#

# DISABILITY POLICY

**Board Approved: January 2019**

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## ****Policy statement****

VLearning Network is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all who work and study at VLearning Network and recognises the legal requirements under relevant Acts and Codes of Practice.

VLearning Network aims to ensure that all actual or potential employees or learners are treated equally, regardless of age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, social class, sexuality, trade union activity and unrelated criminal conviction.

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidance regarding disability and to establish structures and monitoring arrangements for VLearning Network. The guidance should be applicable to all staff and learners at VLearning Network. The Board of Trustees has the legal responsibility to ensure that discrimination does not take place on the grounds of disability.

VLearning Network believes that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable and will not tolerate any form of behaviour, language or activity that discriminates on the grounds specified. VLearning Network embraces diversity in all its aspects, and aims to employ a workforce that reflects, at every level, the community it serves. VLearning Network must take reasonably practical steps to ensure prevention of any discrimination on the grounds of disability.

VLearning Network re-states our commitment to learners and employees with disabilities. VLearning Network will ensure Partners remain compliant with legislation and will also strive to achieve good practice in the area of disability.

No employee, current learner, job applicant or prospective learner should be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements which cannot be justified and/or are not related to the job or programme of study. VLearning Network will make reasonable adjustments to its arrangements and premises to ensure equal access for disabled people.

## ****Definition of disability****

The definition of disability is wide. It includes:

* Mobility – moving from place to place
* Manual dexterity – for example, use of hands
* Physical co-ordination
* Continence
* The ability to lift, carry or move ordinary objects
* Speech, hearing or eyesight (wearing glasses or contact lenses is an exception)
* Memory, or ability to concentrate, learn or understand eg specific learning difficulties and disabilities
* Being able to recognise physical danger
* Mental health problems where these are long-term and/or affect learning

It also covers:

* Progressive conditions eg cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, where these affect normal day-to-day activities
* Past disabilities registered before the Disability and Discrimination Act.

## ****Structures****

The Board of Trustees designates the Chair of Trustees as having overall responsibility for disability issues. They will be responsible for the operation of the policy. They will ensure that regular reports are made to the Board of Trustees, Provider Advisory Group and other relevant groups and committees.

In order to ensure that this policy is fully effective and that all employees and learners are committed to it, VLearning Network undertakes to work in partnership with staff, Partners and learners in its development and implementation.

VLearning Network will educate, train or inform staff, partners and learners of their rights and responsibilities in respect of all matters related to disability.

All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of the policy, which extends to the treatment of employees, learners, other users and through our contractual arrangements with partners.

All partners have a responsibility to ensure the policy is carried through effectively, by giving active support to the policy and ensuring employees under their management understand and implement the policy. Staff with pastoral responsibility for learners and line managers should encourage employees and learners respectively to inform them of any instances of discrimination and ensure that all allegations are investigated.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or learner, as appropriate, who does not comply with these requirements.

## ****Monitoring****

VLearning Network undertakes to conduct comprehensive and effective monitoring of all aspects of staffing and learners in relation to disability.

VLearning Network is committed to the collection of statistics, analysis of data and presentation of data, as well as monitoring on an on-going basis that is compliant with the Data Protection Act and related to disability issues. Monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with best practice recommendations, particularly from bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Best practice will be sought and disseminated within VLearning Network.

The implementation of the Act within VLearning Network will be a regular item on the Board of Trustees agenda. The operation of this policy will be reviewed annually with all relevant partners and with staff and learner representatives.

## ****The rights of individuals****

If an employee believes that they have not been treated fairly on the grounds of disability, due to prejudice or discrimination, they should make their complaint known in the following ways:

• Through discussion with relevant line managers,

• Through the Grievance Policy and Procedure or Harassment Policy and Procedure

If a learner believes that they have not been treated fairly on the grounds of disability, due to prejudice or discrimination, they should make their complaint known in the following ways:

• Through discussion within relevant teaching staff

* Through the Complaints Policy and Procedure

Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or learner, as appropriate, who does not comply with these requirements after receiving informal guidance and support. VLearning Network may use the employee Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or the Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. In the case of learners under 18 years of age, parents/guardians would be involved.

Information regarding disciplinary matters must be made available in a way appropriate to the individual.