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Equality and Diversity Strategy

Version: February 2024

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

System People actively promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work and aims to provide an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential with a feeling of self-esteem. It will eliminate unfair discrimination through a zero-tolerance approach, regular target setting and monitoring and the development of positive action programmes.

Every employee, learner and subcontractor has a responsibility to act in a manner that upholds and follows the spirit and intention of the strategy.

2. SCOPE

- System People is committed to treating all of its staff, learners and stakeholders fairly and equitably regardless of a protected characteristic including: age, race or ethnicity, disability, gender, gender preference, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, non-belief, membership of professional associations or trade unions, marital status, family responsibility and socio-economic standing. We will ensure that no unjustifiable requirements or conditions are imposed that could disadvantage individuals on any of the above grounds.
- System People will be proactive in promoting equality through the embracing, valuing and recognising difference including cultural difference.
- System People aim to create genuine equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. It is our intention to take positive action in promoting equality and justice.

Commitment

- System People seeks to create an accessible training provision and will take positive action to create a supportive and relevant learning and working environment in which all have the opportunity to achieve their potential.
- System People will provide education and training to all staff and learners in implementation of equality and diversity.
- System People recognises that passive support for equality and diversity is not sufficient as inequalities created by indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment, segregation and stereotyping, affects everyone. Challenging inequality must be the responsibility of all members of System People staff.
- System People will develop and embed equality objectives and impact assessment throughout the organisation.
- To promote equality of opportunity for all and recognise and celebrate diversity
- To provide an environment that is free from discrimination in any form, for our employees, learners and any other persons who have contact with the organisation
- To provide a harassment free environment and to take determined action under our disciplinary procedures to remove any direct or indirect discrimination which may occur
- To accept our obligations in the spirit and intention of the various statutory legislation, Acts of Parliament and codes of practice which promote the ethos of equality and diversity.

3. LEGISLATION

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998
- Data Protect Act 1998
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- National Minimum Wage Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998

- Part Time Workers Regulations 2000
- Education Act 2002 – Child Protection

4. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the implementation of this strategy, however it is recognised that it is the collective responsibility of all persons connected with the organisation to contribute to the implementation of this strategy.

Managers at every level have responsibility to ensure that the equality and diversity strategy is upheld. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring fairness and impartiality in selection, managing and developing employees.

Individual employees are responsible for ensuring that learners are treated equally and fairly.

Board of Directors

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to:

- Oversee the promotion, development, implementation and monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Strategy and annually review the impact of the policy.
- Ensure that the company complies with its statutory obligations under The Equality Act 2010.
- Review regular reports on achievement of the Equality Objectives.
- Receive yearly reports on impact assessment across the organisation.

Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity Designated Officer

Works with the delivery teams to:

- Ensure that learner activities are accessible and available to all.
- Ensure that System People takes due regard to the learner voice, particularly from under-represented groups.

The Management Team

It is the responsibility of managers to:

- Ensure that System People complies with its statutory obligations with regard to Equality and Diversity.
- To ensure a thorough induction to both staff and learners to raise awareness and understanding of System People E&D policy and implementation arrangements, the standards expected and their responsibilities in relation to these.
- Ensure all relevant staff complete E&D training at Induction and annually thereafter
- Ensure all Apprentices receive E&D training at induction and then regular reinforcement during training sessions and at reviews.
- Carry out regular impact assessments.
- Develop strategies and set targets for implementing effective equality and diversity practices.
- Ensure that learners have equal access to training.
- Ensure that recruitment and selection of staff and learners is non-discriminatory.
- Ensure that staff have equal access to training and development opportunities.
- Ensure that staff are appropriately trained on equality and diversity issues.
- Ensure that all learners are made aware of System People's Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- Monitor data collected on equality and diversity at regular intervals.
- Carry out the responsibilities of line managers with regard to equality and diversity.
- Produce annual impact assessment for the organisation.

- Promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Ensure that System People complies with its equality and diversity strategy for staff and learners.
- Carry out regular impact assessments.
- Ensure that learners and staff are made aware that substantiated acts of discrimination will be treated as disciplinary offences and dealt with under the appropriate procedures.
- Ensure that any allegations of discrimination are properly investigated and that appropriate action is taken.
- Ensure that sufficient records are kept to enable the effective monitoring of equality and diversity issues.

Employees

It is the responsibility of all System People employees, including managers, to:

- Comply with System People's statutory requirements with regard to equality and diversity.
- Comply with System People's Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- Undergo training on equality and diversity issues.
- Maintain, where applicable, sufficient records to enable the effective monitoring of equality and diversity issues.
- Bring any allegations of discrimination to the attention of the appropriate manager, in accordance with college procedures.
- Ensure that schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity, gender and disability.
- Promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Learners

It is the responsibility of all System People students to:

- Comply with System People's statutory requirements with regard to equality and diversity.
- Undergo awareness raising on equality and diversity issues.
- Bring any allegations of discrimination to the attention of the appropriate manager, in accordance with procedures.
- Respect and develop good relationships between people from different racial groups.

5. PROCEDURES

System People has Grievance, Harassment and Complaints procedures for both staff and learners. Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Strategy will be dealt with through the learner and staff disciplinary procedures.

6. PROMOTION

There are a wide range of meetings which address the implementation of this Safeguarding Strategy including, senior management team meetings, quality team meetings, and operational team meetings. Staff development sessions also enhance communication of the safeguarding agenda and focus on improving practice

7. MONITORING

The implementation of this strategy will be monitored by the, Management Team each year. Appropriate data will be provided including numbers of complaints/incidents in relation to equality of opportunity. Equality and Diversity data will be reviewed at all levels and Equality Objectives developed to address any issues of inequality and discrimination. The objectives will be reviewed yearly through the Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity meetings.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

System People will look to introduce an impact assessment to ensure equality issues are addressed at all levels and in all areas in the organisation. Any adverse impact identified in any impact assessment process will result in an action plan to minimise the impact in as short a timescale as practically possible. An annual impact assessment report will be prepared and published.

9. REVIEW DATE

By When: March 2025

By Whom: Managing Director

Annex A

EXPLANATION OF KEY TERMS

Age – This refers to a person belonging to a particular age group, which can mean people of the same age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18-30 year olds, or people over 50)

Direct Discrimination – less favourable treatment of a person compared with another person because of a protected characteristic.

Disability – a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Disadvantage – something that the individual affected might reasonably consider changes their position for the worse.

Diversity – where many different types of people are included.

Equality Impact Assessment – refers to a detailed and systematic analysis of the actual or potential effects of a formal or informal policy, proposed policy, practice, criterion or service to determine whether it has a differential impact upon identifiable groups of people.

Family Status – identifies whether an individual has children or does not have children.

Gender – identifies an individual's sexual group; i.e., whether the individual is male or female.

Gender Re-assignment – the process of changing or transitioning from one gender to another.

Harassment/Bullying – unwelcome comments or behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment for them.

Indirect Discrimination – occurs where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone but the provision, criterion or practice puts or would put members of one group at a particular disadvantage and is not a justifiable means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Marital Status – identifies whether an individual is married or single.

Marriage and Civil Partnership – marriage is defined as a union between two people". Same sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated no less favourably than married couples.

Nationality – refers to the country in which an individual was born.

Positive Action – refers to a range of lawful actions that seek to overcome or minimise disadvantage (e.g. in employment opportunities) that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs.

Protected Characteristics – refers to the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Public Sector Equality Duty – the duty on a public authority or body when carrying out its functions to have due regard of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.

Race, Ethnic or Nation Origins – are terms used to describe a group of people whose ancestors came from the same country or cultural group. They refer to an individual's ancestry, which may not be the same as the individual's nationality.

Religion – refers to an individual’s faith or beliefs. Non-belief refers to individuals who do not hold faith or beliefs.

Sex – This is a protected characteristic. It refers to whether a person is a man or a woman (of any age).

Sexual Orientation – identifies an individual’s sexual preference, i.e. whether the individual is heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or transgender.

Stakeholders – people who have an interest in a subject, issue or organisation.

Trade Union Membership – identifies whether the individual is, or is not, a member of a trade union.

Transgender – refers to a person with gender dysphoria (a gender identity that is different from their anatomical sex) who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to live their life in the gender that is opposite to that assigned to them at birth.

Victimisation – occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their involvement in a discrimination complaint.

Zero Tolerance – refers to a principle whereby behaviour, attitudes and language which may be deemed to be offensive, derogatory or discriminatory is not overlooked but challenged – with the aim of effecting change or redress.

Annex B

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 aims to end discrimination suffered by people with disabilities and gives rights in the areas of employment and access to goods, facilities and services. The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as someone with a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.”

System People will ensure that it does not treat disabled employees or learners less favourably. Reasonable adjustments will be made for employees and learners including those who become disabled during their employment/ training. The Equality Act 2010 introduced the right for applicants or learners with disabilities not to be discriminated against in education, training and any services provided wholly or mainly for students.

Race

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone on the basis of their race, colour, ethnicity, ethnic origin or national origin. The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on public authorities to promote race equality.

System People will not tolerate any form of racial harassment and whilst not a public authority, will work towards complying with the Racial Equality Act.

Gender

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for employers and other organisations to treat a person less favourably on the basis of their gender.

System People will not discriminate against employees/ learners on the basis of their gender in the recruitment and selection for training programmes or in the way it provides access to benefits, facilities and services.

Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and religion or belief.

System People will not discriminate against employees or learners on the basis of their sexual orientation or religion or belief in the recruitment and selection of employees/ learners or in a way it provides access to benefits, facilities and services.

Age

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate in the workplace and in vocational training on the basis of a person's age.

System People will not discriminate against employees or learners on the basis of their age in the recruitment and selection of employees/ learners or in the way it provides access to benefits, facilities and services.

Ex-Offenders

No discrimination shall be made in respect of ex-offenders in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. However, discretion will be exercised where it is felt that a recent or serious conviction may mean that a person presents a risk to others with whom the employee/learner would have contact. This discretion will be exercised by the Director of Learning.

Certain roles within System People require the completion of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Where these are required they will be completed in line with DBS regulations and any information will be strictly confidential.

Signed: 

Date: 01.02.2023