

## **Cotswold Assessments**

### **Equality & Diversity Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Cotswold Assessments is committed to the provision of fair environment and equal opportunities for all its candidates, assessors and associates, and it recognises the importance of making appropriate and safe assessment and development opportunities available to all people irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, disability or any other factors.

Under the UK Equality Act 2010, Cotswold Assessments will make everyone aware that it is against the law for a company to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation.

Staff, assessors and candidates will be treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, colour, ethnic origin or national origin, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, socio economic background, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership or other irrelevant distinction. Direct and associative discrimination and harassment will now be encompassed in this policy. All staff, agents, contractors and candidates are asked to ensure that their dealings with others promotes equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all.

All Cotswold Assessments qualifications are free from barriers which restrict access and progression unless the restriction is part of the assessment. Qualifications are available to all those who can achieve the standard required. No candidate is disadvantaged by any conditions or procedures that cannot be justified as relevant to the assessment. Cotswold Assessments is committed to improving the diversity of its workforce and will seek to adopt employment/ assessment practices that ensure diversity and a flexible approach including positive action which serve to support this objective.

All employees 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 the organisation. All staff and assessors will be recruited solely on merit, and to meet the needs of Cotswold Assessments and will be required to work to Cotswold Assessments' policies.

#### **Implementation**

1. As part of its strategy to ensure equality of selection of candidates and assessors Cotswold Assessments will ensure that there are clear consistent procedures for dealing with applications, provide applicants with as much clear and accurate information as possible about the assessment for which they apply. Candidates will be made aware that they can access Cotswold Assessments' Equal opportunities policy on Cotswold Assessments' website.
2. Ensure that fair selection criteria are based on the requirements that are necessary and justifiable for successful completion of the assessment.
3. Applications from people with disabilities will be properly considered. When making a decision about a disabled person's suitability for assessment, account will be taken of all the information available on the person, discussions with the person and those who will be responsible for his/her assessment, and where appropriate seek advice from professional services

4. The assessment organisation including location will be arranged to ensure that people living in remote areas have equality of access to assessments, and the logistics and timing of the assessments will be carefully scheduled in order to maximise opportunities for those disadvantaged to benefit most.
5. Assessors will be given a copy of Cotswold Assessments' equal opportunities & diversity policy, and it will be featured as an item in their verification audit process. They must also Support and contribute to the monitoring and review process, .and be aware of the diverse needs of candidates and support them appropriately and fairly.
6. Complaints and appeals will be dealt with promptly and fairly.
7. Every employee/ candidate is entitled to a working environment which promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated to any employee or candidate or from a third party to an employee or candidate.
8. Breaches of our diversity and equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings

## **Monitoring**

The policy and its implementation will be monitored by the Business Manager.

Equal opportunities & diversity practice is demonstrated through:

- Technical verifier audit visits and report forms.
- Discussed as an agenda item at Directors meetings
- Technical updates and training days for Assessors, plus technical verification.
- Use of standard forms for candidate record keeping, providing all information relating to equal opportunities, and monitoring from these forms.
- Monitoring of complaints & appeals procedures.

It should be noted that the candidate in giving this information agrees that it may be sent to various organisations for the purposes of national equal opportunities and access monitoring and be disclosed to Government Bodies if requested.

Statements and terms of conditions of employment contain a section on equal opportunities, and Cotswold Assessments' policy is available for all to view.