



# Equality & Diversity Policy

## Our principles:

- We value diversity and we recognise that different people bring different ideas, knowledge and culture, and that difference can bring strength, creativity and innovation.
- We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics and circumstances, such as age; disability; caring or dependency responsibilities; gender or gender identity; marriage and civil partnership status; political opinion; pregnancy and maternity; race, colour, caste, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; trade union membership status or other distinctions, represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.
- We recognise that patterns of under-representation and differences in outcomes at Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd can be challenged through positive action.
- We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. We will not allow these differences to be manifested in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.
- We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.

## Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd is a place where:

- We treat people with dignity and respect
- Inequalities are challenged
- We anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances so that everyone can achieve their potential.
- We are ethically aware: preparing students to work in a local, national and global context

**Aims:**

This policy outlines Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd's commitment to matters of equality and diversity and indicates its intention for further action, if necessary, in this area.

**Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd will specifically consider:**

- To Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- To Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't; and
- To Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't.

**Scope of policy:**

This policy applies to all staff and students of Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd.

Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd is fully committed to providing equality of opportunity for all its staff and students. The Academy will not tolerate unfair or unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the nine protected characteristics or any distinction which is not relevant to the employee/employer relationship or its student body. Definitions of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 are in Appendix 2 below.

This policy will be published by Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd and drawn to the attention of all staff, students and other interested parties. Copies will be included in the student handbook and downloadable from the web site.

Breaches of this policy by staff or students will be investigated and dealt with through the disciplinary or complaints procedure.

**Responsibilities:**

Promoting and maintaining equality is the responsibility of everyone, although it is recognised that the directors have additional responsibilities to ensure that the policy is carried out.



### **The Directors will ensure that:**

- All staff and students are aware of the equality policy and our procedures for making a complaint.
- The implementation of equality is effectively monitored and regularly discussed and reviewed.
- Staff and Students are provided with appropriate forums to discuss and deal with equality issues. This would be via tutorials and in the event of a concern raised about a member of staff with an alternative member of staff/director.
- All staff are provided with appropriate awareness, support and ongoing CPD (Reflective practise).

### **All staff and students are expected to:**

- Support and implement the equality policy; and
- Ensure that their behaviour and/or actions do not amount to discrimination or harassment.
- Staff and students are expected to comply with this policy and are expected to promote a culture free of unfair discrimination, prejudice and all forms of harassment and bullying.
- Any incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying will be investigated and may be grounds for dismissal or expulsion.

### **Language:**

Prejudice and discrimination can arise and be reinforced by our use of language, which often may not be completely neutral and value-free. Words and phrases can be associated with negative attitudes and may give offence to people including members of groups that are subject to prejudice, harassment or discrimination.

Everyone is expected to ensure that their written and spoken material, including all materials used in teaching, do not contain racist or sexist language or any other language that may cause unreasonable offence to others. In particular, you should be aware of inappropriate references to any of the protected characteristics.

**Staff:**

Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd will work to avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

**Recruitment and selection:**

All applicants and staff will be given equal consideration for selection, promotion and training. Short listing and interviewing processes will be thorough, carried out objectively and without bias. Where applicants declare that they have a disability, appropriate adjustments will be made wherever possible to enable them to compete on an equal basis.

We recognise the need to take a positive bias in our recruitment advertising and interview process as a form of positive action and to challenge the current under representation of minorities in our teaching staff.

**Students:**

Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd will work to avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of the student experience.

**Admissions and Selection:**

All applicants will be given equal consideration during the selection process and will not be discriminated against on any grounds.

Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd welcomes applications from people with disabilities who will be considered on the same basis as other potential students. Considerations about individual needs arising from disability will be made separately and the Academy will strive to meet an individual disabled student's needs wherever possible. However, there may be occasions where it is not possible to admit an individual, where the level of support needed is not possible or where an individual's welfare would be at risk.

Entry qualifications for courses will only include those that are necessary and justifiable. All selection processes will be thorough, carried out objectively and will only address the applicant's suitability for the course requirements.

**Course content:**

It will be the responsibility of the tutor team, who teach course content and set assignments to avoid bias in these areas. Learning materials should be non-discriminatory. If discriminatory material is used to make a point, the discriminatory nature of the materials should be pointed out by the staff member using the material.

**Learning Conditions:**

Collaborative Counselling Academy Ltd will take account of the needs of students and wherever possible, consideration will be given to issues such as caring for dependants when lecturers and examinations are timetabled.

**Progression:**

All students will be treated equally in terms of progression. Any issues brought to the attention of the directors that should be considered on the grounds of equality will be taken in account, if appropriate. Progression will not be offered if we do not believe the student is able to manage the learning requirements or if we do not deem them for to practise counselling in a placement setting.

**Further Guidance:**

- [ACAS Equality and Discrimination Guidance](#)
- [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\) - Equality Act 2010 Guidance](#)



## Appendix 1 – Definitions of protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a 'Protected Characteristic'. The below information gives details on the 9 characteristics which are protected against discrimination, and the definitions which will be used for the purposes of this policy.

- **Age.** This is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination
- **Disability.** A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- **Gender reassignment.** A transgender person is someone who proposes to, starts, or has completed a process to change their gender. Transgender people are not required to be under medical supervision to be protected. Non-binary and genderfluid people may also be protected under this characteristic.
- **Marriage and civil partnership.** People in a marriage or civil partnership are protected, single people are not protected.
- **Pregnancy and maternity.** A person is protected during the period of pregnancy and statutory maternity leave, and protection applies to anyone who is pregnant, who has recently given birth, or is breastfeeding. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination.
- **Race.** Race includes, colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.
- **Religion or belief.** Religion includes any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief, or lack of such belief. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.
- **Sex or gender.** Both men and women are protected from discrimination on the basis of their sex or gender identity. Non-binary people and intersex people may be protected on the basis of perceived or actual gender, sex, or transgender status.
- **Sexual orientation.** Individuals are protected on the basis of sexual orientation, which includes people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and straight (heterosexual).



## Appendix 2 – Definitions of discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 includes the following definitions of discrimination:

- **Direct Discrimination** occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (perceptive discrimination), or because they associate (associative discrimination) with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- **Perceptive discrimination** is direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic
- **Associative discrimination** is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a condition, rule, policy or practice is applied equally to all but puts one group of staff or students at a disadvantage due to a protected characteristic.
- **Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (see below), which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. NB the definition of harassment does not apply to marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.
- **Victimisation** occurs when a person is treated badly because they have made or supported or are suspected of making or supporting a complaint or grievance under the Equality Act.
- **Discrimination arising from disability:** it is discriminatory to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (e.g. a tendency to make spelling mistakes arising from dyslexia).
- Employers may not ask about a candidate's health before offering them work unless it will assist in;
- Deciding whether a reasonable adjustment is necessary to enable participation in the selection process
- Deciding whether an applicant can carry out a function that is essential (intrinsic) to the job
- Monitoring diversity among people making applications
- Taking positive action to assist a person with a disability



- Confirming a person has a disability where the job genuinely requires the jobholder to have a disability.
- **Failure to make a reasonable adjustment** occurs where a physical feature or provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage, compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.