



EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the commitment of Skills to Group to provide a curriculum offer which supports the development, in both young people and adults, of the skills that are necessary for a productive and competitive economy.

The core purpose of Skills to Group is to support people to develop skills in the broadest sense and to encourage talent, knowledge, resourcefulness and creativity.

We seek to deliver skills at all levels required, where possible, in order to support the development of an advanced competitive economy and make us a fairer society, offering equal opportunities for all.

We will focus on the employability and progression of learners and deliver the skills and qualifications which individuals, employers and the economy need.

SCOPE

This policy covers all of our delivery offer of Skills to Group, including apprenticeships, vocational programmes, work based learning, full cost recovery, and Skills for Life. It covers provision for 16-19 years further education, apprentices including 19+ and workplace learning.

The policy will be implemented within the guidance of key national and regional papers which include promoting apprenticeships with employers through the use of Find Apprenticeship Training (FAT) and other national branding which includes all the support on GOV.UK to support employers in finding their apprentice and engaging with apprenticeships services, Skills Training UK.

The principles and aims in this policy will inform strategic and business planning decisions in relation to deciding the direction of Skills to Group developments and will inform the following policies and procedures:

- a) The fee policy
- b) The employer engagement strategy and action plan
- c) The Strategic Plan and Strategic Objectives
- d) Business Planning Guidance
- e) Financial planning
- f) Skills to Group Management structures
- g) The annual review of the mission
- h) The Operational plan

OBJECTIVES

Skills to Group publishes its Strategic Plan and reviews annually, which articulates our offer and explains how it lines up with local/national priorities. The plan contains strategic objectives and employer engagement issues. Skills to Group will develop its staffing potential, allocate its resources, and design its infrastructures in order to continue to move towards a service which is driven by the needs of its learners and its employers.

Our employer facing strategy will drive forward local economic growth and social justice and equality of opportunity.

For Skills to Group this means:

PROGRAMME OFFER AND RANGE

- The provision of excellent learning opportunities for young people aged 16-19 within the travel-to-learn area. This will include partnership working with schools, other post 16 providers and other agencies to ensure within Plymouth and Devon a balanced and inclusive vocational offer at a range of levels which equips all our young people with the skills for employment, further or higher learning and wider social and community engagement. We will continue to offer a wide ranging apprenticeship offer and foundation learning which looks to address issues around worklessness and low aspiration.
- The provision of a responsive, employer facing 16-18 and 19 plus curriculum which helps to raise the skills of the nation, giving employers and individuals the skills they need to improve productivity, employability and social cohesion. This will include the provision of a level 2 or 3 entitlement in agreed sector areas, through work based learning or other funding streams; a programme of full-cost recovery programmes which meets local or regional needs.

IMPROVING OUR OFFER TO EMPLOYERS THROUGH:

- **Promotion of Apprenticeships and engaging with employers to support choice**
 - Skills to Group will ensure that all of our social media platforms/website are up to date and current at all times. Advertising our services through various channels which will include media/radio slots, local newspapers and industrial/commercial/household flyer drops of our services;
 - Skills to Group will hold employer information events as required such as Breakfast events, Myth busting events and Vocational Sector events to ensure employers will have the best information they can to support them with choice;
 - Making employers aware of the range of training options through appropriate information channels including Find and Apprentice (FAT);
 - Supporting employers wherever necessary to access/use digital platforms to enable them to use/choose which Standard/Framework they require this will include location/s of delivery proposed and agreed;
- **Development and support creating flexible co-created and bespoke programmes which will include provision for coaching and mentoring as required**
 - Providing employers with choice and flexibility to develop and train their apprentices through co-creations of programmes/training delivery which could include flexible and bespoke delivery such as day release verses block release, innovative joint delivery within employer premises and/or training site whilst adhering to the Standard or Framework requirements;
 - Providing employers with mentoring and coaching support, if required, especially if this is their first experience of employing an apprentice. This could be direct from Skills to Group

staff or by budding the employer with another employer that has vast experience of employing and delivering apprenticeships to enable them to make informed choices from an independent perspective;

- Project planning to ensure, for each company, an understanding of underlying business need and an adequate analysis of training needs; Ensuring that the delivery of any framework or standard will support their business need
- Providing briefings for delivery staff, employers and employees to ensure shared expectations, this will include methods of engagement are used, employer access to learner's Eportfolio to support on and off the job delivery and cohesion;
- Offering training packages which respect the needs of the business as a whole and impact positively on the business; Engaging employers in vocational development and embedding employability; developing flexible lifelong learning to meet both the employer and employee needs;
- Engaging employers to support the delivery of our offer, not only including learning, teaching and assessment but also learner's personal development, behaviour and welfare;
- Providing learner research opportunities and employer focussed work based projects, that will inform business practice and that promote knowledge transfer;

MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH CONTINUAL ENGAGEMENT

- Skills to Group will ensure all employers are versed in who their named initial point of contact is via the commitment statement but also who they need to engage with if there needs to be escalation of any concerns;
- Providing employers with schedule of regular reviews to monitor learner progress throughout the period of delivery, to ensure there is continual engagement, this can take the form of face-to face, telephone, email or other forms of communication;
- Providing detailed financial costings to support all training programmes; and clear instructions of where the training will be delivered and on which Skills to Group location;

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

The ultimate responsibility for managing employer relationships will be the Managing Director, but all employers will be given a detailed procedures for complaints in delivery and financial as part of their commitment statement and employer service level agreement

COMMUNICATION AND GENERAL ENQUIRES

Skills to Group promise to handle enquiries and general communications promptly and efficiently and reviewing standards of customer service and evaluation of how these are dealt with and to ensure both employer and apprentices are aware of the processes; regularly. All employers and apprentices will be given information on who to contact and complaints procedure.

If any enquiry is more complex than day to day subjects, we will acknowledge the enquiry immediately but aim that within two working days to have come back the enquirer with our response to that question. We will follow up to ensure that this matter is resolved and enquire if we can support further.

If dealing with a complaint we will acknowledge by email immediately that we are investigating the complaint and aim to return to the complainer within 3 working days maximum with findings of our investigation and how this moves forward, depending on the seriousness of the complaint will depend on who deals with this, at what level of management n any follow up correspondence and refer to our complaints policy to ensure we have followed practice.

PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY TRAINING THROUGH

- Ensuring a high level of current industrial skills when recruiting delivery staff;
- Ensuring standardisation of operational and delivery practices, including regular feedback to learners and employers relating to progress;
- Regular performance reviews and observations of the people delivering training solutions;
- Regular review of apprentice's achievement data;
- Regular review of the resources available for training;
- Skills to Group will source and provide guest speakers and masterclasses, where possible, and other enrichment activities to support teaching/learning/assessment and give the apprentice and employer a good experience

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT/CONTINUOUS MONITORING OF EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

- Using cyclical reviews, regular feedback from employers, analysing complaints data and frequently asked questions during learner reviews and contract review meetings will inform what needs to be done to improve our offer for discussion at Management and delivery team meetings to ensure our offer will be current and meet demands for employers and the needs of the environment in the future;
- Acting promptly to respond to feedback and/or complaints in order to improve services;
- Reviewing outcomes following delivery to identify unmet needs and inform further actions;
- Managing and maintaining a data base of employer contacts;
- Measuring employer satisfaction;
- Continuing to evolve and improve the training offer, offering teaching and learning strategies which motivate, stimulate and encourage the learners as well as meeting the employer's requirements;
- Regular review of the resources available for training;
- Evaluation of marketing/sales campaigns and their effectiveness.

EXTENDING AND DEVELOPING IDENTIFIED SPECIALIST AREAS OF SKILLS TO GROUP THROUGH:

- Clearly identifying those areas in which Skills to Group will specialise;
- Developing strategies for working with the identified sections in consultation with the Sector Skills Councils and local employers;
- Using input from appropriate stakeholders and employers to share good practice and understand each sector's shared business needs;
- Developing products and services and staffing to address industry expectations;

- Setting SMART targets and performance indicators which measure and monitor success and lead to an improving trend;

MAINTAINING THE STANDARDS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT ACCREDITATIONS OR KITE MARKS IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE STANDARDS:

- Maintaining a portfolio of evidence against agreed criteria;
- Maintain our Positive about Disabled accreditation
- Continue to be a member of Chartered Institute for Further Education (CIFE)
- Maintain Outstanding Grade in future Ofsted inspections
- Keeping up to date with government policy and advice; External Quality Assurance Agency, Sector Skills guidance; awarding bodies and qualification frameworks/Standards;
- Using labour market information to support the strategy, analyse the market and determine the need of key customer groups;
- Working in partnership, wherever possible, to increase the availability and accessibility of training opportunities;
- Adhering to Skills to Group's general and specific duties under the relevant equality legislation, with reference to all strands, including learners from deprived and disadvantaged backgrounds;

This includes:

- a) Analysis of data for pertaining to Employer Engagement by gender, ethnicity and disability, relating to participation, success and staffing;
- b) Using consultation and feedback to inform practice;

MONITORING AND REVIEWING OF POLICY

The policy will be reviewed by the HR Quality Manager who has responsibility for the review of this policy, and will lead on the development and delivery of the agreed strategy and will chair relevant committees and task groups as required, monitoring its effectiveness and measuring its impact.

Any further discussions will be with the Full Management Group, Marketing and Sales teams and through relevant Board of Directors meetings.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This policy is integral to Skills to Group's quality structure. Regular reports will be written Full Management Group and the Board of Directors monitoring progress towards various targets throughout the year.

Specific information relating to participants and success in Apprenticeships, work based learning and full cost recovery provision are included in the suite of reports on Skills to Group's management information systems and performance summarised in the regular Management and Board Executive reports. The policy links to the procedures listed below.

- Fee policy
- Enrolment and learner tracking processes
- Financial monitoring and regulations
- Teaching and Learning and Quality process
- Business and strategic planning

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- This policy will be overseen by the Managing Director, full management group and will be monitored by the Board or Directors.
- The Board of Directors will be responsible for developing and supporting the mission of Skills to Group in relation to employer engagement and overseeing progress towards target.
- The Management Group will take responsibility for ensuring that the principles outlined in this policy will be integrated within their strategic and operational decision making processes.
- The Vocational Team Leaders and relevant Service Areas will monitor their performance against the standards set out in this policy and related procedures and will set and meet agreed annual targets.
- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.