

Equal Opportunities Policy

Scope

Northumberland FA recognise that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and a right to equal opportunity. Northumberland FA is therefore committed to promoting a best-practice environment, where all individuals and groups are treated with respect and dignity. All staff, learners and any related third party are required to adhere to this policy and to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended from time to time).

All staff, learners and any related third party are required to contribute to the effective implementation of this policy treating others equally and ensuring access for all. No one should feel threatened or degraded on the grounds of the following nine protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. This policy aims to prevent and tackle all types of discrimination also identified through the Equality Act 2010

Direct discrimination	Where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.
Associative discrimination	Direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
Discrimination by perception	Direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.
Indirect discrimination	Occurs when there is a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.
Harassment	Behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient. Employees can now complain of the behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.
Harassment by a third party	Employers are potentially liable for the harassment of their staff or customers by people they don't themselves employ, i.e. a contractor.

Victimisation	Occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under this legislation.
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Objectives

Effective implementation of this policy ensures that we promote equal opportunities, eliminate discrimination, eradicate harassment and ensure access for all. This is achieved by:

- ensuring that all staff, learners and any related third parties are treated equally at all times
- ensuring all staff, learners and any related third parties are made aware of this policy and any related responsibilities
- ensuring that all staff are responsible for creating an open and friendly learning environment
- ensuring that staff selection for employment, volunteering, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability
- ensuring that learner and participant selection for courses and related initial assessments are conducted in accordance with the qualification pre-requisites and specific selection and initial assessment criteria
- ensuring that all selection/rejection decisions are recorded for staff, learners and any relevant third parties.
- ensuring that an effective access arrangements procedure is in place and deployed through conduct of reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- opposing all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- taking any allegations or incidents of discrimination or any type of unfair treatment extremely seriously and responding to them swiftly
- ensuring zero tolerance on any acts of discrimination on the grounds of the nine protected characteristics outlined within the Equality Act 2010. Where such instances of malpractice are proven, action will be taken in accordance with the Northumberland FA Malpractice Policy.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Head of the Centre, Mark Woodhal, to ensure that this policy is published and accessible to all personnel, learners and any relevant third parties. However, to further support effective implementation, Qualification Coordinators (QCs) specific to each qualification are responsible for ensuring this information is fully understood by their qualification team and by the learners who commence courses/programmes in their area.

Access to Fair Assessment Statement

Commitment

Northumberland FA is committed to providing ongoing support to learners with particular requirements and aspires to eliminate discrimination. On this basis, we ensure accessible services, making reasonable adjustments and applying special considerations where these are required, to facilitate learners in completing each course/programme as independently as possible.

Access arrangements ensure that the conduct of reasonable adjustments and special considerations reduce substantial disadvantage caused due to a learner's disability or difficulty. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we have a commitment to provide access for learners with particular needs to prevent discrimination in the delivery of qualifications and the assessment of learners.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are any arrangements made prior to the delivery or assessment of a qualification to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places a learner at a substantial disadvantage. These arrangements are required to be granted by the awarding organisation for the assessment of learners with a permanent, long-term or temporary disability, a learning difficulty, illness or indisposition.

Special Consideration

Special consideration is the implementation of arrangements at the time of an assessment to allow competence to be demonstrated by learners who have been disadvantaged or were unable to attend the assessment due to emotional/physical difficulties or adverse circumstances. These arrangements are required to be granted by the awarding organisation for the assessment of learners who have experience temporary difficulties.

Objectives

Our personnel are committed to contributing to this practice and the overall aims are to assist learners in managing their individual situation and create a more accessible learning and assessment environment for all. In order for this to be achieved, we aim to determine learners' particular requirements and requests for the provision of access arrangements at an early stage. To ensure sure we give access to fair assessment and treating all learners equally we intent to:

- ensure the access to fair assessment statement and practice are understood and complied with by any personnel involved in assessment and also by learners
- promote equality within of each learning programme and in the conduct of all qualification assessments
- adhere to related procedures and regulations regarding reasonable adjustments and special consideration; requesting permission to grant these for each learner from the relevant awarding organisation
- ensure buildings and assessment sites used for delivery and assessment are accessible to all learners, as far as is practicable
- ensure appropriate equipment/personnel (including technological equipment or any assistant personnel, ie reader, scribe, practical assistant, etc) is available for selected adjustments to delivery and/or assessment
- use assistive equipment and personnel within the reasonable adjustments framework, as outlined by the awarding organisation, without disadvantaging others who are not affected by particular requirements.

Access Arrangements Procedure

Stage	Reasonable Adjustments	Special Considerations
Stage 1:	<p>The learner must request reasonable adjustments from the centre at the application stage of their course or by informing their tutor/assessor of the difficulty.</p> <p>This information will be passed to the The Access Arrangements Coordinator Phil Robinson who will evaluate the request and will liaise with the learner to validate their difficulty/disability and to ensure the relevant reasonable adjustments are identified. At this stage, the learner must provide all necessary evidence (medical evidence/certification, diagnostic test results, a statement from the invigilator/tutor/assessor or any other appropriate information) to support their request. Outcomes will be confirmed via email to the learner (Validated requests will then be forwarded to the relevant AO. For invalidated outcomes, no further action will be taken).</p>	<p>The learner must request all special considerations by contacting the centre's appointed Access Arrangements Coordinator Phil Robinson.</p> <p>The Access Arrangements Coordinator will evaluate the need for the special consideration. At this stage, the learner must provide all necessary evidence (medical evidence/certification, diagnostic test results, a statement from the invigilator/tutor/assessor or any other appropriate information) to support their request. Outcomes will be confirmed via email to the learner (Validated requests will then be requested from the relevant Awarding Organisation. For invalidated outcomes, no further action will be taken).</p>
Stage 2:	<p>The Access Arrangements Coordinator will request reasonable adjustments or special considerations from the relevant awarding organisation in accordance with the standard procedure.</p>	
Stage 3:	<p>The Access Arrangements Coordinator will ensure all reasonable adjustments and special consideration are implemented in accordance with outcomes confirmed by the Awarding Organisation. They will evaluate the implementation and audit all outcomes. All records relating to the application, relevant evidence and monitoring forms are securely retained for five years.</p>	

Equality and Access Appeals

Where learners have requested reasonable adjustments or special considerations from but are unhappy with the outcomes they have a right to make an appeal via the Northumberland FA Learner Appeals Procedure

Equality and Access Complaints

Learners have the right to raise any issues related to equal treatment and/or the implementation of access arrangements or make a formal complaint via the Northumberland FA Learner Complaints Procedure.