



Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion Policy

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Name	Title / Role	Date Issued	Version
James Sturdy	Head of Compliance	28/11/2018	1.2
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1 Background

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. Before the Act came into force there were several pieces of legislation to cover discrimination, including:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2003

2 Purpose

Guard Business Solutions Limited (GBS) is committed to creating a culture in which equality of opportunity and diversity are promoted actively and in which unlawful discrimination is not tolerated.

GBS recognises the real educational and business benefits of having a diverse community of staff and learners and is working towards building and maintaining an environment which values and celebrates diversity.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that in carrying out its activities GBS will have due regard to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity, across all its activities.
- Fostering and promoting good relations between people of a diverse background.
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Encouraging participation of all.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all workers including employees, consultants, temporary workers, agency staff, secondees and other third parties working on behalf of GBS Apprenticeships. It applies to the Board of GBS Apprenticeships in the discharge of their duties. It also applies to suppliers, sub-contractors, and agencies in our supply chain. This Policy sets out how GBS Apprenticeships will address the needs of people and communities who have protected characteristics as specified within Equality Act 2010.

4 General Principles

GBS Apprenticeships programmes will be inclusive by: engaging with all stakeholders fairly; delivering value through effective management of the design and building and operating a safe, sustainable, and reliable system to provide exceptional levels of service to passengers creating a diverse, inclusive, and skilled workforce at all levels; building a diverse supply chain that promotes fair employment practices and brings economic benefits to all.

This policy will be implemented as follows:

5 Delivery:

GBS Apprenticeships will seek to:

- embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities
- work with stakeholders, including:
 - other transport providers;
 - affected parties including but not limited to tenants, landowners, occupiers, and their representatives;
 - communities and interest groups; and
 - local and national government, professional bodies, and industry.
- approach its activities proactively by:
 - minimising the potential for discrimination, harassment, and bullying;
 - seeking out opportunities to promote inclusive development;
 - seeking out the views of stakeholders; and
 - taking necessary steps so that people with protected characteristics do not experience disproportionate disadvantage as a result of the planning, design, construction, and operation of the GBS Apprenticeships programme.
- create opportunities for local, disadvantaged, and underrepresented people and companies to benefit from the investment in GBS Apprenticeships by:
 - increasing equal opportunity, skills, and employment; and
 - promote equal outcomes in the services the GBS Apprenticeships programme will provide

5.1 LGBTQIA+

GBS Apprenticeships are committed to promoting a safe and inclusive environment for those employed and studying with GBA Apprenticeships. This is achieved through promoting knowledge and training to staff in relation to terminology used in this area and understanding the impact that discrimination and harassment has upon those within this community. At GBS Apprenticeships, we ensure that our working environment for staff, visitors, learners, and contractors facilitate an open and safe environment, where no individual will face discrimination or harassment because of them being part of the LGBTQIA+ community. We undertake to ensure that where individuals face discrimination or harassment, in relation to any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, a full and robust investigation will be completed, and the companies' Disciplinary Procedure implemented to protect individuals.

5.2 Sex

We believe in equality of appointments and treatment of staff and learners, irrespective of their sex or perceived gender. We ensure that all individuals will never face discrimination or harassment as a result of their sex or perceived gender. This also relates to equality in pay, where individuals will receive a remuneration package commensurate to their work duties, skills, and experience alone.

5.3 Race

We are committed to celebrating all differences in individuals, including race and promote a safe and fair environment for both employees and learners, where they will never face discrimination or harassment as a result of their race or perceived race. We provide opportunities for development based on the individual need and promotion based purely on an individual's performance, skills, and experience,

5.4 Family Life

At GBS Apprenticeships, we understand and value the importance of work-life balance and our commitment towards this through a pro-active approach to family life, encompassing Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Adoptive, and bereavement leave. Also, through supporting those individuals in these circumstances that ensures no mistreatment, discrimination, or harassment.

5.5 Religion or Belief

We recognise the importance religion and beliefs of others have on them individually and how these impacts on our business. This is why we are happy to adapt a flexible approach to those individuals through allowing them to celebrate religious festivals throughout the working year and through facilitating the need for time to pray etc.

5.6 Age

We encourage a diverse workforce which also includes individuals of all ages. We base our decision on hiring purely on the individual's qualification and experience. We promote and commit to a safe working environment whereby individual can be assured of not facing harassment or discrimination because of their age.

5.7 Disabilities

We are a disability confident employer and commit to promoting a safe working and learning environment irrespective of physical disabilities or neuro-disabilities. This helps to ensure that individuals are employed based upon their abilities to complete the required duties, not their physical or mental attributes. This practice also allows us to better support our learners through creating a safe environment to discuss neuro-disabilities such as ADHD etc.

6 Workforce:

GBS Apprenticeships is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of recruitment and employment. We will seek to achieve this in the following ways:

- develop and implement recruitment and selection processes that are open and fair and that enable the selection of the best talent;
- aim to build a workforce that reflects the communities it serves;
- promote an environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation and tackle any behaviour that breaches this;
- provide training support and encouragement to employees and workers so that they can develop their careers and enhance their contribution to the organisation;
- make all employees and workers aware of their responsibility for promoting equality diversity and inclusion in their work; and
- involve employees and workers and their representatives in the development implementation monitoring and review of human resources policies, procedures, and flexible working arrangements.

6.1 Inclusion

GBA Apprenticeships recognises that people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances. An inclusive workplace has fair policies and practices in place and enables a diverse range of people to work together effectively. We believe in giving all employees and learners a voice, a voice that will be heard and listened to, a voice that will allow individuals to voice their opinions and thoughts without fear of repercussions.

We believe and commit to ensuring that individuals working within our organisations receive a remuneration package that reflects their experience and qualification only. We ensure that all individuals are included in all aspects of GBS Apprenticeships working life and throughout the employee life cycle.

6.2 Diversity

At GBS Apprenticeships, we recognise the ever changing and increasing diverse work and learning environment in the UK. As such, we promote the benefits of diversity, including neurodiversity. We recognise that those with unseen diversity attributes, can and do offer value to our organisation and it is this belief that helps us to promote differentiation for neurodiversity characteristics.

7 Underpinning principles

This policy is guided by the following principles, that:

- All staff, learners and visitors should enjoy a safe environment free from unfair/unlawful discrimination including harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- All learners and employees should have equal access to quality services that are made available by GBS.
- All staff and learners should have equal access to opportunities for personal, professional, or academic training and development, career progression and promotion opportunities.
- All staff and learners should be able to participate fully in the work and life of GBS and celebrate its diversity.
- Staff and learners at the college should reflect the diversity of talent, experience and skills from the local, national and international pool from which it draws its learners and workforce.
- Positive action initiatives continue to be used to redress inequalities and unfair / unlawful discriminatory practice.

8 Responsibilities

All board members, management, staff and learners are responsible for ensuring GBS meets its legal obligations in respect of equal opportunities and maintains an environment where there is genuine inclusion and respect for diversity. Individual members of GBS are responsible for promoting equality of opportunity, contributing to an environment free of fear or intimidation and ensuring that their behaviour and actions do not amount to unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Visitors to GBS, together with those contracted to work at or for the GBS will be expected to comply with this policy. Contractors or suppliers should also comply with equal opportunities legislation and if they are unable to demonstrate such compliance they should be excluded from consideration of the contract in question.

GBS recognises that it also has moral and social responsibilities that go beyond the legislation, and it will contribute to the wider process of change through all aspects of its work and practices in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote Equality & Diversity.

9 Procurement and Supply Chain Diversity:

GBA Apprenticeships requires that contractors and suppliers of services comply with this policy. A copy of this policy will be provided to all sub-contractors, consultants and suppliers appointed to work for the GBS Apprenticeships programmes. All such organisations are required make available the resources to comply with this policy, in the delivery of services they are providing. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in them being removed from GBS Apprenticeships approved list of suppliers.

10 Procedures

11 Implementation of the Policy

The successful implementation of this policy relies on the mainstreaming of Equality & Diversity issues within the GBS strategic plan, which in turn, is supported by operational plans. GBS will assess the impact of this policy on staff and learners to ensure it does not have an adverse impact for different groups of people, primarily in terms of race, gender and disability, as well as regarding age, religion/belief and sexual orientation.

12 Breach of the Policy

GBS will take seriously any instances or alleged incidents of non-adherence to the Equality & Diversity policy by learners, staff or visitors. Such instances or allegations will be investigated and where appropriate will be considered under the relevant disciplinary procedure for staff or learners.

Regarding any breach of the policy by visitors, GBS will take appropriate action in relation to the nature of the incident.

13 Complaints

Any complaint will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner as indicated in the How Are We Performing procedure (complaints, compliments, and suggestions) and in accordance with the relevant grievance and disciplinary procedures.

14 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier should it become necessary by the Head of Quality and Compliance.

15 Related Policies

No related policies are defined.

16 References / Citations

More information can be found on the gov.uk website

[Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010)

End.