



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Intent

Instep UK stands committed to encouraging Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (“ED&I”) among our workforce and eliminating unlawful discrimination in all its forms. We are an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing services and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The intent of this policy is to ensure that no applicant or colleague receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way Instep UK operates. We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background and make best use of their talents. We are guided by our values in everything that we do, and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive employer helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference for our people.

Instep UK value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All colleagues are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored, and policies and practices are amended if necessary, to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

The aim is for our team to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, for each employee to feel respected and able to share their voice, and have equal access to opportunities, regardless of their background, demographic and/or identity, so that all our people feel able to give their best and thrive at Instep UK.

All of Instep UK’s colleagues will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All colleagues will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of Instep UK.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in Instep UK as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its colleagues. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every colleague to this policy and the application of its principles,

are essential eliminating discrimination and embedding equality into the culture of Instep UK.

How we promote and gain commitment to our policy

Instep UK is committed to:

- Apply a fair, inclusive and consistent approach to recruitment, that makes clear our commitment to being an employer that opposes any form of discrimination;
- Providing training for all colleagues on E, D&I, during the induction process. Training content will be reviewed and refreshed, inline with our ongoing commitment to educating and reinforcing the values we set out in our E,D&I Policy;
- Give open access to all colleagues and perspective colleagues, to our E,D&I Policy which is held on the Instep UK website and internal HR system;
- Encouraging E,D&I in the workplace in recognition of the commercial value inherent of these practices;
- Implementing Quarterly/Annual assessments of workforce diversity metrics;
- Reporting diversity data into ScaleUp in the agreed form and within the agreed timescales.
- Embedding and collecting relevant diversity data in all staff onboarding processes;
- Keeping a tracker of any complaints received and how they are managed/resolved;
- Set out the Instep UK commitment to E,D&I and promotion of the E,D&I Policy, in all Contracts of Employment;
- Creating an environment and culture in which individual differences and the contributions of our colleagues are encouraged, enabled, recognised and valued;
- Entitling every colleague to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect where no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated;
- Providing personal and professional development and progression opportunities to all, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential through structured monthly one-to-ones, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to optimise the organise and unlock value;
- Reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness;
- Selecting those for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit purely on merit;
- Fully supporting this policy by senior management and ensuring agreement has been reached with colleague representatives;
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy annually;
- Monitoring the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the DE&I policy:
 - Monitoring will also include assessing how the DE&I policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues, as needed.

- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities:
 - Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the company's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice;
 - Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Our commitment as a service provider

Instep UK is committed to:

- Providing services to which all learners, employers and clients are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class
- Making sure our services are delivered equally and meet the diverse needs of our learners, employers and clients
- Having clear procedures that enable our learners, employers, clients or applicants to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated

Equal Opportunity Policy Statements

Age

We will:

- Ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity
- Ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities and
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people

Disability

We will:

- Provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure people with disabilities have access to our services and employment opportunities
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about people with disabilities

Race

We will:

- Challenge racism wherever it occurs
- Respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents
- Actively promote race equality within Instep UK

Gender

We will:

- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about all gender types
- Take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against all gender types
- Offer equal access for all gender types to representation, services, employment, training and pay
- Provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment

Sexual Orientation

We will:

- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about the LGBTQ+ communities
- Ensure that we take account of the needs of LGBTQ+ community
- Promote positive images of LGBTQ+ community

Religion or Belief

We will:

- Ensure that colleagues' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible
- Respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others

Pregnancy or Maternity

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of pregnancy or maternity
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy or maternity of our colleagues

- Ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our colleagues' pregnancy or maternity

Marriage or Civil Partnership

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of marriage or civil partnership
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our colleagues
- Ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account the needs of our colleagues' marriage or civil partnership.

Equal pay

We will ensure that all colleagues have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

Part time and fixed term work

Part time and fixed term staff should be treated the same as comparable full time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

Unconscious Bias

Instep UK recognises the dangers of unconscious bias arising at work, which is where an opinion is formed on an individual by a manager or colleague without them necessarily being aware they have formed it. There are many different forms of unconscious bias, ranging from an affinity towards those of a similar background to placing too much significance on what has been identified as a negative trait.

Instep UK will work against forms of unconscious bias in all decisions taken for employment, including recruitment, promotion and training opportunities, with a focus on promoting diversity and inclusion.