



OUR POLICY FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NB: if you have a concern, please speak to David Morley (Designated Lead for Safeguarding) Jennifer Mayne (Coach and Deputy Designated Lead for Safeguarding, or Jonathan Bourne (Managing Director and Equality and Diversity Lead) immediately – contact details inside.

Policy owner: David Morley

Next review due: September 2025

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1. Policy Context

The Equality Act came into force in 2010 and it forms the legal framework to help reduce discrimination in many parts of our lives including, but not limited to, the following:

- in the workplace
- in education
- as consumers
- when using public services

Damar is committed to promoting and embedding equality and diversity throughout our organisation.

We believe that diversity within our team, our students and our partners is essential and contributes to our quality and strength as a provider.

Damar places equality and diversity at the centre of our business, from senior level strategy and planning to the most simple daily operational processes and procedures.

This policy sets out, amongst other things, how we:

- promote our policy
- get engagement towards the policy
- train our colleagues in implementing the policy
- consider the policy when recruiting, delivering apprenticeship training and working with employers and apprentices
- review the policy and how often

2. Policy Statement

We commit to ensuring that everybody has equality of opportunity and is never treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics. We recognise the differences between people and groups of people and place positive value on these differences. We promote and support diversity and believe that every individual should be treated fairly, respectfully and with dignity and, to this end, we are determined to proactively tackle all forms of inequality. Our staff, students, partners and visitors to Damar are expected to share our vision and commitment.

We strive to ensure that all staff, students, visitors and other stakeholders have the right to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing

Where a student's employer does not have an equality and diversity policy of its own, which is equal to, or more stringent than this document, our Policy Statement shall be deemed to be restated by the relevant employer in respect of the Damar student concerned. Our Contract for Services reflects this.

We expect all partners with whom we engage to have an approach to equality and diversity that aligns with this policy and will not contract with those where we believe this not to be the case.

It is crucial that colleagues understand our aims and that they are confident enough to challenge any evidence of discrimination.

All staff are required to complete induction and ongoing training which covers a range of compulsory topics, including Equality and Diversity.

Through this training they learn that The Equality Act 2010 has 9 protected characteristics which are protected from discrimination under the legislation. These relate to their:

- Age – young (but over 18) or old are protected at work and in work training
- Disability or impairment – organisations must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate staff, customers and visitors with disabilities
- Sex – equal pay, training and opportunity for males and females
- Gender reassignment* – people changing from male to female, or female to male
- Marriage or civil partnership – preventing discrimination at work or in work training on the grounds of being married or in a civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity (including breastfeeding) – only reasons of safety are not covered – e.g. equality may not be possible for pregnant women in some circumstances if the activity could harm them or the baby
- Race – race can mean an individual's colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins, which may not be the same as their current nationality
- Religion or beliefs – any religion, lack of religion or personal belief is protected
- Sexual orientation – heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual people. We refer to wider guidance provided at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/sexual-orientation-discrimination>

*The Equality Act 2010 says that an individual must not be discriminated against because they are transsexual, which is when their gender identity is different from the gender assigned to them when they were born.

For example, where a person who was born female decides to spend the rest of his life as a man. In the Equality Act it is known as gender reassignment. All transsexual people share the common characteristic of gender reassignment.

To be protected from gender reassignment discrimination, the individual does not need to have undergone any specific treatment or surgery to change from their birth sex to their preferred gender. This is because changing your physiological or other gender attributes is a personal process rather than a medical one.

The individual can be at any stage in the transition process – from proposing to reassign their gender, to undergoing a process to reassign their gender, or having completed it.

Under the Act, all of the above are referred to as Protected Characteristics. We observe full guidance regarding this at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#lgb>

3. Organisational Responsibilities

Damar's Directors accept overall responsibility for Equality and Diversity and delegate specific responsibilities to individual members of staff as appropriate.

Damar's Directors have ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and its statutory codes of practice, other legislation and the regulations set out by our key stakeholders, including awarding bodies and funding agencies. They are also responsible for taking action against any breaches of the policy by staff, students, or partners.

Other members of staff are delegated specific responsibilities as appropriate.

All staff with delegated responsibilities receive information, training and support as necessary to carry out their roles.

4. Individuals with specific responsibilities

Managing Director and Equality and Diversity Lead: Jonathan Bourne (tel: 07768 056712)

Designated Lead for Safeguarding and Mental Health Lead: David Morley (tel: 07960 888149)

Coach and Deputy Designated Lead for Safeguarding: Jennifer Mayne (tel: 07891 154701)

Director of People and Performance: Diane Flynn (tel: 0161 480 8171)

Quality Manager: Rebecca Blackwood (tel: 0161 480 8171)

5. Implementation and Communication of the Policy

The Equality and Diversity Lead, Jonathan Bourne, is responsible for the co-ordination, implementation and monitoring of policies, processes and procedures that support compliance with the regulations outlined above and ensures that we align with best practice and developments in relevant legislation and guidance.

Staff are made aware that equality is not about treating everyone in exactly the same way, it is about recognising the importance of treating each person as an individual and making sure their needs are met.

We aim to provide an environment that is fair and respectful and that creates a culture where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Damar celebrates diversity by embracing differences in background, skills, race, religion, language, traditions and experience. Our commitment to British Values, which is embedded throughout the organisation, is further demonstration of this.

6. Embedding Equality and Diversity

Damar is fully committed to the principles of Equality and Diversity and demonstrates this by:

- taking positive action to ensure that our staff and students reflect the diverse local and regional communities in which we work. Our partnership working further demonstrates our knowledge of successful strategies that can be used to attract greater diversity.
- making sure that our staff and students are protected from discrimination, bullying, harassment and insults to personal dignity. Staff and students are encouraged to be vigilant for the signs and indicators of discrimination and are supported in challenging them.
- using documentation, marketing and promotional material that promotes equality of opportunity and reflects the diversity of our staff, students and employers.
- eliminating any barriers when applying to Damar training that demonstrates unfair discrimination and by working to promote Damar's provision to all members of the communities in which we work.
- ensuring that all students have equal access to the support and quality of service they need to enable them to achieve their full potential. This supports our aim to ensure that any achievement gap between groups is minimised.
- using quality assurance procedures that effectively monitor equality of opportunity across our provision.

Whilst our Equality and Diversity Lead has specific responsibility for planning and achievement of our aims, all staff are expected to share our vision. Specific support is detailed below:

- Divisional Leads are responsible for communicating the policy effectively to staff in their teams and for positively promoting the vision and policy statement. They ensure the presence of ongoing equality and diversity support and training for staff and monitor their teams for breaches of this policy.
- Business Development colleagues promote Equality and Diversity with all employer partners with whom they engage and are prepared to challenge any indication of discrimination. Our commitment to Equality and Diversity is also embedded in our enrolment paperwork.
- Recruitment Co-ordinators treat every applicant fairly and with respect. Through the screening process they are able to identify whether an individual has specific needs, where support may be required to provide equality of opportunity.
- Coaches are responsible for ensuring further communication of the policy to students and employers through our induction process. Subsequently, they provide ongoing support to students and are alert to any concerns relating to equality and diversity.

We aim to attract, develop and promote people from diverse backgrounds. Our Director of People and Performance ensures that no applicant is treated less favourably than another person because of their race, gender, disability, religious beliefs, or any other protected characteristic. A wide range of media is used to advertise our vacancies and we state our commitment to Equality and Diversity on all job descriptions.

7. Training Delivery

The overall wellbeing and development of our students is enhanced by our commitment to Equality and Diversity and is part of our wider commitment to Safeguarding. It is an essential thread in all our training provision and is demonstrated through:

- student induction
- our personal development curriculum
- initial assessment of all students
- our Functional Skills training provision
- our 'Profiler' tool, which establishes the starting point for all students, by measuring their current knowledge/skills versus the needs of their job and the qualification
- our paperwork. Students are given the opportunity to disclose additional needs, and potential support requirements during the recruitment and enrolment process
- our commitment to providing reasonable adjustments: flexibility around examination venues, format and time allowed, production of resources in different colours and fonts, changes to display screen settings, provision of a reader (this is not an exhaustive list)
- student reviews

8 Breach of the Policy and Complaints

We will take any breach of this policy, or complaint in relation to it seriously, whether it be by a staff member, student, partner or visitor. Any instance will be investigated, and appropriate action taken in a timely and sensitive manner.

9 Monitoring and Review

We have robust quality assurance procedures that include measures in relation to equality and diversity and we seek to assess the impact of this policy through these processes. These are overseen by the Quality Manager, who communicates feedback to management and staff.

The Policy is reviewed at least yearly and earlier in the event of significant changes to legislation/regulations.

10 Documents Supporting the Policy

Damar has a number of documents which support this policy:

- Self-assessment Report
- Employee Handbook
- Professional Standards Guide
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

- Prevent Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy