



Lambeth

Lambeth Adult Learning Equality and Diversity Policy 2024-2025

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Equality and Diversity Policy

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Equality and Diversity Policy

Who is this policy for?

This policy is for all learners, Lambeth Adult Learning Service staff (including agency staff), volunteers and governors/trustees and our sub-contractors and their staff.

What is this policy for?

This policy outlines our objectives and responsibilities for promoting Equality and Diversity across the Lambeth Adult Learning Service, and how we plan to achieve them. It is important that our learners and staff can make good progress in an environment which is welcoming, supportive and safe from discrimination or judgement.

The policy explains how we try to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. We are committed to do more than is required by equality legislation requires.

Key pieces of legislation that are relevant to us include:

- **Equality Act 2010¹**. This law protects people from discrimination based on age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.
- **Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)²**. This law requires public sector organisations (like Lambeth Council) to try to stop discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to encourage good relations between different groups of people.
- SEND reforms of the Children and Families Act 2014.

How we communicate this policy

All our learners receive a thorough induction at the start of their course. This induction includes the key themes of Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Prevent. Learners are made aware of this policy and have access to it through the Lambeth Adult Learning website.

As part of their induction, all new staff (employees and subcontractors' staff) are made aware of this policy and existing staff receive refresher training to make sure their practice is up to date and promotes best practice in promoting equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity.

What we mean by 'equality', 'diversity', 'inclusion' and 'discrimination'

Equality is about not about treating people the same. It is about making sure that everyone has equality of opportunity. One example of this is a blind learner may be given learning materials in Braille. This is not the same treatment as a sighted person gets, but it makes sure that they have the same opportunity to learn.

Diversity is about what makes us all different. This can include things like age, gender, background, nationality and health.

Inclusion means 'being included within a group or society as a whole'. It is important to understand someone's differences (diversity) so that you can include them and treat them equally and fairly (equality).

Discrimination happens when people are excluded or treated unequally because of their differences. Discrimination happens when someone has a negative attitude towards others. It can be caused by labelling people, stereotyping them or by any other form of prejudice.

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/equality-act-2010>

² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>

Policy Statement

Lambeth Adult Learning Service celebrates and values the diversity of our community. Promoting Equality and Diversity are at the heart of our mission, values and strategic objectives. We are committed to providing the education and support our learners from all sections of the community need to achieve to their full potential.

We and our partners also work to be outstanding employers with a diverse workforce that has the skills and knowledge needed to achieve these ambitions. We aim to ensure that all our employees and volunteers can work and learn in an environment that is inclusive and free from discrimination. We do not tolerate any discrimination based on age, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, nationality, family circumstances, economic and social background, union activity or employment status.

What this Policy covers

This Policy covers the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 i.e. age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage & civil partnership; pregnancy & maternity; race; religion & belief; sex; sexual orientation and also includes nationality, family circumstances, economic and social background, union activity, and employment status.

This Policy covers all the learners, staff and courses that are delivering via funding received by Lambeth Adult Learning through their Grant funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

This Policy shows how we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity by making sure that we are checking how well we are doing towards our key equality objectives. This means we will examine how well different groups of people are accessing the course and how well they are achieving (sex, race, disability, age).

Responsibilities

Everyone who works or studies with Lambeth Adult Learning Service is responsible for making sure that Equality and Diversity are valued and promoted. Here are some of the main areas of responsibility:

Lambeth Adult Learning Service:

- Make sure that promoting equality and diversity is central to the strategic direction of Adult and Community Learning.
- Create a welcoming, inclusive environment when we plan and deliver any events (for example the Learner Forum, End of Year Conference or Staff Training days) or host any meetings.
- Ensure that our subcontracted learning providers understand and enforce all equality and diversity laws
- Use our Performance Review and Quality Improvement visits to check what progress has been made on equality and diversity.
- Make sure that Provider Managers carry out this policy.

Provider Managers will:

- Create a welcoming, inclusive environment for everyone which shows respect, values diversity and promotes equality.
- Make sure that staff and learners understand what their responsibilities are. This will include support and training to help them with their duties.
- Use quality assurance processes to monitor equality and diversity.
- Check that all policies, plans, procedures and actions are in line with national equality and diversity laws and this Policy document.

All staff will:

- Create a welcoming, inclusive environment for everyone which shows respect, values diversity and promotes equality.
- Make sure they do not discriminate against, victimise, bully or harass any individual or group. This includes in person, on paper or when using email or social media.
- Challenge people who behave in a way which is inappropriate or that discriminates against anyone.
- Report all incidents of discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment.
- Review how equality and diversity is promoted in their subject area. This includes contributing to provider reports on progress in equality and diversity.
- Participate in equality and diversity training.
- Include equality and diversity in lesson planning, teaching and assessment. This will include producing inclusive lesson content and resources.

All learners will:

- Create a welcoming, inclusive environment for everyone which shows respect, values diversity and promotes equality.
- Make sure they do not discriminate against, victimise, bully or harass any individual or group. This includes in person, on paper or when using social media or any digital communication.
- Report any incidents of discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment to their tutor or other member of staff.

When we work with Employers, they will:

- Create a welcoming, inclusive environment for learning and work which shows respect, values diversity and promotes equality.
- Make sure they do not discriminate against, victimise, bully or harass any individual or group. This includes in person, on paper or when using social media or any digital communication.
- Behave in a way that is not against the law or this Equality and Diversity Policy.

Anyone who works with Lambeth Adult Learning Service (for example, parents/carers, contractors, work-experience employers, hirers of our premises, external speakers and trainers) will:

- Show respect for everyone, value diversity and promote equality.
- Make sure they do not discriminate against, victimise, bully or harass any individual or group. This includes in person, on paper or when using social media or any digital communication.
- Behave in a way that is not against the law or this Equality and Diversity Policy.

Lambeth Adult Learning and The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the most important piece of legislation about equality and diversity. There are also other laws which have been created since 2010 which are also part of the Equality Act (these are called secondary legislation).

Lambeth Adult Learning has to comply with this Act and all of the secondary legislation that comes with it. The legislation sets out what we have to do in a series of 'duties' and rules. These are described in two documents, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (April 2011).

What Lambeth Adult Learning does to comply with the Equality Act 2010

We have a number of policy objectives to help us comply with the Equality Act. These are:

- Make sure that Equality and Diversity is central to everything that we do
- Get rid of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and anything else that the Equality Act bans
- Make sure there is equality of opportunity between anyone who has a 'protected characteristic' and anyone who does not
- Create good relations between anyone who has a 'protected characteristic' and anyone who does not
- Take action to reduce any gaps in achievement for different groups of learners
- Improve how Equality and Diversity is promoted in Teaching and Learning
- Make sure that all our staff complete Equality and Diversity training and always promote equality and celebrate diversity in everything we do.

More formally, the general duty is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act and states, "A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

What is a 'protected characteristic'?

To prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation, the Equality Act lists the characteristics which it protects. It says it is illegal to discriminate against anyone based on:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage & civil partnership
- Pregnancy & maternity
- Race
- Religion & belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

To make sure that we are promoting equality and diversity effectively, at Lambeth Adult Learning we also make sure people are not discriminated against based on their nationality, family circumstances, economic and social background, union activity and employment status.

How we advance equality

Lambeth Adult Learning think carefully about how our planning, policies and decisions affect equality and diversity. We collect information on the 'protected characteristics' listed above to help us check whether we are doing this well, and to decide how to improve. Information we collect comes from the data we have on whether learners stay on course, if they attend and if they achieve. We also analyse our learner and staff feedback, at learner forums or staff training events, to make sure we are actively promoting equality and celebrating diversity.

For example, we advance equality of opportunity by looking at information about any differences in achievement levels. We then think about how we can reduce or get rid of those differences and talk to providers about what actions they are taking. This helps us to remove or minimise any disadvantages that people may have due to their protected characteristics.

We also actively make choices about our curriculum and what learning we offer to meet the needs of people from the protected groups, as sometimes these can be different from the needs of other people. For example we may put on a course for older people in a sheltered housing scheme who may be at risk of loneliness.

We also encourage all our learners, especially those from protected groups, to take part more in their communities. We do this through our Active Citizenship curriculum as well as through our learner forums. We make sure our learners are aware of how they can join in and what they can do. For example we have informed our learners about social action and we have run a workshop on what it is, what the benefits are and how they can get more involved in social action as well as how they can be more involved in planning and shaping their learning.

What Lambeth Adult Learning does to ensure Equality and Diversity

Lambeth Adult Learning looks closely at the results of our equality and diversity processes to make sure they are working well. Every November, we report on how well we are doing against our objectives from in this Policy and we also include how we are doing in our Self-Assessment Report each year.

We have regular Provider Meetings which examine the progress we have made towards our objectives and how each of our different groups of learners are doing. We also have our progress monitored by external people, for example by our councillors or peers. We look at information about learner enrolment, retention, achievement, pass and attendance rates. We also come to lessons and speak to our learners to get their feedback as well as carrying out surveys. We do lesson observations where we formally judge how well we are promoting equality and celebrating diversity in the lessons we observe. We train our staff in Equality and Diversity and update this training to make sure they are up to date and our staff consistently demonstrate best practice.

All this information is used by managers in their day-to-day decisions to make sure that no one from any group are being inadvertently disadvantaged and our learners and potential learners have equal opportunities to access learning and training.

We also use the information to inform our strategic and business planning processes. We identify 'Areas for Improvement' within learning providers, curriculum areas and for the whole Service. We then identify what actions we need to take, and these are planned out in our Quality Improvement Plans.

Every year Lambeth Adult Learning Service completes a Self-Assessment Report on quality and performance. This contains information from:

- Provider Self-Assessment Reports
- Performance data (information about enrolments, attendance, retention and achievement)
- Learner feedback from surveys, meetings and events and course reviews
- Stakeholder feedback from meetings
- Lesson observations
- Local and national statistics to help us compare how we are doing with other adult learning organisations

We use the results of this Report to update our objectives and decide what our new priorities and objectives are and what actions we need to take to achieve them.

How we monitor and review this policy

The Head of Quality monitors how effective this policy is by carrying out various activities. Some of these activities include: carrying out data analysis on how well we are performing overall and how different groups of learners are performing compared to each other (for example if women are performing better than men); being responsible for staff training and ensuring all staff are appropriately trained and can get more training if they need it; planning learner forums and events, ensuring that all these events are open to all our learners, promote equality that there is a welcoming and inclusive environment, supporting learners to learn more about each other and how they can become more active in their communities and keep mentally and physically well.

The Head of Quality is also responsible for carrying out the objectives in this Policy and reporting the progress we have made back to other staff, key stakeholders and external bodies (for example Cabinet Members).

This policy is reviewed and updated every year. If there are any changes in the law, the policy will be updated more frequently.

Appendix A: Forms of Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 describes different types of discrimination. This policy covers all of these. They are:

Direct Discrimination

This happens when a person is treated worse than someone else because of a 'protected characteristic' or because they are a part-time worker or fixed-term employee. *We tackle this by ensuring all staff are well trained in E&D, understand different forms of discrimination and promoting best practice in E&D in class. All learners are made aware of the importance of E&D at the start of and throughout their course. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any forms of bullying, victimisation and harassment.*

Associative Discrimination

This happens where someone is directly discriminated against or harassed because they associate with someone else who has a 'protected characteristic'. *We tackle this by training our staff ensuring they know about different forms of discrimination, promoting equality, celebrating diversity in class and promoting a strong and inclusive provision. All learners are made aware of the importance of E&D at the start of and throughout their course.*

Perceptive Discrimination

This is where someone is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular 'protected characteristic' (even if they do not). *We tackle this by training our staff to know what the different forms of discrimination are. All learners are made aware of the importance of E&D at the start of and throughout their course.*

Indirect Discrimination

This is where the impact of a rule or way of doing things disadvantages someone with a 'protected characteristic'. It is only discrimination if the rule or way of doing things cannot be justified. *We tackle this by making sure all our policies and practices are not indirectly discriminating against anyone in the equality strands. If necessary we will do an Equality Impact Assessment on a policy or procedure.*

Victimisation

This happens when someone is treated worse than others because they have made (or supported) a complaint about unlawful discrimination, or because they are suspected of doing so. *We tackle this by having a clear Whistleblowing Policy. We have well trained staff who know how to keep all our learners safe. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any forms of bullying, victimisation and harassment.*

Harassment

Harassment is about how people behave. It means behaving in a way that violates dignity, or is hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to someone with a protected characteristic (whether or not this effect is intentional). Harassment also includes any behaviour that is sexual in nature. *We tackle this by making sure all our learners are aware of what harassment is and that it is not behaviour that is acceptable in any of our learning environments. We ask our learners if they feel safe and make it clear who to go to if they do not. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any forms of bullying, victimisation and harassment.*

Disability Discrimination

There are special provisions which protect disabled people, employees and job applicants against discrimination, both in and out of the workplace. Policies need to make sure that organisations make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people are not substantially disadvantaged. *We tackle this by making sure that people with disabilities can access our courses and the different learning environments.*

We can make reasonable adjustments to support access to learning. We monitor and analyse data to make sure that people with disabilities can achieve the same as those without.