

Family:	Leadership and Management	REF: ARCPO009
Policy title	Equality and Diversity Policy	
Version:	3.3 - this replaces all previous versions	
Policy owner:	Operations Director	
Policy author:	Quality Manager	
Date of Review	2/1/2024	
Next review date	2/1/2025	
Applies to:	All staff	
Related policies:	Bullying and Harassment Procedure and Policy Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Grievance Policy Staff Recruitment, Selection & Vetting Policy Health Safety Manual Complaints & Praise Procedure Staff Development Policy Safeguarding & Prevent Policy	

Policy Introduction

ARC Group is committed to challenging discrimination, both face-to-face and online for groups who share a protected characteristic (race, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, sex, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief) and those who do not. This is our equality and diversity objective for the group.

The group is opposed to all forms of discrimination in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) and as defined by the Equality Act 2010, whether direct, perceived, indirect or by association. This policy sets out the organisation's position on equal opportunity in all aspects of employment, including recruitment and promotion, giving guidance and encouragement to employees at all levels to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, part-time and fixed term contract status, age, sexual orientation, or religion.

ARC Group abides by the current equality legislation and ensures that all subsequent legislative changes are fully utilised to update this policy accordingly to ensure that its practices are lawful. Compliance with this policy also ensures that no member of the staff commits unlawful acts of discrimination.

Policy Aim

- It is the policy of ARC to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- The organisation is committed not only to its legal obligations, but also to the positive promotion of equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment.
- The organisation recognises that adhering to the Equal Opportunities Policy, combined with relevant employment policies and practices, maximises the effective use of individuals in both the organisation's and employees' best interests. ARC recognises the great benefits in having a diverse workforce with different backgrounds, solely employed on ability.
- Our ability to promote, celebrate, and value diversity and ensure equality are fully embedded into our core values. These also include the British values of mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith, the rule of law, individual liberty and democracy.
- All employees, stakeholders, and learners will be made aware of the provisions of this policy through the associated induction regimes.

Recruitment and promotion

The group will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline, and selection for redundancy. The application of recruitment, training, and promotion will be based on job requirements and the individual's ability and merits.

- Advertisements for posts will give sufficiently clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post. Information about vacant posts will be provided in such a manner that does not restrict its audience.
- All descriptions and specifications for posts will only include requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.
- Recruitment literature will not imply a preference for one group of applicants unless there is a genuine occupational qualification, which limits the post to this specific group, in which case this must be clearly stated.
- Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Descriptions and person specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Where it is necessary to ask questions relating to personal circumstances, these will be related purely to job requirements and asked to all candidates.

General Principles

- All employees will be provided with appropriate training.
- All employees will be encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their Line Manager and/or the HR Department.
- Trainers and assessors will deliver equality and diversity training to learners as part of the induction & review process.
- All members of staff will complete equality and diversity training upon induction to the Group and staff will be provided with regular updates.
- Commitment statements from others engaging with the Group, such as colleges, contractors, and employers will state that they comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Employment

- The Group will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for flexible working and will decline such requests only in accordance with the statutory procedure.
- The Group will make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.
- The Group will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering 'flexible working' requests permitted by law and any other request for a variation to standard working practices.
- The Group will take very seriously any instances of noncompliance of the Equality and Diversity policy by staff, learners, or stakeholders. All instances will be investigated, and appropriate disciplinary action taken against the learner, staff member or stakeholder.
- Employees should report any bullying or harassment to their line manager, Human Resources and/or the Operational Director who will take appropriate action.
- Learners should report any bullying or harassment to their trainer or assessor, or a member of staff in whom they feel they can confide in. The process detailed in the Bullying & Harassment policy will be followed.

Responsibilities and Expectations

Learners will be expected to:

- uphold the core values of the Group.
- not engage in or accept any bullying or harassment.
- respect, recognise, and acknowledge varying needs of all members of the Group.
- be prepared to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour.
- act with due consideration and respect towards all members of the Group
- treat all staff, fellow learners and visitors with courtesy and respect and without discrimination.

Learners can expect from ARC Group:


- inclusive learning practices, which acknowledge differences in learning styles and abilities.
- learning materials free from bias, which celebrate diversity and challenge stereotyping.
- all instances of bullying, harassment, or discrimination to be taken seriously and fully investigated, with appropriate action taken.
- to be always treated with respect and courtesy.
- a learning environment where differences are not only respected but are celebrated.
- reasonable adjustments and support in helping you meet your learning aims.

Staff will be expected to:

- uphold our core values.
- challenge and report all instances of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- lead by example in demonstrating understanding of, and respect for differences in diversity groups.
- be courteous, respectful and treat without discrimination all members of the community.
- contribute to the development of a learning environment free from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment.

Staff can expect from ARC Group:

- all employees to have equal chances of staff development, career development, and promotion opportunities.
- induction training and subsequent staff development on equality and diversity issues where appropriate
- inappropriate behaviour from any member of the group to be challenged, with appropriate disciplinary action taken.
- to be always treated fairly, in an environment which respects individual differences and challenges discrimination.
- all staff members to take responsibility for promoting a fair, inclusive and supportive environment, where discriminatory practices are challenged.

Signed		Dated	2/1/2024
Managing Director			

Signed	 A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. G. J.', written in a cursive style.	Dated	2/1/2024
Operations Director			