



1. Current Policy and Practice

1.1 Policy Overview

- a. Business To Business welcomes and values the social diversity of its community. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work. The policy and practice of Business To Business is to afford genuine equality of opportunity to all staff, learners and prospective learners. Business To Business recognises that having a sound equal opportunities policy ensures an atmosphere in which all staff and learners will work and communicate with greater confidence and ease. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant, learner or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of his or her sex, marital status, sexual orientation, racial group or disability.
- b. Business To Business welcomes diversity amongst its staff and learners. We recognise that embracing equality of opportunity means that, in addition to compliance with current legislation, we can:
 - i. Stimulate a healthy and productive working environment
 - ii. Broaden the “talent base” for our staff, learners and potential learners
 - iii. Improve our motivation and performance, thereby reducing staff turnover
 - iv. Improve our corporate image with prospective employees and customers
- c. Business To Business has adopted the following policies in support of this aim:
 - i. Harassment Policy – adopted in 2003
 - ii. Disability Policy – adopted in 2003

1.2 Implementation of policies

- a. The success of this policy depends on the co-operation and commitment of all staff. This commitment starts at the highest level within the organisation with the Senior Partner being ultimately responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy and the principles within. Equal Opportunities also underpins our vision and mission statement, and is actively promoted in our business planning.
- b. The Policy is of open access for all to Business To Business’s training programmes. This principle is promoted in all areas of Company activity and aims to overcome any inequality in relation to gender, race, religion, marital status, age or disability. We also seek to promote equality of opportunity for other minority groups such as ex-offenders, people who experience discrimination due to homelessness, sexual orientation, or lone parents, people with English as a second language, people with learning difficulties or who need help with literacy and numeracy.
- c. Business To Business will ensure that all members of staff are conscious of and work sensitively against discrimination through an effective Induction procedure and regular on-going communication on Equal Opportunities matters so that they are aware of the differing expectations of learners and appreciate potential cultural differences and problems.

It is the responsibility of each staff member to:

- i. Acquaint him/herself with Company Policy and supporting rules and procedures, and to respect and act in accordance with the provisions
- ii. Promote the Equal Opportunities Policy with learners and employers during recruitment and monitoring

- iii. Report instances of discrimination to the so that disciplinary action may be taken
- iv. Make any suggestions that may help to improve the implementation of the Company Policy on Equal Opportunities for all people on Business To Business programmes and within Company itself

All staff need to consider that should a complaint be made regarding discrimination, that they may have to justify their actions in an Industrial Tribunal

- d. As an employer, Business To Business seeks to:
 - i. Effectively monitor and promote Equal Opportunities through EO monitoring and review. A quarterly review and monitoring of Equal Opportunities data will enable the Senior Partner to identify initiatives to address under-represented groups and develop an appropriate implementation plan
 - ii. Involve its staff and associates in the implementation of this policy at operating level
 - iii. Select, recruit, train, develop, reward and retain staff in all job areas, and promote on merit, without discrimination, and with particular reference current legislation, including:
 - 1) Equal Pay Acts 1970 and 1984
 - 2) Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986
 - 3) Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
 - 4) Race Relations Act 1976 and 2000
 - 5) Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - 6) Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
 - 7) Employment Rights Act 1998
 - 8) Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
 - 9) The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - 10) Asylum & Immigration Act 1997
 - 11) Human Rights Act 1998 (Article Eight)
 - 12) “Age Diversity in Employment” DfEE Code of Practice 1999
 - 13) Ageism Regulations 2006
 - iv. Provide an environment for its workforce who is free of harassment and intimidation. Discrimination against any learner or work colleague, irrespective of employment status, will be treated as Gross Misconduct.
 - v. Ensure that all staff are aware of Business To Business’s Grievance and Disciplinary procedures
 - vi. Ensure its buildings are accessible to people with disabilities, so far as is reasonably practicable
 - vii. All job advertisements and other relevant materials will carry the following statement: whenever practicable “Working towards equality of opportunity”
- e. As a training provider, Business To Business seeks to:
 - i. Ensure all learners are aware of our policies and procedures on Equal Opportunities.
 - ii. Monitoring our learners’ employers to ensure that they comply with all Equal Opportunities legislation through effective implementation of policies, procedures and monitoring.

1.3 Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, we recognise the following definitions of key terms relating to Equal Opportunities:

- a. Direct discrimination: “occurs where a person is treated less favourably, than another in the same or not materially different circumstances on grounds of gender, race, religion, marital status, disability, age or sexual orientation”.
- b. Indirect discrimination: “occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied equally, but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group, because the proportion of that group which can comply with it is much smaller than the proportion of the other group that can comply with it”
- c. Victimisation: “occurs where a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because he/she has done something by reference to the Equal Opportunities legislation.
- d. Harassment: “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct affecting the dignity of women and men at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct”.

1.4 Links with External Agencies

Business To Business works in co-operation with a wide range of External Agencies, including Examination Boards and other organisations as appropriate, to develop and maintain Codes of Practice which can assist in ensuring that assessment and course materials embody the principle of open and equal opportunity.

1.5 Future activity and policy development

Business To Business’s policies and procedures as they relate to equal opportunities will be monitored and kept under review by the Senior Partner at least annually, and will be amended as and when necessary to reflect relevant new legislation. Monitoring will be done through the analysis of data collected. Evaluation and policy review will be conducted through a representative group

HARASSMENT & BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT

2. Policy Statement

Business To Business welcomes and values the social diversity of its community. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind are in no one's interest and should not be tolerated in the workplace. As a consequence, Business To Business aims to provide a working and learning environment that will enable staff, associates, potential learners and learners to fulfil their potential and in which the dignity of all individuals is respected. To this end, the company wishes to provide an environment that promotes equal opportunities and is free from harassment. Harassment can have a serious detrimental effect on working, learning, studying and social conditions of staff, learners and visitors to the company. This policy applies to all members of the local community, staff, associates and learners and any incident of harassment will be regarded extremely seriously and can be grounds for disciplinary action including dismissal or expulsion.

Derek Allford
Director
June 2008

2.1 What constitutes Harassment?

Harassment can be a source of great stress to an individual. It may be so serious and unrelenting that the person who is being, or has been, harassed feels it necessary to change job or change/not complete their NVQ. All members of the company and learners are responsible for ensuring that individuals do not suffer any form of harassment. They should also encourage and support any legitimate complaint. There is no specific legal definition of bullying and harassment, however B2B has a duty of care for all its staff, associates, learners and potential learners and a liability at common law under the following laws:

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Race Relations Act 1976

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Under these Acts harassment may be considered to be discrimination.

2.2 Definitions of Harassment

- a. Harassment is used here to mean sexual, racial, bullying and other forms of personal harassment, arising from disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or any other personal characteristic.
- b. Harassment may occur where the harasser has a position of authority (for example, where an assessor, supervisor or administrator is able to affect another person's job or career. Harassment is difficult to define in terms of what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. The defining features are that the behaviour is unwanted by the recipient and would be regarded as harassment by any reasonable person.

2.3 Sexual Harassment

This always involves unwanted sexual attention, which emphasises sexual status over status as an individual, colleague or learner. It is most often found that it is women who are harassed by men. However, sexual harassment between members of the same sex or of men by women does also occur. It can be physical, ranging from suggestive looks, indecent assault, rape, or verbal, ranging from belittling or suggestive remarks, compromising invitations, aggressively foul language, or unwanted demands for sex, displays of sexually suggestive or degrading pictures in the working environment, including images, text and messages on computer screens. Sexual harassment occurs when any such behaviour creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for employment, for study or for social life. Any behaviour that makes the recipient feel unjustifiably viewed, as a sexual object is liable to cause offence, even if offence is not intended. Differences of attitude or culture and the misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as sexual harassment by one person may not seem so to another.

2.4 Racial Harassment

This may be defined as any hostile or offensive act or expression by a person of one racial or ethnic origin against a person of another, or incitement to commit such an act. Such behaviour includes derogatory name-calling, insults and racist jokes, racist graffiti, verbal abuse and threats, physical acts, ranging from gestures to attack, and ridicule of an individual for cultural or linguistic differences. Racial harassment occurs when any such behaviour creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for employment, study or social life. Differences of attitude or culture and the misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived, as racial harassment by one person may not seem so by another.

2.5 Bullying

This is not confined to derisory remarks or open aggression but can be subtle and devious. Bullying can occur when professional abrasiveness becomes tainted with personal vindictiveness and people are singled out, demeaned and devalued. It is often an experience that causes the individual to feel isolated, with repercussions for mental and physical health. Bullying does differ from harassment and discrimination in that the focus is rarely based on gender, race or disability. The focus is often on competence, or rather the alleged lack of competence of the bullied person. In reality, the target of

bullying is often competent and popular, and the bully is aggressively projecting their own social, interpersonal and professional inadequacy onto their target. Examples of bullying are:

- a. Picking on people and criticising them in front of others;
- b. Refusing to delegate or punishing competent people by removing their responsibility;
- c. Unfounded criticism at performance of work tasks;
- d. Shouting at people to get things done;

Bullying should not be confused with “tough management” or any other popular euphemisms that people disingenuously use to dismiss, diminish, rationalise or justify bullying behaviour.

2.6 Personal Harassment

Other forms of harassment can equally cause misery. Such harassment may include;

- a. Insults or bullying based on personal circumstances, appearance, sexual orientation, disability;
- b. Pranks about age, cultural differences, disability;
- c. Hostility based on religious and cultural denomination, age, disability;
- d. Using a person’s known ill-health or disability to deskill, undermine or demoralise them.

2.7 Action If You Are Harassed

- a. Any difficulty in defining what constitutes harassment should not deter staff, learners or visitors from complaining of behaviour, which causes them distress. Nor should anyone be deterred from making a complaint because of embarrassment or fear of intimidation or publicity. Business To Business will respect the particular sensitivity of harassment complaints and their consequences as well as the need for the utmost confidentiality. If you feel that you are being subjected to harassment in any form, do not feel it is your fault or that you have to tolerate it.
- b. If possible make it clear to the person that you object to their behaviour – this may in some instances be sufficient to stop it. If you feel unable to tackle the person concerned, this does not constitute consent to harassment, nor will it prejudice any complaint you may bring. If you do not want to face the harasser, you might be able to put it in writing. Write a letter or memo explaining what it is about the behaviour that is upsetting you and ask for it to stop. If you decide to tackle the problem by writing to the harasser, you should keep a copy of the letter or memo.
- c. Keep a record of incidents – This is important. Later on, you may need to re-call what has happened to you. Make a note of the date and time of any incidents, and of the name of anyone that was around at the time and might have seen what happened.
- d. Seek advice – You could seek the help or advice from a trusted friend, a sympathetic colleague or a staff representative. Also, at any time you may seek a confidential meeting with the Senior Partner at Business To Business. If you wish, you may be accompanied at such a meeting by a sympathetic colleague, friend or staff representative. Following this meeting further action involving you will not normally be taken without your express permission; in particular the person about whom you are complaining will not be given your name without your express permission. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the harassment and try to find a solution. An anonymous statistical record of the meeting will be kept.
- e. If necessary, seek medical help – If the nature of the harassment is such that it is putting you under stress, injuring you, or making you unwell, go to your doctor.

f. Informal Action

- i. Most recipients of harassment simply want their harassment to stop. Where the harassment is occurring between two co-workers or learners and when the harassment is not too severe, it may be possible to try to resolve the matter informally. Where it is too difficult or embarrassing for you to do this on your own behalf, an alternative approach would be to seek support from the Senior Partner of Business To Business.
- ii. One option would be for you to be accompanied by the Senior Partner while you speak directly to your harasser. You can explain that you find certain behaviour offensive and that if the behaviour or similar behaviour is repeated you may make a formal complaint. You can then note down the details and either keep it yourself or pass it to the Senior Partner. This means that no one else needs to be involved if you do not want them to be.
- iii. This type of approach may be effective where someone does not realise that their behaviour may be objectionable.

g. Formal action

- i. If you wish formal action to be taken then you may make a formal complaint. By its nature, harassment may make the normal channels of complaint difficult to use because of embarrassment, fears of not being taken seriously, of damage to reputation, of reprisal or the prospect of damaging the working or learning environment.
- ii. The formal complaint should be made in writing to either of the Partners. It will then be dealt with in one of two ways depending on whether the alleged harasser is a member of staff or learner.

2.8 Alleged Harasser is a Member of Staff

- a. The formal complaint will be passed to the Senior Partner who may then appoint an investigator, to investigate the incident.
- b. At this stage the alleged harasser must be made aware of the formal complaint by the Senior Partner and given full details. He/She will be given the opportunity to respond. It may be necessary for the investigator and the Senior Partner to speak to any witnesses. Strict confidentiality must be maintained throughout the investigation.
- c. Once an initial investigation into the complaint has been done the Senior Partner will decide on appropriate action. Appropriate action by the Senior Partner might include: instigating further discussions, writing a letter giving guidance to both involved parties, deciding that a disciplinary hearing should be held or deciding that no action will be taken with reasons given to both parties.
- d. If it is decided that a disciplinary hearing should be held the existing disciplinary procedures and regulations and appeals procedures pertinent to that individual will be used.

2.9 Alleged Harasser is a Learner

- a. The formal complaint will be passed to the Assessor who then may investigate the incident or ask assistance of the management team at Business To Business. The Learners employer will also be informed that an investigation is underway.
- b. At this stage the alleged harasser will be made aware of the formal complaint by the Assessor or appointed representative and given full details. He/She will be given the opportunity to respond. It may be necessary for the investigator and Senior Partner to speak to any witnesses. Strict confidentiality must be maintained throughout the investigation.
- c. Once an initial investigation into the complaint has been made the Senior Partner will decide on appropriate action. Which could include: instigating further, discussions, writing a letter, giving

guidance to both involved parties, removing the harasser from their NVQ programme or deciding that no action will be taken with reasons given to both parties.

- d. If it is decided that a disciplinary hearing should be held all information will be supplied to the harasser's employer, who will then take any appropriate action.

2.10 Victimisation

Those bringing forward incidents of harassment will be protected against retaliation. An allegation of victimisation will be dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedures.

2.11 Disciplinary and grievance procedures

Individuals who have been found to breach Business To Business's policy on harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. In such cases Business To Business's existing disciplinary procedures and regulations may be used. If an individual is dissatisfied with the action taken under the harassment guidelines, Business To Business's formal grievance procedure can be invoked.

2.12 Harassment involving Violence

Nothing in this policy prevents you from exercising your legal rights at any time.

- a. If you have been attacked (or feel threatened in any way, or have been the subject of harassing telephone calls) seek help immediately. In particular you should report this attack to the police. Either of the Partners will willingly give you support and help you decide what to do. If you go to them further action involving you will not normally be taken without your express permission. You will be advised on what to do but you have a choice. For your own protection and for the protection of others it is important that the offender is dealt with. If you decide to go to the police you will not be asked to go alone, unless you so wish.
- b. If you have been sexually assaulted or raped seek medical help and advice immediately. Information on locally available advice and help for females and males who are the victims of sexual assault or rape is available, within your local telephone directory, or by contact with Business To Business.

2.13 Learner Employers and Placements

- a. B2B will seek to ensure that all employers who use its services will have in place arrangements and policies that promote equal opportunities and to prevent and deal with harassment and bullying

DISABILITY STATEMENT

3. Current Policy

3.1 Policy Overview

- a. Business To Business's aim is to provide genuine equality of opportunity to staff, associates, learners or prospective learners. Within this context, people/learners who have a disability shall, as far as possible, not be excluded from participation in Business To Business life with respect to admission to any Business To Business programmes solely on account of disability or special needs.
- b. Business To Business has adopted the following policies in support of this aim:
 - i. Equal Opportunities Policy - adopted in 2003.
 - ii. Harassment Policy - adopted in 2003.

3.2 Implementation of policies

- a. The Senior Partner of Business To Business is responsible for ensuring that the policy for people/learners who have a disability is disseminated within Business To Business and implemented as effectively as possible.
- b. Business To Business welcomes applications from people/learners who have a disability and endeavours to consider their individual special needs. Support for people/learners who have a disability may require negotiation on the provision of facilities not normally available. If individual needs cannot reasonably be met the prospective learner will be advised of the reasons why and will be given appropriate advice.
- c. Business To Business is concerned that people/learners who have a disability should be able to complete a programme of study with as little inconvenience as possible.
- d. Business To Business will consider methods of training and assessment, which take into account the special needs of people/learners who have a disability and are designed to make a fair assessment of each learner's ability.
- e. Disability awareness training is made available to members of Business To Business staff and associates. A wider programme of training is planned for the coming year.
- f. Business To Business can advise and assist learners and employers in seeking funding from external sources. Business To Business is not able, however, to provide financial assistance except in very limited and exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement.

3.3 Links with External Agencies

Business To Business collaborates and liaises with external organisations concerned with the needs of people/learners who have a disability and are able to assist in investigating financial and practical help available.

3.4 Current Provision

3.4.1 Staffing

- a. The Partner with primary responsibility for learners with disabilities is Lynn Allford, she is also to be known as the Special Needs Coordinator
- b. In carrying out her duties, the Special Needs Coordinator is responsible to the Senior Partner

- c. The Special Needs Coordinator can provide the following advice and support in relation to people/learners who have a disability:
 - i. Advice to prospective applicants, learners and members of staff on the provision of facilities and services available within Business To Business.
 - ii. Co-ordinating the arrangements for the assessment of learners with disabilities.
 - iii. Liaison with external organisations concerned with the needs of people/learners who have a disability.
 - iv. Advice on external sources of financial support and assistance to help further a learner's and/or employers application for such funds.
 - v. Preparation and distribution of information sheets on support available for those with specific disabilities.
 - vi. Advice on suitable equipment.
 - vii. Organisation of personal helpers and support workers (e.g. lip-speakers, sign language interpreters, live-readers, note-takers/transcribers, amanuenses).

3.4.2 Welfare Support and Advice Services

Business To Business provide a range of welfare and support services available to all learners, including:

3.4.3 Careers Guidance Service

We work closely with the local Careers Services (Connexions) and Learning & Skills Councils. One of the Advisers in the Careers Service and the Local Learning and Skills Council has special responsibility for people/learners who have a disability and are invited to make early use of the Service. There is a specialist resource in the Careers Service on opportunities for people/learners who have a disability and a web site link. The Careers Service is accessible to people/learners who have a disability but staff will also offer to see learners in an alternative venue if appropriate.

3.4.4 Counselling Service

A specialist counselling service can be arranged which provides a confidential, individual counselling service for learners.

3.4.5 Practical and Technical Support

As set out in Staffing (above), the Special Needs Coordinator can assist learners in organising personal helpers and support workers. Through Social Services and the Royal Society for the Blind, a programme of mobility training is available for blind/visually-impaired learners. The Special Needs Coordinator can also offer help and advice on suitable equipment and can sometimes offer equipment on short-term loan (e.g. Perkins Brailier, tape recorder, CCTV).

3.4.6 Restrictions

- a. Business To Business works with employers and endeavours wherever possible to accommodate the needs of people/learners who have a disability. Physical access to some buildings will however be difficult. Prospective learners must assure themselves, before accepting a place with Business To Business or one of its supporting employers, that their special requirements can be met.
- b. Prospective learners must make sure that if they feel that they have insufficient funds or do not have access to grants to support their special needs, they draw it to the attention of Business To Business.

This applies whether or not learners are in receipt of a Disabled Clients Allowance as costs may well exceed the funds available through the DSA.

- c. Business To Business will do all, as far as reasonably practical, assist in securing additional funds to cover the learner's special needs, but this cannot be guaranteed.

3.5. Future Activity and Policy Development

- a. Business To Business's policies and procedures as they relate to people/learners who have a disability will be monitored and kept under review by the Partners of Business To Business. Business To Business is endeavouring to improve its provision for learners with special needs through the following:
 - b. B2B recognises that there is a clear need to change attitudes and perceptions towards disability. People with disabilities have a valuable contribution to make to the workplace. B2B will engage in a programme of awareness raising training. B2B will also expect all staff and associates to include this subject in their Continuing Professional Development.
 - c. Review and revision (as appropriate) of information on provision and facilities made available to prospective learners.
 - d. The seeking of external sponsorship for special projects to enhance and improve support arrangements for learners with disabilities.
 - e. Communication of this policy and supporting documentation will be made available to all staff, associates and learners in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

Director
Jan 2009