramadan in the spring issue of the 'Safe and Sound' newsletter

Class discussions about how to adjust communication with clients and colleagues who may be heard of hearing

An opportunity for the apprentice to state their preferred pronouns in the learner profile form.

Commitment to the policy throughout Abbeydale

Abbeydale's strong commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion starts with Senior Leadership from the Directors.

The Directors leads Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Abbeydale and monitors targets and standards. The Governance Board will also monitor the progress and commitments of Abbeydale to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are linked to student reviews of each apprentice and cohort quarterly with all group tutors.

The training practice coordinator and placement visit officer also ensure the commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is taking place within the apprentices' workplaces and this is recorded on the appropriate visit forms.

Inclusive Culture and Belonging

Abbeydale is committed to creating a culture of belonging in which every apprentice, learner and member of staff feels valued, respected, safe and able to achieve their full potential.

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We recognise that inclusion goes beyond equality of opportunity. We actively work to remove barriers to participation, achievement and progression for all learners, particularly those who may be disadvantaged, have additional learning needs, disabilities, caring responsibilities, mental health needs, or face other challenges that could affect their learning.

We will:

- Foster an environment where diversity is celebrated and differences are respected.
- Ensure all learners can see themselves positively represented within learning materials, resources and discussions.
- Promote understanding of protected characteristics, British Values, protected beliefs and different lived experiences.
- Challenge stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and discriminatory language wherever it occurs.
- Encourage learners to share their views and experiences and contribute to decision-making.
- Provide appropriate pastoral, wellbeing and learning support to enable learners to participate fully and achieve their goals.
- Monitor learner participation, achievement, progression and satisfaction to identify and address any gaps between different groups of learners.

Engagement

Ways in which we listen to apprentices' and learner views and act on them:

- Group Representatives
- One-to-one phone calls and tutorials
- Apprentice Surveys
- Apprentice Reviews

Responsibilities

All at Abbeydale are required to support us in meeting our commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and to avoid unlawful discrimination.

If you commit serious acts of harassment, you may be guilty of a criminal offence. As well as exposing us to liability for unlawful discrimination, you can be held personally liable for such acts.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against you or our stakeholders are

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disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Such acts may in certain circumstances constitute gross misconduct and could lead to your summary dismissal.

Monitoring and Review

We will monitor this policy periodically to judge its effectiveness and it will be updated in accordance with relevant changes in the law.

Information provided by job applicants and you for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with per the Data Protection Act 2018.

Definition of Terms

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct sex discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she was pregnant.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory, about individuals that have a protected characteristic. However, for there to be a claim of indirect discrimination the provision, criterion or practice must also:

- be to the detriment of people who share the particular protected characteristic compared with people who do not;
- not be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct related to one of the prohibited grounds which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment will take place in such circumstances even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed due to their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed due to a mistaken perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic. Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have a disability and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Victimisation occurs when an employee is subjected to a detriment because he/she 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 gave false evidence or information, or made a false allegation, if

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the evidence or information is given, or the allegation is made, in bad faith.

Implementing the policy in the curriculum

- A. Abbeydale will seek to create an atmosphere in which no apprentice, learner or applicant suffers unfair discrimination.
- B. Apprentices and learners should have equal access to all entitlement offered through the curriculum. In assessing provision, individuals will not be denied consideration for training and educational opportunities. Assessment of suitability for participation in a particular activity will be based upon the principle that each apprentice and learner is to be offered appropriate training or educational opportunities.
- C. Equal Opportunities should form part of the curriculum, syllabi, teaching materials, methods, examinations and assessments should recognise and reflect this commitment. Reasonable adjustments will be made.
- D. Apprentices and learners should be made aware of the channels of communication for help, advice or complaint should unfair discrimination be perceived whilst attending Abbeydale.
- E. Apprentices and learners will be made aware of the provisions of Equal Opportunities legislation.

Through the curriculum, tutorials and enrichment activities, learners will develop an understanding of equality, diversity, inclusion, British Values, respectful relationships, and life in modern Britain. Learners will be equipped to work effectively with people from different backgrounds and contribute positively to diverse workplaces and communities.

This policy will be seen to have the active support of management at all levels. Overall responsibility for implementation will rest with Abbeydale Directors. The Policy will be clearly stated and be made known to all employers, employees, apprentices, and learners wherever practicable.

The Directors will identify and support an individual or group of individuals to implement, monitor and review the Policy annually. Abbeydale will actively and regularly review the effectiveness of this Equality and Diversity Policy and will act as appropriate to redress any weaknesses in it.

Training

Training that is delivered to managers includes specific references to the Equality Act (2010) and avoiding discrimination throughout the recruitment and application process for apprentices, learners and staff.

All staff are responsible for modelling inclusive behaviours, using inclusive language, challenging discriminatory attitudes, and promoting respect and positive relationships in all interactions with learners, employers and colleagues.

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Monitoring Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes

Abbeydale will regularly review equality, diversity and inclusion data, including:

- Recruitment and enrolment trends.
- Achievement and completion rates.
- Attendance and participation.
- Learner satisfaction surveys.
- Complaints, grievances and safeguarding concerns.
- Progression into employment or further study.

Any identified gaps in outcomes between learner groups will be investigated and appropriate actions taken to promote equitable outcomes for all.

Complaints

Any employee/apprentice/learner who believes that unequal treatment has been applied to him or her within the scope of this Policy should follow either the Learner Grievance Procedure or the Staff Grievance Procedure.

Abbeydale values

V – vitality

E – empowering our learners

T – teamwork

N – nurturing resilience

U – unleashing potential

R – responsibility to uphold professional standards

S – skill through precision, training and growth

E – equity

"We are committed to ensuring that all learners feel safe, included, represented and able to thrive."