

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Date: March 2025
Review Date: March
2026



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Date: December 2023
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Scope

For the avoidance of doubt and unless expressly stated to the contrary any reference to Little Gate Supported Employment (LITTLE GATE) should be treated as including Little Gate College and Little Gat Farm and any reference to client/participant should be treated as including a Student of Little Gate College. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and users of the provision at LITTLE GATE. It forms part of the commitment of LITTLE GATE to creating a stimulating, supportive and inclusive environment for all, free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

Purpose

This equal opportunities policy statement and policy statement on dignity at work are designed to implement the commitment of Little Gate (LITTLE GATE) as an Employer to equal opportunities. It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure his or her own conduct conforms to the expected standards and reflects these policy statements.

Aim

The aim of the policies is to encourage harmony and respect amongst individuals so as to promote good working practices with a view to maximising the performance to the LITTLE GATE Employer and the employees.

Risk

If equal opportunities are not applied then valuable talent and potential are wasted. Moreover, when unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation take place, they bring about a climate of fear, insecurity and poor work performance. As well as being unlawful it affects profitability and morale. It is therefore vital that every employee, volunteer, client/participant and student understands their responsibilities. Equal opportunities is taken very seriously by the LITTLE GATE Employer and wilful failure to apply the policies or evidence of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation will result in disciplinary action which may include dismissal from employment, provision or study programme.

Legal Framework

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act consolidated and brought together previous anti-discrimination law into one piece of legislation, and aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to protected characteristics.

The Act established nine 'protected characteristics', on the grounds of which it is unlawful to discriminate against a person. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Religion
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Gender
- Sexual orientation

The policy is also supported by the following legislation:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions Amendment Order 1986)

Unlawful Discrimination

There are seven areas of discrimination:

- Direct
- Associative
- Indirect
- Harassment
- Harassment by a third party
- Victimisation
- Discrimination by perception

Direct discrimination occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic, for example, refusing to employ an individual because of their race or sexual orientation.

The law also protects people from being discriminated against by someone who wrongly perceives them to have one of the protected characteristics.

- Direct Discrimination can occur when a member of staff, volunteer, client/participant or a student is treated less favourably because an individual mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity).

Because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic:

- Direct discrimination might occur when an employee, volunteer, client/participant, student or visitor is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity). For example, this might occur when a student is treated less favourably because their sibling, parent, carer or friend has a protected characteristic, such as disability. This would therefore include the parent of a disabled child or adult or someone else who is caring for a disabled person.

Because of pregnancy and maternity:

- It is discrimination to treat a woman unfavourably (including a female student of any age) because of a pregnancy of hers, at any point during her pregnancy or within 26 weeks of her having given birth. This includes unfavourable treatment because of breastfeeding during this period.
- It may not be direct discrimination against a male student to offer a female student more favourable treatment because of her pregnancy.

Indirect discrimination is also covered by the Equality Act. It would occur if LITTLE GATE were to apply a provision, criteria or practice to all employees, volunteers, clients/participants or students which had the effect of putting a person with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage. For example, if LITTLE GATE were to refuse all requests for flexible working, this may have the effect of putting women at a disadvantage because women often take in greater care responsibilities. A provision, criteria or practice will not be unlawful where it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. Any individuals who make a complaint of discrimination must not be penalised. This applies to all employees, volunteers, clients/participants and students, including those who are the subject of a complaint, mentioned as a witness, asked to give relevant evidence, or are supportive of the alleged discrimination.

Harassment occurs where a person engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating another person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. This includes conduct of a sexual nature. Examples of harassment include name-calling and making innuendos. Treating a person less favourably because they have either rejected or submitted to harassment related to sex or gender reassignment will also be harassment.

Types of unacceptable behaviours may include

- unwanted physical contact, insulting or abusive behaviour or gestures, physical threats or assault
- unwanted comments or unwelcome advances, patronising titles or nicknames, propositions or remarks, innuendoes, lewd comments, jokes, banter or abusive language which refers to a person's protected characteristics

- arranging meetings that would exclude individuals of certain protected characteristics
- unwanted non-verbal conduct such as racially or sexually based graffiti referring to an individual's characteristics or private life, abusive or offensive gestures, leering, whistling, display of pornographic or suggestive literature, pictures or films/videos or inappropriate use of the network systems or mobiles for this use
- conduct which denigrates, ridicules, intimidates or is physically abusive of an individual or a group
- to discriminate against any individual in respect of an activity, service or opportunity because of an instance of misconduct for which an appropriate sanction has already been applied

Employees, volunteers, clients/participants and students must not engage in any conduct which could potentially offend another member of staff or a student or make that person feel intimidated, humiliated or degraded.

LITTLE GATE is opposed to all forms of prejudice that stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties set out above. This includes:

- Prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- Prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- Prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia

Little Gate's equal opportunities policy statement

1. LITTLE GATE Employer recognises and accepts its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.. Employees, other workers, clients/participants students and applicants for employment who have one or more of the protected characteristics are protected from all forms of unlawful discrimination in the workplace, including: direct and indirect discrimination; discrimination by association; discrimination by perception; discrimination arising from disability; harassment; and victimisation.
2. LITTLE GATE Employer seeks to employ a workforce and develop people who attend as clients/participants and students to reflect the diverse community at large because the Employer values the individual contribution of people irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
3. LITTLE GATE Employer will use its best endeavours to provide a training/working/study environment free from unlawful discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
4. LITTLE GATE Employer undertakes to review periodically its recruitment and selection criteria and procedures, together with client/participant and student admissions and enrolment processes, to maintain a system where individuals are selected, solely on the basis of their merits and abilities.
5. LITTLE GATE Employer undertakes to review its employment and enrolment practices, policies and procedures, including opportunities for training and promotion, pay and benefits, discipline, selection for redundancy and retirement, to ensure that it avoids all forms of unlawful discrimination in the workplace.

6. All LITTLE GATE employees, volunteers, clients/participants and students will be treated with dignity and respect. LITTLE GATE Employer recognises that harassment, bullying and victimisation are forms of unlawful discrimination and has a separate policy statement on dignity at work, which deals with these issues (see below).
7. LITTLE GATE Employer will make reasonable adjustments to its recruitment and selection arrangements and procedures to ensure that no applicant for employment is disadvantaged because a disability. Whenever reasonable and practicable, the Employer will make adjustments to retain disabled workers in its workforce, volunteers, clients/participants and students in their place of training, study, work experience and work placements. This may include making reasonable adjustments to working arrangements and practices, making changes to the physical environment and/or providing auxiliary aids and services.
8. LITTLE GATE Employer will not tolerate acts which breach this policy and all instances of such behaviour or alleged behaviour will be taken seriously, fully investigated and may be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the Employer. The Employer further seeks to give all employees, volunteers, clients/participants and students equal opportunity and encouragement for employees and volunteers to progress within the organisation; clients/participants within the different programmes and students in their studies by implementing a positive action plan.
9. LITTLE GATE Employer will provide training in equal opportunities and undertakes to distribute and publicise this policy statement to all employees and elsewhere as from time to time appropriate. Equality and diversity values are embedded throughout LITTLE GATE training and study programmes.
10. LITTLE GATE Employer will monitor and review the operation of this policy and will implement any changes required by law or to improve its effectiveness.
11. Any LITTLE GATE employee or volunteer who believes that they may have been subjected to treatment that breaches this policy initially to a manager and may raise the matter through the grievance procedure of the Employer. Clients/Participants may raise a complaint through Little Gate complaints procedures. Students should approach their tutor or Head of College in the first instance or may raise a complaint through LITTLE GATE complaints procedures.

Responsibilities

LITTLE GATE Employer takes a collective responsibility in providing an environment and facilities that are conducive to inclusion, such as ensuring areas can be accessed by people with disabilities and facilities and services are equitable to all clients/participants and students. Employees will maintain a physical environment where staff, volunteers, students and visitors feel secure and safe from harm.

Board of Trustees recognise and accept their responsibility to provide and monitor a working and learning environment that is free from unfair, unjust and unlawful discrimination. They will also ensure that an environment exists in which all potential employees, employees, volunteers, potential clients/participants, clients/participants, potential students, students, and anyone else who comes into contact with LITTLE GATE feels valued, safe and secure and treated with respect at all times. In such an environment employees, volunteers, clients/participants, and students will feel confident in working to their full potential and enjoy the satisfaction of achievement in a diverse environment.

The Senior Leadership Team of Little Gate, which includes the CEO, Head of Little Gate Farm, Head of Supported Employment, Head of Finance and Fundraising and Head of College, is responsible for ensuring that all staff, volunteers, clients/participants are aware of this policy. Staff

will be made aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training, where necessary, as part of their induction and on-going professional development. –

Head of College is responsible for ensuring that all College staff and students are aware of this policy. Staff should be made aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any case of a breach in policy.

All Staff including College staff and Volunteers have responsibility to ensure they act lawfully and that the spirit of the policy is maintained and prompted in all aspects of the business. They are responsible for monitoring their work area and stopping unacceptable behaviours immediately. Staff are expected to promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their learning environments dealing with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur. They will plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect LITTLE GATE guiding principles. Staff must ensure that resource materials used to deliver the curriculum and provision support are accessible to a diverse range of students and adjusted to meet specific needs, and that they are free from sexist, racist, and other discriminatory assumptions, images and languages, unless they are being studied as examples of such.

Students (Clients/Participants) are responsible for participating in the learning of equality and diversity and discrimination and ensuring that they understand and apply this policy throughout their day-to-day activities. Students will be supported through appropriate learning as part of our personal, social development programme.

The Curriculum

LITTLE GATE keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the policy statements set out above.

Breaches of policy and complaints of discrimination

Breaches of policy will be dealt with promptly and all incidents raising concern will be investigated fully by Human Resources or Line Manager. Escalation and disciplinary action resulting from any investigation will be determined by Human Resources and Head of Department, keeping the CEO and Board of Trustees informed.

LITTLE GATE is committed to preventing discrimination, harassment and bullying and acknowledges that despite the best intentions, such action or behaviours can occur.

Monitoring and review

LITTLE GATE records and monitors all complaints whether external or from clients/participants, students, volunteers and employees, including analysis from survey results. We collect, study, and use quantitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, including collecting views from students, clients/participants, volunteers and staff via surveys, student voice and collaborative practice, and make adjustments as appropriate. The introduction of Equality Impact Assessment Reports will support monitoring and review aligned to this policy. LITTLE GATE will collect and evaluate comprehensive data, to assist in evaluating its performance. This will include the following broken-down gender, race (including colour, ethnic or national origin), disability, religion, belief, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership and maternity and pregnancy.

For Students/Clients/Participants

Admissions (Applications, initial assessment and enrolments)

Retention rates

Achievement rates

Success rates (Outcomes)
Satisfaction surveys
Attendance, punctuality and engagement

For employees and volunteers

Category of work/job role
Job application and appointment
Contract type
Training, development applications, attendance, and outcomes
Professional Development Review records (appraisal)
Promotion applications and outcomes
Disciplinary, grievance and capability proceedings
Satisfaction surveys

All of the above will inform the annual evaluation of this policy for statutory purposes and LITTLE GATE/college strategic plan through introduction of an EDI report. All data will be captured in line with Data Protection GDPR requirements. Monitoring reports will inform future Development Plans, target setting, future policy development and staff development. Training will be provided for those responsible for and involved in, collating monitoring data.

The outcome of the annual monitoring exercise will be provided in reports to funding partners where required. Exception reports may be required on an ad hoc basis for specific purposes. Where requested, LITTLE GATE will ensure that information and materials is accessible in user friendly formats.

Where monitoring shows that people are not accessing services, or where policies or procedures are not working effectively, LITTLE GATE will take action to attempt to improve such situations.

Little Gate's Policy statement on dignity at work

1. LITTLE GATE Employer believes that the dignity of every person must be respected. Harassment and victimisation are forms of unlawful discrimination, which are unacceptable and will be regarded as gross misconduct. The highest standards of conduct are required of everyone regardless of seniority.
2. Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Unwanted conduct of this nature can constitute harassment of an individual even if it directed at another person. Harassment can take a number of forms (the following list is not exhaustive):
 - Harassment may be unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic. However, a person does not have to possess a protected characteristic to be a victim of harassment. Individuals who are subjected to harassment because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic can also be victims. It is also possible for someone to be subjected to harassment because colleagues wrongly believe they have a protected characteristic. Unwanted conduct can include any kind of action or inaction, behaviour, exclusion, written or spoken words, jokes, imagery, or physical contact that the victim finds objectionable or offensive. The test of harassment is, at least in part, subjective.
 - Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. This can include any unsolicited or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, such as: making sexual advances;

touching; staring; making inappropriate comments; telling sexual jokes; displaying or sending pornographic photographs or other materials of a sexual nature.

- Harassment can also be less favourable treatment of someone because they have rejected or submitted to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or conduct related to sex or gender reassignment.
- Julie on each list do we need to add that each list is not exhaustive??

3. Condoning any form of harassment may be harassment in itself.

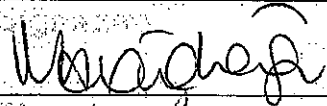
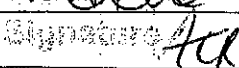
4. LITTLE GATE Employer accepts its responsibility for protecting employees from harassment by third parties, such as clients, customers and visitors. LITTLE GATE Employees and Volunteers are required to report any incidents of third party harassment immediately to their manager or supervisor.

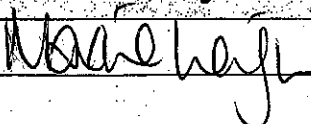
5. Victimisation occurs when someone is subjected to detrimental treatment because they have (or are thought to have) brought proceedings under the Equality Act, given evidence or information in support of proceedings or made allegations about any breach of the Act.

6. Harassment and victimisation will be regarded as gross misconduct for disciplinary purposes. Accordingly, employees guilty of harassment or victimisation run a serious risk of summary dismissal.

7. Equally, an allegation of harassment must not be made lightly. If it is found that an individual has made an allegation of harassment without foundation and maliciously or has given false evidence or information in relation to an allegation, then this will also be regarded as gross misconduct for disciplinary purposes.

8. All complaints of harassment or victimisation should be made to your manager through the grievance procedure unless the complaint is regarding this person when you should complain to that person's superior.

Signed by trustee	Maxine Leigh		8.1.24
Signed by CEO	ANDREA RANDALL CEO		8.1.24

Reviewed by	Date	Changes made	Next review date
	2 March 2025	None	2026