

Community Learning Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2025-2026

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Community Learning Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
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Owner	Community Learning Team
Protective Marking	
Primary Legislation	<i>Equality Act 2010</i>

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Responsibilities

Responsible	
Accountable	Beccy Brown
Consulted	
Informed	

Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
August 2025	Beccy Brown	V.1	

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Somerset Council's (SC) commitment to delivering inclusive, equitable, and accessible Community Learning (CL) for all adults—particularly those from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups—where both learners and staff feel understood, valued, and part of a supportive learning community

2. Policy Statement

Somerset Council is committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations among all learners and communities

SC CL will adopt an inclusion and equity approach based on the following determinants:



3. Definitions:

Equality: Individuals are treated equally, regardless of their protected characteristic. No-one will be directly or indirectly discriminated against because of a protected characteristic.

Diversity: Accepting and valuing the differences in people and recognising that such differences enrich through a broader spectrum of skills, attributes, experience and ideas.

Inclusion: Is about everyone who is part of SC CL; all students, staff, volunteers, members, partners and other stakeholders. It involves taking action to remove barriers to participation and learning. Inclusion also involves eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.

Protected characteristic: Direct or indirect discrimination due to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic origin and caste), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Separate legislation also provides similar protection against discrimination on the grounds of part time status and membership or non-membership of a trade union.

Direct discrimination: Less favourable treatment is given to an individual because of their protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination: A policy, practice or rule is applied to everyone but may place a particular group of employees with a protected characteristic (e.g. females, older employees, disabled employees) at a disadvantage. Indirect discrimination may be lawfully justified in certain circumstances.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (twelve months or more) adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Harassment: Unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, and which is related to a person's protected characteristic.

Legal duties:

Under the Equality Act 2010, SC CL has three public duties we aim to meet as we work towards our mission:

To enrich lives through inclusive and inspirational adult learning that will assist people to make intelligent choices and succeed in their personal, social, and economic aspirational objectives and to enable them to contribute to the resilience, ambitions, wellbeing and growth of Somerset.

The three public duties:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, along with other conduct prohibited by the Act.

SC enforces a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, considering it a minimum standard for all staff, students, volunteers, members, partners, and visitors. SC CL will ensure that procedures to challenge all forms of bullying, discrimination, harassment, and unacceptable behaviour are widely promoted.

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This is a fundamental part of SC CL's mission and values. SC CL is committed to ensuring that every individual reaches their full potential, regardless of personal identity, characteristics, or socio-economic status. We will ensure that all partners make reasonable adjustments to their

provisions, teaching, learning and assessment resources, access, and other publications to enable equal access for all individuals and groups.

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

SC CL will pro-actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion. It will ensure that learners, volunteers, members and staff have an understanding and appreciation for the diversity and difference that goes to make up the society in which we live and work.

4. Strategic Objectives

Advance Equality of Opportunity

- Deliver inclusive learning tailored to the diverse needs of learners.
- Remove barriers to participation for protected and priority groups through targeted outreach and support.

Eliminate Discrimination

- Promote respectful, safe, and inclusive learning environments.
- Implement robust policies and tutor training to identify and challenge discriminatory behaviour.

Foster Good Relations

- Build strong partnerships with community organisations to reach and support marginalised groups.
- Encourage community cohesion through collaborative and culturally responsive learning initiatives.

Ensure Accessibility

- Provide learning locally and online, with reasonable adjustments for physical, sensory, and cognitive needs.
- Offer flexible formats and venues to accommodate varied learner circumstances.

Promote Inclusion

- Design curriculum and resources that reflect the backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations of diverse learners.
- Embed inclusive practices in teaching, assessment, and learner support.

Strengthen Engagement

- Work with community partners to reach priority groups including carers, refugees, veterans, and those in rural or deprived areas.
- Use data and feedback to continuously improve outreach and engagement strategies.

Enhance Learner Support

- Provide financial assistance, digital access, and childcare support to remove practical barriers to participation.
- Ensure learners receive tailored support throughout their learning journey.

Embed Respect and Safeguarding

- Promote respectful behaviour and challenge discrimination through tutor training and learner codes of conduct.
- Maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all learners.

5. Protected Groups & Mitigation Measures

The policy includes specific actions to support:

- **Age:** Lifelong learning opportunities for adults 19+, with referrals for under-19s.
- **Disability:** Venue adjustments, learning support plans, accessible materials.
- **Gender Reassignment & Sexual Orientation:** Inclusive facilities, safeguarding, tutor training.
- **Pregnancy & Maternity:** Childcare partnerships, baby-changing and breast feeding facilities and flexible scheduling
- **Race & Ethnicity:** ESOL outreach, translation services, refugee support.
- **Religion or Belief:** Respect for religious practices in scheduling and facilities.
- **Sex:** Targeted outreach to increase male participation.
- **Armed Forces:** Flexible learning for serving personnel and veterans.
- **Other Groups:** Support for carers, low-income households, rural residents, and ex-offenders.

6. Implementation

- **Initial Assessments:** Conducted for all learners to identify support needs.
- **Tutor Training:** Mandatory training on equality, safeguarding, and inclusive teaching.
- **Policies & Posters:** Display of Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding, Prevent and British Values (see appendix A) materials in all classrooms.
- **Monitoring:** Regular learner voice activities, data analysis, and review meetings.

7. Governance

- **Lead Officers:** Quality Officer, CLP Manager, Programme Lead

- **Monitoring:** Quarterly reviews, six-weekly PRMs, annual policy review
- **Reporting:** Updates to the Interim Advisory Board and Equality Lead

8. Review & Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated based on learner feedback, data analysis, and changes in legislation or local needs.

Appendix A

Somerset Council's (SC) Adult Community Learning are committed to promoting and upholding the fundamental British values of:

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

These values underpin what it means to be a citizen in modern, diverse Britain and are integral to our ethos, curriculum, and wider learning environment.

Embedding British Values

We embed British values throughout our provision by:

- Integrating them into teaching, learning, and assessment across all courses and workshops.
- Encouraging open discussion and debate, enabling learners to express their views and listen to others.
- Promoting respect for the law and understanding of the consequences of behaviour and actions.
- Supporting learners to develop self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence.
- Encouraging learners to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to contribute positively to the community.
- Providing opportunities for learners to explore and appreciate diversity, including cultural exchange sessions and themed workshops.

Implementation

Democracy:

Learners are encouraged to participate in decision-making, such as agreeing session content and activities, learner feedback and group discussions.

Rule of Law:

We emphasise the importance of following rules and understanding the reasons behind them, both within the learning environment and in wider society, through collaborating to decide course/workshop expectations of behaviour (learning agreement) and integrating discussions on relevant legislation into sessions plans.

Individual Liberty:

Learners are supported to make informed choices in a safe environment, with guidance on rights and responsibilities and are given autonomy in the learning journey.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance:

We foster an environment where everyone is valued, where differences and achievements are celebrated. Discriminatory behaviour is challenged, and respect is modelled through providing an inclusive curriculum and meeting the individual needs of learners through adaptive teaching practices.