

# **Charlotte's Forest School**



## **Equality, Diversity – Equal Opportunities Policy Document**

Charlotte's Forest School advises all candidates where to find the current version of this policy via its website [www.charlotteswood.co.uk](http://www.charlotteswood.co.uk). Candidates may receive a paper version upon request.

## Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Charlotte's Forest School is committed to providing services that embrace diversity, promote equality of opportunity and produce assessments that are based on requirements only and do not discriminate against anyone.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to explicitly state how this commitment and current legislations are to be applied by Charlotte's Forest School to our training courses, qualifications and assessment practices.

### 2. This Policy Covers 3 Broad Areas:

- 2.1 **Equality** is where people are treated fairly and given an equal opportunity. It is not about treating everyone in the same way, but recognises that needs can be met in different ways. Equality focuses on those areas covered by the law, namely the key areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. Legislation seeks to prevent discrimination in all these areas. Charlotte's Forest School believes we all have a duty to promote equality and remove discrimination in race, gender and disability. We confirm we do this by analysing statistical data and candidate/stakeholder feedback.
- 2.2 **Diversity** is about recognising, valuing and managing individual differences to enable everyone to contribute in their own way feeling comfortable with and understanding various different needs.
- 2.3 **Equal opportunity** is about providing good practice guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for reasonable adjustments in activities and assessments or who require special considerations.
- 2.4 **Scope**  
This policy will be applied to all training courses and qualifications offered by Charlotte's Forest School

### 3. Equal Opportunities Statement

- 3.1 Charlotte's Forest School is committed to providing equal opportunity for everyone who is employed by Charlotte's Forest School or takes advantage of Charlotte's Forest School services, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, political persuasion or trades union activity. This commitment will be informed by current UK legislation and EU directive e.g. recognising restrictions on those working with young children and vulnerable adults. 1
- 3.2 It is morally wrong to discriminate directly or indirectly and hinder equality of opportunity. Thus it is our intention to ensure that no person is subject to unfair treatment in any way. 2

### 4. Application of Equal Opportunities Statement

- 4.1 Charlotte's Forest School will ensure equality for all learners by ensuring that:
  - a) Responsibility for the full implementation, evidence collection, maintenance of registers and annual review of this policy is taken by the manager of Charlotte's Forest School. All such evidence is to be made available to the Awarding Body upon request.

- b) All qualifications used by Charlotte's Forest School are developed by Awarding Bodies with robust equality systems.
  - c) All assessment instruments and processes will be free from any bias, and inclusive for all candidates.
  - d) All Charlotte's Forest School Trainers, Assessors and Candidates are made aware of Charlotte's Forest School's commitment to equality of opportunity.
  - e) Charlotte's Forest School implements this equal opportunities policy and all staff and students are aware of it.
  - f) As many candidates, and as diverse a range of candidates as possible have access to Charlotte's Forest School qualifications.
  - g) Charlotte's Forest School candidates have the opportunity to feedback to Charlotte's Forest School after every course. Charlotte's Forest School will archive this evidence on the ITC website.
  - h) Candidates can contact the ITC First Malpractice and Misconduct Committee or Appeals/Complaints Committee if matters relating to alleged discrimination are not resolved by Charlotte's Forest School directly.
  - i) Charlotte's Forest School, in conjunction with ITC First, will collect sufficient data to allow the monitoring and evaluation to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of race, disability and gender via candidate registration and achievement documents and course evaluations.
  - j) This policy and statement is reviewed by Charlotte's Forest School annually or more frequently if required.
- 4.2 All information and data for review and evaluation is archived. Including:
- a) Evidence of higher or lower participation by different groups by collecting candidate registration data from each course.
  - b) Evidence that different groups have different needs in relation to ITC qualifications by collecting candidate evaluation data from Charlotte's Forest School.
  - c) Authentic sample of evaluation data gathered by ITC by informing candidates that ITC will request additional email completion from all candidates.
- 4.3 Where a barrier to learning has been identified (through review process, EQA reports or complaints and appeals procedures being invoked, Charlotte's Forest School (in conjunction with ITC) will investigate and take appropriate action (withdraw assessment material - amend/update/provide training, as necessary) and then continue to monitor the evidence.

## **5. Action Plan**

- 5.1 An Equal Opportunities review will be conducted annually by Charlotte's Forest School and an Action Plan developed when issues are identified.

## **6. Diversity Statement**

- 6.1 Diversity is about valuing and respecting the differences between learners, regardless of ability and/or circumstances or any other individual characteristic they may have.
- 6.2 Charlotte's Forest School believes differences should be acknowledged, celebrated and embraced to help ensure that all learners feel included in the learning process and the learning environment is suitable for all.
- 6.3 Charlotte's Forest School will consider the following list whilst preparing and undertaking its training activities:
- a) Environment and equipment e.g. adjustable height workstations, accessibility, CPR manikins reflecting age and/or ethnic origin of potential learners.
  - b) Programme resources E.g. Handouts and presentations to be capable of adaptation to a number of formats, consider other languages, language level and jargon, illustrations to reflect diversity of potential learners.

- c) Staff development E.g. Ensuring all are well informed of current policies and procedures in good time for the knowledge to be meaningful.
- d) Information E.g. This should be accessible to all; email, notice-board or leaflet.
- e) Liaising with others E.g. Language interpreters may be required or staff who can use sign language.
- f) Information may need to be shared between businesses and learners have to agree to their disclosure to be shared with legitimate agencies since the DDA Act describes the duty to comply with learners requests for confidentiality.
- g) Feedback and evaluations should be obtained from all learners to ensure that current practices are responsive to their needs and any barriers to learning identified and mitigated.

## **7. Assessment Practice Statement**

7.1 Charlotte's Forest School will ensure that assessment practice will be based on award requirements only and will not discriminate against anyone.

### **7.2 Candidates with Individual Assessment Requirements**

- a) Charlotte's Forest School is committed to providing equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination. Requests for reasonable assessment adjustments, by individuals with special needs, can be applied for using ITC document C4. Charlotte's Forest School will determine if the request is acceptable or may refer a request to ITC who will assist in the decision making process.
- b) Charlotte's Forest School will ensure that the reasonable adjustments arrangements will be valid and reliable, designed to reflect the candidates' competence to meet the assessment outcomes of the qualification and for the employment for which the qualification is designed. Charlotte's Forest School ensures this by issuing this policy guidance, scrutinising all C4 [form] requests and working with ITC when necessary.
- c) Charlotte's Forest School will review all C4 [form] requests and forward them to ITC along with candidate registration and evaluation documents.
- d) There will be two timescales for adjustments requests. Where the candidate requests reasonable adjustment more than 5 working days before the training and assessment and where reasonable adjustment decisions have to be made shortly before (or even during) the initial stages of the training.

### **7.3 Guidance**

- a) Charlotte's Forest School can request that ITC adjust the to allow the candidate an opportunity to reach the standard. However we will also ensure that the reasonable adjustment does not give the candidate an unfair advantage.
- b) Individual adjustments may be required for a number of reasons, including:
  - I. Temporary or permanent illness or injury
  - II. Sensory impairment
  - III. Reading &/or writing difficulties
  - IV. English as a second language
  - V. Recent bereavement
  - VI. Other extenuating circumstances
- c) Charlotte's Forest School will inform ITC First where reasonable adjustment requests are made. Form C4 will be downloaded from the ITC website and/or Charlotte's Forest School, completed and forwarded to ITC at least 5 working days prior to the assessment. Decisions will be made by ITC first and communicated to Charlotte's Forest School. Charlotte's Forest School may appeal against any decision made by ITC.
- d) If candidates are unable to attend scheduled assessments for justifiable extenuating circumstances, then an alternative date for assessment may be made for the candidate. The assessment process can thus be deferred to a time when the candidate has recovered from their indisposition, temporary illness or injury. All such events will be recorded on the C4 form and forwarded to ITC with all assessment evidence and copies of the event will be made available to the ITC External Quality Assurer.
- e) For some ITC First qualifications e.g. First aid, where the candidates are assessed in real time scenarios, as the course progresses this assessment opportunity normally requires candidates

to attend part of another training course for the qualification. Due to the 'real-life' practical nature of first aid qualifications, regardless of the extenuating circumstances, the candidate must demonstrate competency up to the minimum standard to be awarded the qualification.

- f) Charlotte's Forest School will monitor equality of access to assessment by requesting that all candidates complete an assessment evaluation section on the end of course evaluation form (03). Charlotte's Forest School will archive this information on the ITC website. This gives the candidate direct feedback to the awarding body.

**Note:** Document Form C4 relates to adjustment requests known to Charlotte's Forest School **before** the training course commences.

#### 7.4 **Minor and routine occurrences**

- a) Routine (listed in this guidance) reasonable adjustment to assessment decisions will be made by Charlotte's Forest School, and all such decisions will be recorded on document C4 and a copy (completed C4) forwarded to ITC with all assessment evidence.
- b) For routine minor illness, injury situations or similar close to the time of assessment Charlotte's Forest School can, at its discretion, choose to adjust the time of the assessment (for instance by asking the candidate to attend a session from another course delivered by Charlotte's Forest School and record such decisions in the 'Specific Reasonable Adjustment to be made' box on C4 document and sign it.
- c) This form (C4) will then be sent to ITC with all assessment evidence and a copy kept by Charlotte's Forest School and made available for the External Quality Assurance visit.

### 8. **Temporary Indisposition**

#### 8.1 Temporary indisposition presentation

- a) Candidates regularly present themselves with a temporary problem that might impede their performance during a course e.g. recovering from surgery, lower back pain, damaged joint, muscle pain, digestive system upsets, migraine, occasional seizure, diabetic episode or faint.
- b) Charlotte's Forest School will make a minor reasonable adjustment to normal activity in order to provide every opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate their capability. Some recent examples from ITC first aid qualifications are illustrated below:
  - I. A candidate presents with lower back pain, they are unable to bend down to a simulated casualty comfortably. The Trainer will negotiate with the candidate and arrange a solid table to be present so that the candidate can perform, and be assessed performing, a casualty assessment protocol with a simulated casualty lying a hip height. Similarly a CPR manikin can be placed upon the table. As the course develops and the candidate performs in a variety of situations appropriate terrain and simulated first aid scenarios can be arranged. E.g. the casualty could be placed upon a safe rocky ledge or the candidate could stand in a safe ditch.
  - II. A candidate presents with a recently broken arm still in a plaster cast. It may be inappropriate to perform simulated CPR upon a manikin, the candidate can be assessed by performing the appropriate actions in the air space close to the manikin without making potentially damaging contact with the manikin.
- c) These minor reasonable adjustments to normal procedure are typically left to the judgement of the Trainer (Internal Assessor) at the time, as there are a large number of potential occurrences and guidance cannot be given for every potential occurrence. Form C4 must be used as described above.
- d) If a copy of form C4 is **not** available, a record is made of the decision and a comment made on the reverse side of the Course Details Form (06). Charlotte's Forest School will keep a copy and forward a copy to ITC.
- e) If the situation is beyond the experience of the Trainer or Charlotte's Forest School and the situation necessitates immediate advice then Charlotte's Forest School has the option of phoning the ITC First Office

#### 8.2 **Evidence of indisposition**

All supporting evidence e.g. original Doctor note will be archived by Charlotte's Forest School unless specifically asked for by ITC.

## 9. Appeals against reasonable adjustments to be made

- a) If there is disagreement with the ITC (Access to Training & Assessment request) decision then Charlotte's Forest School will contact the ITC Office for informal dialogue.
- b) For appeals against ITC reasonable adjustment decisions Charlotte's Forest School will refer to the ITC Appeals Policy (P5).

## 10. Potential impact of an ITC qualification training & assessment upon disabled people

10.1 Guidance documents investigated include those on the Equality & Human Rights Commission website: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

10.2 The scope of disability is examined and advice on how discrimination can be avoided taken from:

- a) The Disability and Discrimination Act 1995.
- b) Code of practice Post-16 and Code of Practice (revised) for Providers of Post-16 education and related services produced by the Disability Rights Commission, published 2007.

### 10.3 Impact conclusions

Key points:

- a) The onus is on Charlotte's Forest School tutors and ITC to demonstrate that the reason for not awarding a qualification was a non-discriminatory one.
- b) There is no duty to make any adjustment to a provision, criterion or practice of any kind that is a competence standard. However the duty does not apply to the process of demonstrating that a person meets the competence standard. The competence standard and method of assessment are separate and reasonable, fair adjustment has to be made.
- c) Charlotte's Forest School has a duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- d) The Disability Discrimination Act does not override Health & Safety legislation.

## 11. Special Considerations

11.1 If the course or candidate assessment is disrupted for unforeseen reasons beyond Trainer or candidate control then special considerations can be considered, to ensure that candidates are treated fairly in accordance with current guidelines from ITC and the regulatory authorities. For candidates on Charlotte's Forest School courses and courses where additional special consideration is required then they will be subject to this guidance.

### 11.2 Guidance

- a) Special considerations are any short term unforeseen events that happen during the assessment of the course e.g. fire alarm, the key holder being late, unforeseen noisy intrusive building work close by, sudden sickness/illness and the like.
- b) Typically a one off short-term solution is found such as changing rooms or buildings, extending the working session by a short time or adding additional time to the training programme by negotiation.
- c) If candidates are unable to attend scheduled assessments for these or similar reasons, then an alternative date for assessment may be made for the candidates, normally within 6 weeks of the original date. The assessment process can thus be deferred to a time when the individual candidate has recovered from their indisposition, temporary illness or injury or the environment has again become conducive to training and assessment for the whole group.
- d) All such events need to be recorded (Form C7) and made available to the ITC External Verifier. This document is normally completed **during** or **immediately** as is practicable **after** a training & assessment course.
- e) With sudden unforeseen events away from the main Charlotte's Forest School Centre address the onus is on the individual Trainer to make a discretionary judgement decision that may have to be made quickly. A Trainer working for Charlotte's Forest School should contact Charlotte's Forest School Director immediately for advice and consultation. If not available for any reason



then the ITC First office is in operation during normal office hours where ITC staff are available for advice and consultation by Charlotte's Forest School Trainers.

### 11.3 Decision Parameters

- a) The following guidelines outline the parameters within which to make various decisions. It is recognised that by the nature of events that Form C7 completion will in all probability be a retrospective occurrence.
  - I. Danger to the candidates  
E.g. Fire alarm, noxious fumes then the trainer will immediately remove the group from danger and if the event is not temporary and easily dealt with by returning to the building upon the all clear, or changing rooms then the session may well be cancelled and the Charlotte's Forest School Director informed immediately by telephone. All course candidates will be given opportunity for training and assessment as soon as reasonably practicable afterwards.
  - II. Intrusive events or noise  
The course venue may be moved. Additional time may be allocated. Training and assessment opportunities may be presented to the group on alternative dates.
  - III. Temporary indisposition of individuals  
Guidance is produced for access to training and assessment earlier in this policy. Form C4 is required. Minor adjustment to normal procedure is decided upon and recorded on the reverse side of the Course Details Form 06. If there is a need for additional time resources for that individual e.g. the opportunity for assessment at a later time or place then Form C7 needs to be completed.
- b) These special considerations treat candidates fairly and give them every reasonable opportunity to fulfil the training and assessment requirements of the qualification.
- c) Whatever decision is made regarding moving or deferring training and assessment, the minimum training and assessment requirements must be met.
- d) If in doubt as to any decision Charlotte's Forest School will contact the ITC First Office immediately.

## 12. Summary of Procedures

### 12.1 Candidate Procedures

- a) For any matter arising from or relating to this policy, candidates should:
  - I. Inform the Trainer delivering the course. Most matters can be resolved at this level. Minor concerns can be addressed by making a comment upon the course evaluation form (03).
  - II. Inform Charlotte's Forest School in writing at their earliest opportunity if the candidate cannot easily resolve the situation.
  - III. Inform ITC directly if Charlotte's Forest School cannot resolve the matter to the candidate's satisfactory.

## 13. Data collection

### 13.1 Data

- a) As a provider of recognised and approved regulatory training activities Charlotte's Forest School has to have procedures in place to collect sufficient data to allow the monitoring and evaluation of compliance with the requirements of equalities legislation and to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of race, disability and gender.
- b) Candidate Registration (02) and Evaluation (03) documents are continually developed to enhance both learner consultation and data collection.
- c) It is Charlotte's Forest School and ITC First policy that all information and data be shared with the regulatory authorities upon request.

### 13.2 Candidate Registration Form (02)

- a) Each candidate is asked to complete a Registration Form giving details of:
  - I. Gender - male or female (tick box)
  - II. Special needs or reasonable adjustments requested (text box)

III. Ethnicity - ethnic group definitions based upon 2011 census question (tick box)

**13.2 Candidate Evaluation Form (03)**

- a) Each candidate is asked to complete an end of course evaluation form. Answers are entered to the ITC website which allows Charlotte's Forest School training courses to be analysed in relation to the information asked for.
- b) Candidates have an opportunity to add an 'amplified comment' to possible areas of concern, each comment received is scrutinised by the Charlotte's Forest School Director. Any area for concern is investigated. Specific questions ask for a candidate response relating to:
  - I. The assessment component of the qualification
  - II. The teaching component of the qualification
  - III. The qualification courses materials
  - IV. Special adjustment requirement

**13.3 Access to Training & Assessment Form (C4)**

Each completed form will be forwarded to ITC.

**13.4 Special Considerations Form (C7)**

Each completed form will be forwarded to ITC.

**13.5 Awarding Body Annual Assessment by Providers and Centres Feedback Form (F2)**

Each completed form will be forwarded annually by Charlotte's Forest School to ITC.

**14. The Equality Act**

14.1 You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

**14.2 What 'substantial' and 'long-term' mean**

- a) 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial - eg it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- b) 'long-term' means 12 months or more - eg a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection