

DIVERSITY/EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
(INCLUDING FAIR ACCESS AND ASSESSMENT
ARRANGEMENTS)

1. Defining Equality

Future Focus recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons that are not fair. These include race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record.

Future Focus is committed to a Policy of Equality and Diversity as per Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta that respects the identity rights and values of each individual and opposes all direct and indirect discrimination within the organisation. We believe everyone is entitled to a working and learning environment that promotes dignity and respect. This commitment is not only good management practice but makes sound business sense.

2. Principles and Policy

Future Focus commits itself to safeguard and promote its principles via this policy:

- i. To deliver equality and diversity throughout organisational policies, procedures and practice and develop an ethos which respects and values all people

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

- ii. To challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity and encourage other organisations and individuals to do the same to actively promote equality of opportunity
- iii. To create a culture that respects and values an individual's differences and recognises that difference/diversity is an asset to our organisation both to its work and the people it serves.
- iv. To eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment or other oppressive behaviour. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
- v. Take positive action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by stereotyping and cultural expectations and to prepare learners for life in a diverse society
- vi. To ensure all employees, volunteers, learners and collaborative partners are aware and encouraged to support the objectives of this policy
- vii. Promote good relations amongst people within the organisations community and the wider communities within which we work
- viii. Do our best, within available resources, to remove barriers which limit or discourage access to the Future focus's training provision and activities
- ix. Monitor the implementation, set targets for improvement and evaluate the impact of equality and diversity action.

3. Management

Equality of opportunity is crucial to good practice in any organisation and fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right. This policy is therefore underpinned by the following values, principles and standards:

- i. Active challenge to stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes and unfair discriminatory behavior;

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

- ii. Commitment to inclusive education which enables and supports all students to develop their full potential;
- iii. Commitment to the positive development of all staff;
- iv. Accountability for compliance with this policy by all employees and others engaged in Future Focus business or activities.

The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring that Future Focus implements and follows its equality and diversity policies and codes of practice and meets its legal responsibilities. The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring the subsistence of:

- i. A consistent and high-profile lead on equality and diversity;
- ii. Promotion of equality and diversity inside and outside the training organization;
- iii. Policies and procedures in place to comply with all applicable legislation;
- iv. Future Focus' implementation of its equality and diversity policies and codes of practice;
- v. Quality audits carried out in all areas of Equality & Diversity;
- vi. A baseline data on admission used to ensure learner progression and for staff recruitment and career progression;
- vii. A 3 year Disability Equality Action Plan in place, which is monitored & reported;
- viii. Staff and learners who know their responsibilities and who receive the necessary support and training;
- ix. Relevant procedures and actions that are followed in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Employees and Volunteers are responsible for:

- i. Co-operating with Future Focus to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination
- ii. Promoting equality and diversity, and avoiding unfair discrimination
- iii. Reviewing on an annual basis the existing policy
- iv. Challenging, reporting and analysing any incidents of unfair discrimination, racial, sexual or other stereotyping perpetrated by staff, volunteers and/or learners.
- v. Keeping up-to-date with equality law and participating in equality and diversity training. Employees should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination.

Learners are responsible for:

- i. Participating in equal opportunity and diversity training
- ii. Respecting others in their language and actions
- iii. Having an input into policy amendments
- iv. Reporting instances of unfair discrimination, or racial, sexual or other stereotyping.
- v. Implementing Future Focus Ltd's equality and diversity policies and codes of practice

4. Prevention

Every employee, volunteer and learner has a duty to report instances regarding the unfair or negative treatment and acts of discrimination, either direct or indirect, by any other individual either to themselves or to others. This can be achieved informally by speaking with, or writing to, the Designated Person or a Support Team Member or the Managing Director. If, having raised a complaint, you feel that it has not been adequately resolved you can formalise your complaint by following the Grievance Procedure.

Information will be gathered from a variety of sources, which will include:

- i. Learner reviews.
- ii. Client and staff questionnaires
- iii. Feedback from external agencies and partners
- iv. Analysis of complaints and grievances and their outcomes
- v. Analysis of suggestions
- vi. Annual policy review
- vii. Quality audits.
- viii. Baseline data produced on the admission and progression of learners with disabilities and in respect of staff recruitment and career progression.

5. Compliance

The Operations Manager working in liaison with staff, volunteers & learners:

- i. Will review this policy on an annual basis whereupon examination of logged incidents will be taken into consideration. Amendments to the policy may be made as appropriate.
- ii. Develop a 3 year action plan and conduct reviews and evaluate its effectiveness. This plan will outline Future focus Ltd's key priorities, outcomes and targets to narrow and identify gaps in the experiences of disabled people compared to non-disabled people.
- iii. Ensure progress data towards targets are detailed at Manager's Meetings on a monthly basis.

In addition to Future focus Ltd's annual self-assessment process, information gathered from client reviews, evaluations and client perception of courses will be reported regularly at staff meetings.

Action under Future Focus' disciplinary procedure will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of the equal opportunities policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

Future Focus Ltd will offer additional support to learners to ensure equality of provision (Equality Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta). This includes offering additional learner support (including one to ones), adaptive equipment (such as adapted keyboards, mice and magnifiers) and other specialist support deemed necessary for the learner to access their learning without discrimination.

Future Focus Ltd's management are responsible for monitoring and developing the processes and procedures for additional support and providing clear information to staff so that they are able to access this support for learners in their centres.

Policy review date: July 2020