EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Scope

Beyond the Bark Ltd. (BTB hereafter) complies with the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and preventing discrimination in all training and assessment activities.

In England, Scotland and Wales, the Equality Act 2010 brought together and harmonised equality legislation. Legislation in Northern Ireland is different and is principally from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, revised to 2015 (ROI) and all other equivalent/relevant/legislation.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 places public authorities, including HEIs, under a duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- People of different religious beliefs, political opinions, racial groups, ages, marital statuses or sexual orientations
- Men and women generally
- People with and without a disability
- People with and without dependants

Equality means everyone having the same chances to do what they can. Some people may need extra help to get the same chances.

Diversity recognises that each of us are different and unique, consequently, it makes sense that treating everyone the same is not necessarily going to work. Different people will have different aspirations, expectations, opportunities, responsibilities and needs. Therefore, treating people fairly means recognising their differences, respecting them and acting accordingly. In short, diversity is about valuing differences.

We recognise and value people's differences and will assist them to use their talents to reach their full potential.

BTB is opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (defined as Protected Characteristics).

2. Responsibilities

The Director has overall responsibility for promoting awareness of this policy and for monitoring its effectiveness and to ensure individuals and learners are treated fairly, equitably and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

- Adhere to the policy
- Inform the Director if they become aware of any discrimination practices
- Help to create an environment in which all individuals are valued and respected.

3. Objectives

BTB objectives are:

- Sustaining, regularly evaluating and continually improving its services to ensure equality and diversity principles and best practice are embedded in our performance to meet the needs of learners
- Working together to provide accessible and relevant service provision that responds to learners' needs
- Monitoring of services, publicity and events provided by BTB to ensure that they are accessible to all sections of society.

4. Commitment

BTB is committed to upholding and promoting equality of opportunity through all aspects of its work and will treat all people with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all. It will

eliminate all forms of discrimination and will tackle social exclusion, inequality, discrimination and disadvantage.

BTB understands the diverse nature of individuals by:

- Appreciating the needs of individuals and learners
- Meeting the needs of individuals and learners
- Ensuring information and learning opportunities are available to everyone
- Ensuring individuals and learners are not prejudiced
- Insensitivity to difference – ensure individuals and learners are not ignored and will be included
- Over generalisation – efforts are made to obtain individual information
- Assumed homogeneity – differences of individuals and learners are acknowledged
- Overt double standards – provide the same treatment
- Under representation or exclusion – include individuals and learners whenever relevant
- Stereotyping – avoid stereotyping individuals and learners

BTB is committed to taking positive steps to ensure that:

- All people are treated with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all
- Equality of opportunity and diversity is promoted
- The differences and individual contributions are recognised and valued
- Services are accessible, appropriate and delivered fairly to all
- Individuals and learners are made aware, understand, agree and are willing to implement this policy
- All individuals and learners will have access to this policy
- Equality and diversity awareness is raised through information and training
- Recruitment and selection for employment is based on aptitude and ability, and applicants' diversity demographics are captured as part of the recruitment process to promote the elimination of unlawful discrimination
- Staff development is determined solely by criteria which is relevant to the duties of a post and will support career development and progression to ensure diverse representation

- Effective record keeping and monitoring is in place to measure effectiveness

4.1. Training and Qualifications

- Every learner is assessed according to his or her personal capability prior to any training/qualification/assessment
- Training and qualification opportunities in diverse geographical locations is offered
- Training and qualifications are offered to learners who can achieve the required standards and free from unnecessary barriers that restrict access and progression
- Content and language of all written information including training and assessment materials are non-discriminatory and free from social and racial bias or stereotypical wording
- Promotional materials are monitored for the use of potentially discriminatory language and bias and make use of images that are representative of society
- Appeals policy is published and made available to individuals and learners
- Reasonable adjustments policy is published and made available to ensure that this is achieving its objective of providing all learners with equal access to fair training/qualifications/ assessment
- Monitoring of data on ethnicity, gender, age, and disability in relation to learners
- Learners with a protected characteristic, when they are undertaking one of our training /qualifications/assessments, are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in comparison to learners who do not share that characteristic.

5. Common areas where discrimination can occur

Everyone has a responsibility to respect the feelings and sensibilities of others and to behave in a way that does not cause offence. Respect for all people is at the heart of our strategy and will take all reasonable steps to avoid discrimination against:

- **Direct discrimination:** When an individual is treated less favourably than you treat (or would treat) another individual because of a protected characteristic

- **Discrimination by association:** When an individual is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic
- **Discrimination by perception:** When an individual is treated less favourably because they are believed to have a protected characteristic, whether or not this is the case.
- **Indirect discrimination:** When a certain criteria or practice is applied in the same way for all individuals but has the effect of putting others sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage
- **Age** – treating someone unfairly because they are being too old or too young
- **Disability** – treating someone unfairly because they have a disability such as sensory or mobility impairment, a form of disfigurement, or a learning or mental health problem
- **Gender reassignment** – treating someone unfairly because they are proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex
- **Marriage or civil partnership** - treating someone unfairly because the person is married or is a civil partner
- **Race, religion or belief** – treating someone unfairly because of where they or their family originate from or because of their faith, culture or skin colour, or failing to respect their religious or philosophical beliefs
- **Pregnancy and maternity** - treating someone unfavourably because of a pregnancy or having given birth or breast feeding
- **Sex** - treating someone unfairly because of their sex - a man or a woman
- **Sexual orientation** – treating someone unfairly because they are a gay man, a lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or of another sex

6. Reasonable Adjustment

It is the responsibility of BTB and its instructors/assessors/staff/subcontractors to identify learners who are having difficulty or are likely to have difficulty in undertaking training or assessment activities. It is important that the learner is involved in all discussions to set any reasonable adjustments.

We will endeavour to accommodate the needs of learners with a particular training, qualification or assessment requirement, according to individual circumstances, ensuring such learners are not disadvantaged in relation to other learners and that certificates accurately reflect learner attainment.

We will give every consideration to reasonable adjustment or special consideration requests and will consult with and follow the Awarding Organisation or Accrediting Body process for which the training/qualification/assessment is accredited with. Please refer to the Reasonable Adjustment Policy which outlines reasonable adjustments for learners. Records of reasonable adjustments will be kept for audit purposes and evaluated for trends and continual improvement.

7. Legal Responsibility

Discrimination is a key concept of the legislation and direct and indirect discrimination are defined and recognised by the Act. BTB has a clear duty to ensure that the provisions of relevant legislation and codes of practice are followed. We are committed to ensuring, through policies and procedures the promotion of equality and diversity and the prevention of discrimination. We will fulfil our legal and moral obligations as an employer and during our training activities.

You may find this website useful: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com

Republic of Ireland

- Equal Status Act 2000, revised to 2015: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/enacted/en/print, includes the Employment Equality Act 1998
- Protection characteristics in ROI also includes the 'Traveller community'

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated annually or as and when required.