

LSDN Equal Opportunities Policy	
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LSDN MISSION STATEMENT

LSDN's mission is to enhance the life chances, economic independence and social mobility opportunities of its service users by helping individuals to develop vocational, academic and life skills using a supportive and individualistic approach so service users can realise their fullest potential at home, in the workplace and in the community. LSDN works in partnership with its clients and local community to bring about the best possible results for each individual and their families.

Purpose	This document sets out the policy and procedure for Equal Opportunity and Diversity covering the 9 protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation.
Scope / Summary	Applies to all staff, volunteers and all contractors of LSDN.
Management Responsibility	The LSDN Chief Executive and Director have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
Introduction	As an employer and training provider, LSDN is committed to equality and valuing diversity within its workforce. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our customers and learners.

	LSDN has been awarded Investors in Diversity for Small Businesses. We provide equality of opportunity and do not tolerate discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation – or any other grounds. Every person working for LSDN has a personal responsibility for implementing and promoting these principles in their day-to-day dealings with everyone – including members of the public, other staff and employers. Inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable.
	Equality & Diversity Definitions: Bullying: Bullying is a form of harassment and can be defined as the use of position or power to coerce others by fear, oppression or threat. Disability: Under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, a 'disabled' person is classed as someone who has a physical or mental impairment. That impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Discrimination – Direct discrimination: Treating people less favourably than others on grounds of ability, age, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, race, religious belief, impairment, criminal background, gender, marital status, sexuality, and responsibility for dependents, HIV status, employment status, socio- economic factors, refugee status, language or any other potential disadvantage. The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 safeguards a person

	Discrimination – Indirect discrimination: Applying a rule, condition or requirement that disadvantages people of a particular sex, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, and religion or belief and which is not a justified means of achieving a legitimate aim. Diversity: The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It is understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising individual differences. Harassment: Unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Victimisation: Treating people less favourably because of something they have done under, or in connection with, equality legislation, e.g. made a formal complaint of discrimination or given evidence in a tribunal case.
Marketing	All advertisements and literature about our service delivery will state our commitment to, and actively promote, equality & diversity. We will use materials in other languages whenever required and use easily legible fonts in order to make our marketing literature legible and accessible to end users.
Access to Learning Programmes	LSDN will strive to ensure that all learning opportunities are available to all within health and safety guidelines and that all learners are supported as far as possible to pursue the learning programme of their choice. Wherever possible all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure physical access to the learning environment/workplace as well as ensuring those facilities are suitable for all (e.g. positioning of notice boards to ensure that wheelchair users can access them).

Disclosure of disability or other equalities values	LSDN encourages learners to disclose any disability that they may have to a member of Centre staff. LSDN also encourages learners to disclose any issues relating to their age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion/belief that might have an effect on their learning, e.g. restrictions with the time of day when learning can take place due to daily worship.
Induction / Information Advice and Guidance	In receiving inquiries about learning programmes, staff will ensure that all prospective learners receive a prompt and fair service. Learners will be entitled to advice and guidance at the pre-entry stage and during induction to try to ensure that they are on the right course for them. All learning programmes are open to all learners. Where learners meet the criteria, they may be eligible for government funding. Funding regulations will be explained to the learner as appropriate. During the learner's initial assessment a range of courses and support provisions offered by the Centre, or if appropriate elsewhere, will be discussed. LSDN is dedicated to ensuring that the learners are not only made aware of but understand the Centre's commitment to equality & diversity during induction. Every learner will be provided with a copy of our Equality & Diversity Statement with information about disclosure and details of what we constitute to be Unacceptable Behaviour. Disclosure and Unacceptable Behaviour in relation to equalities will also be explained verbally to learners at induction. All learners will be clearly informed that, in signing their learning agreement, they are agreeing to

	respect and follow the ethos of this Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy.
The Learning/Working Environment	The learning/working environment will foster an atmosphere of openness and acceptance of a variety of views, perceptions and experiences. It will also challenge, in a developmental and supportive way, all forms of prejudice discrimination and stereotypical attitudes.
Unacceptable Behaviour	LSDN classes any behaviour that does not respect the rights of others or that harasses, vilifies or discriminates against others, including threatening or violent behaviour, as unacceptable. If a staff member or learner behaves in an unacceptable way, which does not uphold or represent the values and intent of this Policy, then the Wellbeing Manager will take responsibility for responding to this situation as soon as it is evident.
Recruitment and Selection of Personnel	LSDN will ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures are fair, non-discriminatory and recognise diversity.
Procedures for Making a Complaint	An employee or learner who feels that they have been the victim of unlawful discrimination, or suffered victimisation, bullying or harassment or witnesses any act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying has the right to have their complaints investigated through the LSDN complaints procedure. LSDN will ensure that there is always a copy of the LSDN complaints procedure available to staff and learners.

Monitoring	A monitoring and evaluation framework that reflects equal opportunities will include both financial and operational monitoring procedures. Representatives of the target user groups will actively participate in monitoring and evaluating to ensure that the agreed action plan reflects user needs. Learners and staff will contribute to LSDN's Equalities monitoring process via surveys, evaluations, focus groups and the staff and student rep arrangements.
General Procedures	LSDN will seek to ensure that this Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy is implemented efficiently and effectively. All staff are responsible for ensuring implementation of the policy. Equality & diversity training and support will be given to all staff who interact with learners to enable them to implement this policy effectively. Staff will proactively ensure all learners are supported throughout their learning. However, should there be any breach of this policy, it will be dealt with promptly and formal procedures implemented accordingly. It is important that staff do not overlook offensive comments or actions that may be made in the learning environment. Staff will discuss sensitively with the person responsible for the comments/actions, explaining the distress that they may have caused to other learners/employees.

	This Equal Opportunities Policy will be reviewed annually and more frequently when legislative or internal changes require it.
Links to other policies	Bullying and Harassment, Safeguarding, Prevent, Disciplinary, Health & Safety, Disability Discrimination Policy, Professional Conduct and Behaviour policies.
Policy Monitoring and review arrangements	Quarterly monitoring – Board and SMT Annual –full review and update