

Equality and Diversity Policy

Chestnut Barn, Blackbirds Farm, Blackbirds Lane, Aldenham, WD25 8BS

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Overview

Christmas Creations Ltd. is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion; eliminating discrimination to all job applicants, staff, clients, learners and members of the community served by us. Our aim is that everyone will be treated fairly, openly, honestly, with dignity and to respect and value differences irrespective of and regardless of:

- 1) Sex (including marital status, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity and paternity)**
- 2) Sexual orientation (including civil partnership status);**
- 3) Race or racial group (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)**
- 4) Religion or belief**
- 5) Age**
- 6) Caring responsibility**
- 7) Disability**

General Statement of Policy

Christmas Creations believes that our policy and practice are a means of maximising the effective use of human resources in our and the employee's/candidate's best interests.

All members of staff employed by us and all applicants for employment or learners for training will be given equal opportunity irrespective of their sex, religion/belief, race, age or marital status in all aspects of employment and training e.g. in their access to posts and in the terms of benefits on which employment is normally available in this organisation. We are committed not only to the letter of the law, but also to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all fields.

The operation of recruitment, training and promotion policies to all individuals will be on the basis of job requirements, and the individuals' ability and fitness for work/training.

Staff employed by this organisation and learners in training shall be made aware of the provisions of this policy. This may be done, for example, by means of advertisements, job descriptions application forms, posters, training courses and handbooks for appropriate managerial and supervisory staff.

All key personnel involved in management, selection and dealing with the public shall be given training and guidance in the law and organisational policy, their own personal liability under the law and the nature of discrimination.

Definition of Discrimination & Legislation

In this policy 'discrimination' means discrimination where a person is treated less favourably on grounds of disability, sex or marital status, as defined in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, or on grounds of race, creed, colour or age as defined in the appropriate Acts (see below).

Christmas Creations will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we and our staff and associates do not unlawfully discriminate under the **Single Equality Bill which will come into force in October 2010** and the **following Acts that have already been passed:**



- 1) The Equal Pay Act 1970
- 2) The Sex Discrimination Act 1975; (c) the Race Relations Act 1976
- 3) The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- 4) The Employment Rights Act 1996
- 5) The Human Rights Act 1998
- 6) The Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- 7) The Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- 8) The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- 9) The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief Act) Regulations 2003
- 10) The Work and Families Act 2006
- 11) The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- 12) Any other relevant legislation in force from time to time relating to discrimination in employment and the provision of goods, facilities, or services

Where it appears that any employees/applicants/learners are not being offered equal opportunities, the circumstances will be investigated by management to see if there are any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage employees and, if so, whether these policies and criteria are justifiable. Appropriate action will be taken, where necessary, to redress the effects of any policy or criteria which may be found to have unjustifiably limited the provision of equal opportunities.

Christmas Creations Commitment

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff and learners are recognised and valued.
- Every employee/associate and learner are entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development, and progression opportunities are available to all.
- Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will undertake planned reviews all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported and agreed by senior management, employees, awarding organisations, Consortium Leads, and funding organisations.
- The policy has, and will be reviewed annually against evaluations, feedback, and changes to legislation.
- To raise awareness of policies and procedures to ensure that our services are accessible for a diverse range of clients and learners
- To promote the principles of equality and diversity with clients and learners/partners/subcontractors and recruitment agencies.

We have found that by putting equality and diversity policies into action we have the benefit not only of compliance with the law, but also enjoy a number of other advantages including:

- Making full use of the talents of all members of the workforce and our candidates. This helps to ensure the best return on what is often a costly investment in recruitment and training.
- An improvement in motivation and performance which, in turn, can reduce turnover levels.
- A broadening of the "talent base" which develops people's abilities faster and further and opens up the potential for new and flexible approaches.
- Better two-way communications.

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- An improvement in the external view of the organisation, so that talented people outside will want to join it and more candidates will be attracted to it.
- The implementation of equality and diversity policies stimulates a healthy and more productive atmosphere and creates a better quality of working life.

Recruitment and Promotion

Applicants for posts/training shall be given as much clear and accurate information about opportunities through advertisements, open days, inductions, job descriptions, and interviews in order to enable them to assess their own suitability for the opportunity they are applying for. Information about opportunities shall also be placed and prominently displayed where it may reach individuals of all groups.

Recruitment literature shall not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants. However, in accordance with Sections 47 and 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, we may encourage persons of one sex only to apply for vacancies where, during the previous 12 months, the number of persons of that sex employed on particular work is small in comparison with the number of persons of the opposite sex employed on that work by us. However, after encouraging such applications each candidate must be considered on his/her merits and suitability for the post and their membership of an under-represented group shall not influence the appointment.

Advertisements and recruitment drives shall be aimed at as wide a group of suitably qualified and experienced people as possible. All applicants shall be informed that we encourage equality and diversity. Such information could be conveyed in advertisements, job descriptions, or application forms. All personnel specifications for posts shall include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job, as requirements that are convenient rather than necessary, may be discriminatory.

All interviews shall be thorough, conducted on an objective basis, and shall deal only the applicant's suitability for the job and ability to fulfil the job requirements. Where it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect performance of the job (for example, where it involves unsociable hours or extensive travel), this should be discussed objectively without detailed questions based on assumptions about marital status, children and domestic obligation. Questions about marriage plans or family intentions should not be asked, as they could be construed as showing bias against women. Information necessary for personnel records can be collected after a job offer has been made.

All staff shall be encouraged to discuss their career prospects and their continued training needs and aspirations with their manager.

Vacancies shall be given as wide an internal circulation as possible to staff who are likely to possess appropriate qualifications or have relevant experience.

We will not discriminate on the basis of sex, marital status, age, religion, or disability in the allocation of duties or shifts between staff employed in any grade or grades with comparable job descriptions, except where night work restrictions apply, in which case exemptions may be considered.

Where appropriate and/or necessary, we will endeavour to provide appropriate specific needs of employees, clients and learners which arise from their ethnic or cultural background; gender responsibilities as carers, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

All new employees and associates are issued with either a Company Handbook or an Associate Manual with details of all employment related issues.

All learners are issued with a Learner Agreement with details of all equality and diversity related issues.

Staff training / development

It is our Policy that we will not discriminate in the provision of training and development courses.

Appropriate training shall be provided to enable staff or perform their jobs effectively. Such training will make provisions where necessary for individuals returning work following a break for domestic reasons.

Age limits for entry to training schemes should not be unnecessarily restrictive to exclude certain groups.

Clients and Learners

Christmas Creations is an Equal Opportunities Employer and Training Provider. Our clients and learners are entitled to equal treatment irrespective of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and civil partnership, religion or belief and age, taking into account the diversity of the community that we serve. We feel it is our responsibility to ensure that our clients promote equality and diversity codes of practice to our learners within their organisation. We will promote awareness are able to offer help and awareness on request.

Christmas Creations is committed to meeting the diverse needs of clients and learners. We will take steps to identify the needs of clients and learners in our community and develop policies and procedures setting out how we will meet clients and learners' needs and for entering the services we provide are accessible to all. We will take account, in particular, the needs of clients and learners with a disability and clients and learners who are unable to communicate effectively in English. We will consider whether particular groups are predominant within our client base and devise appropriate policies to meet their needs: including men and women; carers; children; the elderly; members of religious groups; ethnic groups or nationalities; and lesbian, gay or transgender people.

Our learning programs include discussion about equality and diversity and further reading and research is encouraged and signposting is undertaken to relevant up-to-date sources of information.

Possible Pre-conceptions

In the application of this policy, it is essential that managers guard against discrimination of the basis of possible assumptions that individuals because of their sex, race, disability, religion, or marital status possess characteristics which would make them unsuitable for employment or receiving training. Examples of such assumptions might be:

- Lack of commitment to work.
- Have outside commitments which would interfere with work or training.
- Possess poor mental/physical ability.
- Produce an anticipated unfavourable reaction of other staff and members of the public.
- Be unsuitable for the job/training because of a feeling that certain types of work are only suitable for a member of the opposite sex or of single status.
- Be unable to supervise.
- Possess limited career intentions.
- Be unwilling to undertake training.
- Have poor standards of behaviour/conduct.
- Have limitations imposed by so-called traditional female interests and experience.

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We emphasise that discrimination as a consequence of any such pre-conceptions is unacceptable.

Any restrictions which are applied by management and which affect certain groups of staff/trainers/trainees more than others, may effectively result in indirect discrimination, and should be reviewed to determine whether they are necessary rather than convenient and removed if this is not so.

Community Partnerships

Christmas Creations will seek to develop community partnerships within the areas that we serve, through working within the community we aim to ensure that we reach as wide an audience as possible.

Disciplinary Procedure

Any member of staff or associate who does not abide by this policy will be subject to the disciplinary procedure as detailed in the Company Handbook and the Associates Manual. Christmas Creations will fully investigate any reported incidents of discrimination by clients with whom we work including learners and employers.

Grievances and Victimisation

Particular care will be taken to deal effectively with any complaints of discrimination and sexual harassment which should be perused by application and fully investigated.

Monitoring and Reviews

Christmas Creations will actively monitor equality and diversity data of our learners to ensure that we are recruiting to meet the diversity of our community and that achievement opportunity to equal to all.

Christmas Creations will review the operation of this policy not less than once a year (or more regularly if we identify any non-compliance or problem concerning equality and diversity issues with clients, learners, staff or sub-contractors or changes in legislation). We will take remedial action if we discover non-compliance under this policy or barriers to equality and diversity.

This document sets out our policy. It must be strictly adhered to (unless there are legal limitations on employment to particular posts). Disciplinary procedure may be used in the case of a breach of our Policy

The Director with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is Mr Alex Walters.

Signed:

Date: **21/01/26**

Mr Alex Walters
Director