

# Lifeskills – Learning for Living

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



### **Equality diversity and inclusion statement**

Lifeskills has adopted equality, diversity and inclusion as core values and places all its policy development in the context of the objectives of:

- ensuring that all individuals who come into contact with Lifeskills, whether as employees, volunteers or in other capacities, are treated with dignity and respect,
- ensuring that the opportunities Lifeskills provides for learning, personal development and employment are made available on a non-discriminatory basis,
- providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for staff, volunteers and visitors.

Lifeskills seeks through all its policies and actions to be a genuinely inclusive organisation, and draws for this on good practice throughout the Charity sector and in the wider economy. The objective is to integrate the principles of fair treatment, equality of opportunity and promotion of diversity into all aspects of day-to-day life.

### **Defining equality, diversity and inclusion**

Fair treatment and equality of opportunity involves much more than simply treating everyone alike; it requires a recognition that some groups and individuals have particular and specific needs that need to be met if they are to enjoy equal access to the services offered. We recognise that Lifeskills may need to provide its services in a range of different or more flexible ways, in order to ensure genuine equality of access or opportunity for groups and individuals who approach those services from a position of persistent and longstanding disadvantage.

Valuing diversity involves an acknowledgement of the benefits and intrinsic worth derived from the range of difference within our community, and fostering it as a strength. We aim to celebrate and to value the differences between individuals' cultural, social and intellectual contribution and will seek to promote greater mutual understanding between groups and individuals who reflect these differences, and will seek to utilise the talents and experiences that each and every individual can bring.

Inclusion involves Lifeskills and its staff in designing and operating flexible services, practices and procedures that take appropriate account of the needs of staff, volunteers and visitors. For example, all aspects of the experience must be accessible to people with the range of disabilities.

## **Legal framework**

Lifeskills endorses wholeheartedly the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to the positive promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion amongst all members of the community. To achieve this Lifeskills will:

- ensure that no unlawful discrimination occurs in the conduct of its work;
- advance equality of opportunity for people who share the 'protected characteristics' that are listed below, and all other members of the community;
- foster positive relations between people who share the 'protected characteristics' and those who do not.

Lifeskills will give protection against unfair discrimination on the grounds of:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)
- gender
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy or maternity
- religion, belief
- sexual orientation.

Lifeskills recognises that equality issues are complex, and that it has responsibilities to others, including, but not limited to, people with caring responsibilities and students who are leaving local authority care.

## **Scope**

Lifeskills is a functionally diverse organisation operating in a local and regional context. We expect all staff, volunteers and visitors to behave in accordance with this policy and to have regard for Lifeskills values. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion apply to the way in which staff and volunteers should treat each other, and to all visitors, contractors, sub-contractors, service providers, suppliers, former staff and any other persons associated with the functions of the Charity.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Lifeskills will:**

- ensure that the aims and the values embodied in this policy statement are appropriately reflected in all job descriptions, person specifications and annual appraisals;
- have due regard to equality issues in all decision-making;
- investigate whether any groups, including people with 'protected characteristics', have particular needs in relation to accessing services;
- ensure that due consideration is given to equality, diversity and inclusion within their own sphere of influence;
- promote an environment where respect is shown to all, and mutual understanding is fostered;
- challenge any actions or behaviour which is in conflict with the values and principles laid down in this policy;
- ensure staff and volunteers know how to report any instances of discrimination, bullying and harassment without fear of victimisation;
- deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly, quickly and confidentially;
- promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all learning settings;
- develop understanding and realisation of equality, diversity and inclusion.

### **All members of the Lifeskills community will:**

- ensure understanding of this policy and seek guidance if there are any questions;
- promote equality, diversity and inclusion for others and strive to create a safe supportive and welcoming environment;
- challenge inappropriate behaviour or discrimination;
- report unacceptable behaviour in accordance with policies and procedures.

### **Visitors**

- All visitors, together with those contracted to work at, or for, Lifeskills will be expected to comply with this policy.