

Personnel and Continuing Professional Development Policy

Code of Conduct

It is vital to the success of Welcome Skills Limited that we conduct our business with integrity and in compliance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements set out in the policies and procedures of the company and our funding partners. This code of conduct sets out fundamental standards to be followed by employees and associates in their everyday action on behalf of Welcome Skills.

Welcome Skills Limited employees and associates must:

- Conduct the organisations business with honesty, integrity and in a professional manner that protects the company’s good public image and reputation.
- Build relationships with our stakeholders based on trust and treat every individual with respect and dignity in the conduct of our business.
- Become familiar with and comply with legal requirements.
- Avoid any activities that could involve or lead to involvement in any unlawful practice or any harm to the organisation’s reputation or image.
- Avoid actual or potential conflict of interests or the appearance thereof, in all company transactions.
- Provide accurate and reliable information in records submitted and maintain confidentiality.
- Promptly report to the Directors any violations of law or ethical principles, and co-operate fully in any audit, enquiry, review or investigation by the Directors or by external auditors.

Welcome Skills Limited recognises the fact that there is a wide range of dress styles across its employees and contractors, and that this variety reflects the cultural diversity of the local community. Whilst valuing this diversity, the organisation does expect all employees and associates clothing to be appropriate and reflect the nature of the company business.

All employees and associates must act with impartiality and respect all individuals irrespective of all issues covered by equality and diversity. We should embrace individuality and act without prejudice toward any stakeholder, learner or colleague.

All employees and associates must uphold these standards in the conduct of company business. If a decision about a particular action is not covered specifically by this code or related policies, employees and contractors are required to seek guidance from the Directors.

Any employee who fails to comply with this code of conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, which could include termination of employment. Any associate who fails to comply with this code of conduct may have their contract terminated.

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Professional Boundaries

Introduction

All employees who come into contact with young people in their work have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare, and organisations have a need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of young people or vulnerable adults are competent, confident, and safe to do so.

The vast majority of adults who work with young people or vulnerable adults act professionally and aim to provide a supportive environment which secures the well-being and the very best outcomes for the young people in their care. However, it is recognised that tensions and misunderstandings can occur, and the behaviour of adults can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them. Allegations may be malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event. Equally it must be recognised that some allegations will be genuine and it therefore essential that steps are taken to safeguard young people and ensure that the adults working with them are safe to do so

Purpose

It is important that all employees working with learners understand that the nature of their work and responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This guidance provides advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for Welcome Skills Limited employees and aims to:

- Keep all safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided
- Assist adults to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with young people
- Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused

Professional Boundaries

The term 'Professional Boundaries' is not easily defined, but could be seen as:

- Violation of the position of trust
- Abuse of power in a relationship with a young person or adult at risk
- Use of the relationship to meet own needs rather than the needs of the young person or adult at risk

It is important to stress that Welcome Skills Limited employees are responsible for recognising whether they are at risk of crossing boundaries and if they are, addressing the issue.

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Whilst not exhaustive, the following list identifies ways in which boundaries can be violated:

- Becoming too personally involved with learners – friend, confidant, surrogate parent
- Writing or exchanging notes, letters, emails, texts and social networking messages
- Serving as a confidant with regard to a learner’s decision about his or her personal issues
- Giving one learner undue attention
- Being alone with a learner
- Disclosing personal information to a learner
- Initiating physical contact
- Entering into any financial transactions with learners, including borrowing money or possessions, giving, or accepting gifts and handling money on behalf of learners, except in clearly defined local work instructions
- Influencing learners with their own beliefs and personal values. Be aware of the potential to influence young or vulnerable people

Confidentiality

Employees may have access to confidential information about learners in order to undertake their responsibilities. These details must be kept confidential at all times and such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the young person concerned.

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the General Regulations Protection Regulations May 2018.

Whilst employees need to be aware of the need to listen to and support young people, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets. Neither should they request this of a young person under any circumstances.

Communication (including the use of technology)

Communication between young people and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Mobile phones, text messages, emailing and social networking sites have the potential to blur personal and professional boundaries, as well as leaving staff open to criticism/hostility.

- Personal social networking sites should be set at private ,and learners should never be listed as approved contacts
- Never use or access social networking sites of learners
- Do not give personal contact details to learners, including personal mobile phone numbers
- Only make contact with learners for professional reasons
- Recognise that text messaging or use of sites such as WhatsApp should only be used as part of an agreed protocol
- Do not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a learner. Only business messages or messages relating to a learner’s study can be sent as part of an agreed protocol

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- Report and record any situation which might place a young person at risk, or which you think might compromise your own professional standing
- Ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny

Managing Boundary Issues

Staff may unwittingly be put in a position where their relationship with a learner is compromised or be drawn into conversations or situations where their boundaries are being stretched or crossed. In some situations, the fine line between good and bad practice may not always be obvious or clear. Staff should seek the guidance of their line manager if they are unsure about the nature of a relationship developing, or if they need advice on how they intend to deal with a situation.

Conflict of Interest Policy

To ensure the integrity of qualifications delivered by Welcome Skills Limited and to comply with any Awarding Organisation requirements, this Conflict of Interest Policy is in place to protect all parties.

Welcome Skills Limited Trainers

All Trainers must notify the Director of any businesses, relationships, contracts, or other activities that are, or may be considered to be a conflict of interest with Welcome Skills Limited. Notification must be in writing (email is acceptable) and must be made as soon as the potential conflict is identified.

Conflict of interest includes, but is not restricted to:

- Non-Welcome Skills Limited business interest or activity that could call into question the integrity of Welcome Skills Limited activities.
- Interest in an employer (shareholder, associate, employee, consultant, internal or external quality assurance officer) that is a client of Welcome Skills Limited and using their services.
- Personal knowledge (including relative or friend) of a learner registered with Welcome Skills Limited for a regulated qualification.

All Welcome Skills Limited Trainers are required to complete the Conflict of Interest Form annually during their staff review, confirming that they do not have a conflict of interest with regard to current employers or learners. During the year, any further Conflicts of Interest must be reported as soon as they are identified.

The Director will investigate any notifications of potential conflicts of interest.

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The line manager will present the findings of the investigation to the Director, outline any adverse, or potential adverse effects, and seek approval of any proposed course of action.

- a. Investigation outcomes include but are not restricted to:
 - No conflict of interest
 - Possible conflict of interest – further information required
 - Where there is a conflict of interest:
 - Member or staff/consultant ceases the activity creating a conflict.
 - Member or staff/consultant ceases working for Welcome Skills.
 - Where appropriate, Trainers cease working on all regulated qualifications.
 - Where appropriate, Trainers cease working on regulated qualifications with specific customers.

- b. All investigations will be recorded. Notes and details will be retained throughout the Trainer’s employment or contract with Welcome Skills. All investigation notes will be available to Awarding Organisations.

Any Trainer who fails to adhere and comply with this policy will be subject to an investigation and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Recruitment and Selection

The Company is committed to recruiting diverse and high calibre applicants ensuring:

- The qualifications, skills, abilities, and experience of staff appointed to positions in the company meet the needs of the post to which they are appointed.
- Staff at the company operate a fair and consistent appointments process so all applicants are guaranteed equality of opportunity.

All recruitment and selection related documentation will be developed and produced, taking into account, best practice, the legal framework and to ensure all groups have fair and equal access. Internal and external job advertisements must only be placed by a manager who has the authority to recruit to posts.

Anyone who is involved in any stage of the recruitment and selection process is working on behalf of the company and must ensure they follow this policy and procedure. By following the policy and procedure, those responsible for recruitment and selection will be assisted in their key task in selecting the best applicant for a vacancy and will also be protected in the event of any subsequent complaint.

Managers are responsible for the planning of their staffing, identifying roles and completing required recruitment and selection documentation including the job description and person specification.

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The panel members are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the recruitment procedure and practices and apply fairness and consistency throughout the process.

The chair of the panel is responsible for ensuring appropriate questions are set and agreed in advance of the interview. The chair of the panel will be responsible for providing verbal feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

The Procedure

The Job Vacancy

All requests for filling a vacant post must be agreed and authorised by a member of the management team. When considering a job vacancy, the management team will consider the following:

- Whether it is necessary to fill the vacancy.
- That the team are fully deployed.
- If there should be any change to individual roles and responsibilities as a result of the vacancy.
- Whether changing work patterns, organisation or technology have produced a different job, or the work can be distributed in a different way.
- The nature of the replacement, e.g. full-time, part time, term-time, permanent, or temporary.
- If there may be opportunities for internal progression and promotion.

The Job Description

The Job Description must include:

- An accurate up to date job title.
- The salary.
- Team in which the post is located.
- Who the jobholder is responsible to.
- Who the jobholder is responsible for (if relevant).
- The overall purpose of the job comprising a brief statement of what the job is intended to achieve.
- The main responsibilities of the job.
- The main duties of the job, identifying tasks and activities the jobholder will need to carry out to achieve the purpose of the job.
- The company's standard statements on health and safety, equality of opportunity and safeguarding.

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Job descriptions and disabilities

The company will not discriminate on grounds of disability in the way it recruits and selects staff and will ensure:

- Job descriptions and person specifications are drafted so they do not exclude or disadvantage people with disabilities.
- Recruitment materials are fully accessible, and made available in a range of suitable alternative formats when requested.
- Interviews are fully accessible, and reasonable adjustments are made to allow applicants with a disability to attend the interview without being placed at a disadvantage.
- Impairments are not used to excuse the non-recruitment of applicants who meet the minimum criteria.
- Where applicants have particular needs, consideration is given to the adaptations needed to enable the applicant to do the job, assuming they meet the essential criteria in the person specification.
- A member of the management team will give the final approval before the job description is advertised.

The Person Specification

When writing the person specification managers must ensure they list the minimum qualifications, experience, knowledge, and skills required to be able to undertake the job.

All criteria should be absolutely relevant, precise, and measurable.

Filling the vacancy

A job description and person specification must be produced for each post to be advertised.

The type of advertising medium used will be determined by the job being advertised. This may include:

- Internal bulletin.
- Local and/or national press.
- Job centres.
- Jobs websites.
- Specialist/professional journals.
- Job Fairs.
- Disability and equality networks.

Once a job enquiry is received a member of the admin team will ensure that the following documents are sent to potential applicants and where possible this information should be e-mailed so as to speed up the process.

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- An application form.
- Guidance on how to apply and complete the form.
- The closing date for receipt of application forms.
- The job description and person specification.

Applicants with disabilities should be allowed to submit an application form in a different format if necessary i.e. by tape or other suitable means.

Talking to candidates

Informal chats with candidates (internal or external) may be useful but it is easy to make subjective assumptions or to put other candidates at an unfair disadvantage.

The purpose of an informal chat is to give information only. The member of staff/manager nominated should be the only person to receive enquiries and have an informal chat with the prospective candidate. The chair of the panel must ensure that no preference is given to any particular candidate as a result of the informal chat.

Application Form

Only the company's approved application may be used for the post applied for. Other forms of application form or a CV must not be used. If a CV is submitted, it will be removed and not copied as part of the recruitment for the panel.

Once the application form is received, a member of the admin team will remove the equal opportunities monitoring form, before copying the application form for panel members.

Short Listing and the duties of the panel

A recruitment panel, convened and chaired by a member of the company management team, will be organised. The chair is responsible for ensuring the process is fair, procedures are followed and to offer advice and guidance on all recruitment related issues. A recruitment panel will be no less than the chair and one other of staff. In some instances, it may be appropriate for an external person to be present on a recruitment panel. member

For external posts, panel members must declare a conflict of interest if they know any candidate(s) who have applied for a post. The chair of the panel will decide if the panel member should continue to be an active member of the panel, an observer member or whether they should not take part in the process at all.

Short listing will be based on the requirements of the job description and person specification and will be carried out by the panel. Panel members must independently shortlist in advance and then

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meet to review the short-listing scores. When short-listing each panel member must complete the short-listing assessment grid.

Inviting the candidate for interview

A member of the admin team will formally write to applicants who have been selected for interview, providing a minimum of 5 days notice of the interview date.

The applicant's invitation should include the following details:

- The date, time and venue details of the interview.
- The names and job titles of the selection panel.
- Any details regarding the selection methods used i.e. interview, testing, presentation etc.
- Who to contact to confirm that they will be attending the interview.
- Ask the applicant to notify the company if they have a disability and need any adjustments in to support them in the interview process.

The interview and duties of the panel

The interview panel, where possible, should be the same as the short-listing panel. Interviews must be scheduled as soon after the advert is placed as reasonably possible, as delays are likely to lead to the loss of applicants.

The structure of interviews should be decided in advance by determining who will chair the panel and what areas of questioning are required to cover all of the elements of the person specification. The questions to be asked by each panel member must be discussed and agreed in advance to avoid overlap or repetition.

The same questions should be covered with all applicants. Interview questions should be phrased so that they do not favour any one candidate or group of candidates.

Supplementary questions should be used to probe for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous. Care must be taken to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory (e.g., questions about personal circumstances that are unrelated to the job). It is, for example, legitimate to ask for confirmation of whether individuals can comply with the working patterns of the post, but not to ask details such as their domestic or child care arrangements. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the panel, to ensure that such questions are not asked.

Appropriate questions relating to safeguarding, equality and diversity and health safety must be asked of all candidates. Consideration should be given to using job-related selection tests or asking candidates to give presentations as part of the selection process if they are appropriate for the job which is being applied for. If selection tests or presentations are to be used, all candidates should be

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given the same written information as to how long they will take, the topic area(s) they will cover and what, if anything, they should prepare in advance.

Each panel member must complete the interview assessment grid.

Once the panel agrees an appointment, the chair of the panel is responsible for making the job offer, and clearly stating the job offer is subject to satisfactory checks i.e. DBS, references, eligibility to work in the UK.

Interview panels act for the company in making selection decisions and are accountable for them. Interview notes and responses to questions must be taken by each panel member to help the panel to make an informed decision based on the content of the interviews. Care should be taken over the content of any notes and they should relate to how candidates demonstrate their knowledge, skills, experience and abilities in relation to the person specification. Any inappropriate or personally derogatory comments contained within the notes could be considered discriminatory and are unacceptable and must not be made.

The Data Protection Act allows applicants to request disclosure of such notes in the event of a complaint. An Employment Tribunal would expect the company to have notes of every selection decision if a claim by an unsuccessful candidate is brought. The lack of such notes would seriously impede the company's ability to contest such a complaint because there would be no record of what was said at the time of the interview.

The Appointment

All candidates are informed of the panel's decision as soon as possible after the interview and offered the opportunity for feedback. The successful candidate should be offered the post before the unsuccessful candidates are informed. Any feedback provided will be verbal.

Interview proceedings are confidential and interviewers are free to divulge to others the decision reached only once the appointee has accepted the post and all candidates have been notified. Qualifications of the successful candidate must be checked thoroughly, obtaining copies to place on file.

Permission to work in the UK

The company will check that all successful candidates have permission/the right to work in the UK in accordance with the UK Border Agency.

No individual will be appointed to a post unless these checks have taken place and relevant evidence is obtained and checked.

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In the interests of providing a fair and equitable opportunity for applicants, the names of two referees must be provided. Referees must include the applicant's current and previous employers. If the applicant does not put forward the name of their current or previous employer they should be consulted for an explanation. No approach may be made to any person who has not been named as a Referee.

Appointment of people with disabilities

A member of the management team will ensure that any adjustments to the working environment and/or adaptation of equipment required for a person with disabilities are identified and made available from the commencement of duties/activities.

6. DBS

All staff must have a DBS check prior to being engaged.

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Continuing Professional Development

Welcome Skills Limited will support continuing professional development, which involves all staff equally as partners in achieving the aims of the company. Neither the maintenance of current performance nor the achievement of significant change will be possible without staff who are both committed to the company's objectives and in possession of the necessary skills to achieve them.

To ensure that staff understand the culture, business objectives and targets of the company, staff meetings and standardisation meetings will include changes to policy and/or procedures and data relating to enrolments, achievements, timeliness, and destination data. It is important that all staff are aware of the business objectives and targets that need to be achieved, together with practices to improve where outcome data falls below the standard required.

National Standards

The Company introduced the Pellcomp PICS Management Information System, which enables greater data management and precise outcome measurements which link to the company's business plan and overall objectives. Elements regarding this are covered in the Strategy for Quality Improvement Policy and are included on the Agenda of Senior Management Team and Standardisation meetings.

Equality of opportunity

In accordance with the company's equal opportunities policy, there will be a commitment to combating all unfair discrimination by ensuring that relevant continuing professional development opportunities are made available for appropriate staff regardless of age, colour, creed, disability, employment category, health, sexual orientation, marital status, race or sex.

Individual responsibility

The company has the right to expect that each member of staff, as part of the individual's contractual obligations, will develop his/her competence and capability, which are aligned to the company's strategy. This continuing professional development policy will be reviewed annually by Senior Management and where necessary changes required and actioned will be communicated to all staff.

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Continuing Professional Development Processes

- Each member of staff will keep a record of their continuing professional development activities which is monitored and evaluated in collaboration with their line manager at least annually to Welcome Skills Limited.
- The CEO oversees staff induction, training, and continuing professional development.
- In collaboration with the line manager, members of staff will participate in the continual professional development which includes opportunity for appropriate on-going support, undertaking an annual review of the individual's past development and identification of future plans.
- Each member of staff will take personal responsibility to update specific expertise on a regular basis, and as appropriate to the nature of the individual's post. Each member of staff will contribute to team continual professional development where appropriate.
- Each member of staff will keep a record of his/her continual professional development activity and take responsibility for submission.
- Each member of staff has the right to expect to receive continual professional development entitlement, including to:
 - be inducted into the organisation and understand its ways of working including what contribution that individual is expected to make;
 - be supported to develop the competence and capability for which the member of staff has been employed;
 - have the opportunity to develop new competencies and capabilities of relevance to the individual's employment, and which enhance career prospects and lifelong learning both within the company and outside of it;
 - participate in the continual professional development process, in collaboration with the line manager, which gives opportunities for on-going support, an annual review of the individual's past development and identification of plans for the future;
 - be interviewed by the line manager on leaving the company to explore any lessons to be learned by the member of staff.

Continuing Professional Development

As an organisation specialising in training, Welcome Skills Limited seek to embody the value of on-going professional development and learning support within our own team.

All trainers and QA's will participate in an induction programme to familiarise them with the processes and policies of the organisation. The induction will be evaluated to ensure a cycle of continuous improvement. All staff will be provided with Awarding Organisation updates. Together with the Standardisation Meeting, this will contribute to a culture of CPD inherent in the organisations' structure.

Personal Development Plans will be created with staff annually which will be tied to organisational objectives and feed into their CPD for the year.

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At the end of the year an Appraisal / Performance Development Review will be conducted to evaluate performance against objectives. Learner feedback will feed into the review. We will work with staff that experience difficulties to set goals in an action plan to get back on track. Unqualified trainers and internal verifiers will be provided with additional support to complete their qualification.

Continual Professional Development is required by all employees in order to fulfil their role and to keep up to date with legislation and ever changing requirements in education and training.

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