

Connect2Education



Disability Discrimination Policy

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Authority:

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Executive Summary

Connect2Education Ltd committed to taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination in its policies, practices and procedures and this intention underpins our Equal Opportunities Policy. The Disability Discrimination Policy is designed to assist Connect2Education Ltd review their services and to remove barriers to disabled people. These barriers may be attitudinal, informational, environmental, organisational or cultural. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 has amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 so that it now places a duty on all businesses to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons; eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- be pro-active in taking account of disabled persons disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The policy places positive responsibilities on us to work towards a more equal society by mainstreaming disability equality into the way in which we carry out our functions.

1.0 Disability Statement

At Connect2Education Ltd we are committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and a supportive environment for all. For the purposes of this statement disability is understood in the broadest sense including physical and sensory impairments, mental health issues, medical conditions and specific learning difficulties that have an impact on day to day activities.

We aim to:

- Anticipate the needs of disabled staff, trainees, students and clients.
- Recognise the particular contribution to achievement of Connect2Education Ltd.'s mission made by individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.
- Foster independent learning through comprehensive support whilst creating an environment in which all stakeholders feel they can declare their support requirements.
- Maximise our capacity to create career opportunities for disabled people in which they are in no way disadvantaged in comparison with their peers and colleagues.

By ensuring that:

- Disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria for job vacancies are automatically invited for interview and considered on their abilities.
- Clients, Trainees, Students and staff have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of Connect2Education Ltd
- The views of the disabled trainees and staff are taken into account at all times when their requirements are being assessed or discussed.
- With the individual's consent, staff have the relevant information to offer their full support.
- We provide staff working with disabled trainees, students and staff with the necessary support and development opportunities.

We work to improve the accessibility of our physical environment.

2.0 Social Model of Disability

Connect2Education Ltd will use the social model of disability. In the past much of our understanding of disability used a medical model. Issues and solutions tended to focus around the idea of curing the individual or making them better. Connect2Education Ltd will no longer use the traditional approach based on what a disabled person cannot do and instead will focus on what they can do. Following the social model should result in a better environment for all service users and the entire community and better access for disabled and service users generally.

Connect2Education Ltd has developed this Disability Discrimination Policy to help us to achieve a number of things:

- to carry out equality impact assessments on existing policies, practices and procedures to identify where action needs to be taken to make improvements or changes, and to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people;
- to make sure that we are taking the needs and views of disabled people into account when, for example, we design and deliver services, make access improvements or develop policies;
- to continuously monitor and improve the ways in which we deliver services to disabled people; to ensure that there are resources and support available to deliver our Disability Discrimination Policies core priorities.

3.0 Legal Framework

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) defines that a "disabled person" is a "person who has a disability". A person is treated as having a disability if "he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities". It is unlawful to discriminate against disabled people by:

- refusing to provide a service without justification;
- providing a service to a lesser standard without justification;
- providing a service on worse terms without justification;
- failing to make reasonable adjustments to the way services are provided for disabled people;

- failing to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of service premises, to overcome physical barriers to access. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was passed in 1995. This Act consists of 3 parts. The first part of the Act defines disability and who is protected under the Act. The second part of the Act covers employment and the third part covers goods, services and facilities.

Whilst some elements of education were covered in this Act i.e. services and employment, some key aspects were omitted. As a result, in September 2001 the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act was passed and became more commonly known as SENDA. SENDA more specifically covers students; those studying in post 16 education. This part of the DDA 1995 sets clear deadlines during which time responsible bodies need to ensure they are carrying out their duties under the Act. In September 2002 it became unlawful to discriminate against a disabled student. In practice this means disabled students must not receive “less favourable treatment” due to having a disability and that “responsible bodies” must make “reasonable adjustments” to accommodate specific needs. In September 2003 the second part of SENDA came into force stating that responsible bodies must make adjustments that involve the provision of auxiliary aids and services. SENDA also placed a duty on universities to be “anticipatory” in their support of disabled students. As well as making reasonable adjustments for students who are already studying, training providers need to consider support requirements for prospective students before they begin their studies. The Act also clarifies that it is unlawful to discriminate against a disabled person “in admissions, enrolment or exclusion”. Reasonable adjustments cover a whole variety of scenarios. A student may benefit from receiving handouts in advance of lectures or may need a portable loop system in class or extra time in their examinations. Whilst some adjustments can be on an individual basis responsible bodies need to consider holistic approaches that can benefit all students. This could be providing all modular handouts as downloadable documents on the web, through the Intranet or via the Internet. All students then have the choice to access this information at their own convenience. In addition to that students could also download the information in their preferred format; font size, type, colour of printer paper etc. Providing information in this way and improving its accessibility would also address the anticipatory duties under the Act. In addition to considering access to curriculum, teaching facilities and the physical environment, other areas are also covered by the DDA. The duty to make reasonable adjustments is an anticipatory one. This means that educational providers must think ahead to the type of adjustments that may be required and, where feasible, put these adjustments in place. This might involve:

- Ensuring the accessibility of courses is considered during course validation.
- Planning accessibility features into buildings at the design stage.
- Staff training.
- Auditing institutional procedures and processes to ensure that they do not set up unnecessary barriers to disabled people
- Ensuring e-learning materials are accessible to student with visual impairments or those who are unable to use a mouse

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places additional duties on responsible bodies in relation to the support of, involvement and progression of disabled people in the workplace and disabled students in their studies. This amendment to the Act extends the definition of “disability” in two ways:

- It now covers people with progressive conditions; specifically, cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis. They will be recognised as having a disability from the point of diagnosis.
- A mental illness no longer has to be “clinically well recognised”.

This is very significant as this further opens up the definition of disability under the Act and therefore will incorporate many more people than previously.

4.0 Individual Responsibilities

Directors:

The Director and Senior Management are responsible for the implementation of the policy. The Connect2Education Ltd Directors are ultimately responsible for the implementation of all agreed policies of the, including the Disability Discrimination Policy.

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Staff:

All staff with management responsibility have responsibility for the implementation of the Policy in their spheres of operation and among the staff, trainees, students and clients for whom they are responsible by identifying existing and potential barriers and develop strategies to remove them.

All staff have responsibility for adhering to the policy and for minimising the impact of disability on students, colleagues and all those with whom they come into contact in the course of their work.

5.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We will involve our disabled community in the evaluation of our scheme and action plans and make sure that the scheme is evaluated. This will include:

- Staff and potential staff
- Visitors and members of the public

This process will include making any changes to the policy so that continuous performance improvements and overall effectiveness demonstrate our commitment to the disability discrimination Policy.