

B-Skill Limited Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy 2025-2026



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B-Skill Ltd embraces the belief that all human beings are equal and different and its culture of promoting equality and valuing diversity is firmly rooted in that conviction.

B-Skill Ltd takes its responsibilities seriously in promoting increased awareness of its beliefs, values and accompanying behaviours amongst its staff, associates, apprentices, learners on other B-Skill programmes, partners and organisations and individuals with whom it comes into contact by ensuring fair, respectful and un-biased treatment of all, encompassing their personal skills, individual needs, limitations, beliefs, culture and values.

B-Skill Ltd aims to promote access to learning and vocational achievement to all groups of people in modern society, wherever it is most appropriate to deliver.

B-Skill Ltd values the unique skills, experience and perspectives of every individual, finding ways to bring out the best in every employee, apprentice and learner on other B-Skill programmes and recognises the benefits these differences bring.

For apprentices, learners on other B-Skill programmes, employers, partners and employees alike, B-Skill Ltd promotes a culture and provides a service of equality and fairness in recruitment, assessment of capabilities and skills, assessment and feedback on performance and matters of discipline and conduct.

B-Skill Ltd also respects the privacy of individuals and does not believe that any one person should be treated as a token representative of a group of people or their beliefs and values.

B-Skill Ltd is committed to providing training and development to all staff, apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes, on an ongoing basis.

Paul Wileman
CEO
For and on behalf of B-Skill Limited

Protected Characteristics:

Age (Equality Act 2010)

B-Skill Ltd actively recognises the business benefits of an age-diverse workforce, welcoming the skills and experience of people of all ages. All members of staff and apprentices are treated fairly in their cycle of employment from recruitment, selection, promotion, training and development, redundancy and retirement.

Sex (Equality Act 2010)

B-Skill Ltd actively promotes a culture of equality and fairness in recruitment, selection, promotion, training and development, recruitment and retirement regardless of the sex or sexual orientation of the member of staff or apprentice.

Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010)

B-Skill Ltd promotes fair treatment of heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual employees and apprentices whilst in employment and ensures that they are not subject to post-termination harassment.

Race (Equality Act 2010)

B-Skill Ltd is committed to ensuring that no individual or group to whom it offers or provides a service or employment should be subject to discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin. B-Skill Ltd is working to ensure that all racial and ethnic groups within its business location are exposed to opportunities for employment, learning and development and achievement of qualifications.

Disability (Equality Act 2010)

B-Skill Ltd is committed to offering equal employment opportunities to job applicants with physical limitations and supporting them to work alongside more fully able team members. B-Skill Ltd offers support, guidance and access to assessment towards the provision of specialist aids and equipment.

Staff are encouraged to be aware of the needs of physically limited or disabled colleagues, apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes, to understand their special needs and arrangements for training events, meetings, audio and visual materials and physical environment.

Gender Re-Assignment (Equality Act 2010)

Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment was made unlawful as a result of the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999. The provisions are now part of the Equality Act.

B-Skill is committed to protecting individuals who have undergone or are about to undergo gender reassignment. Individuals do not need to be under medical supervision to be protected by the law.

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Maternity and Paternity (Equality Act 2010)

Maternity and Parental leave rights are actively maintained and operated within the organisation ensuring that the life/work balance is maintained.

Religion and Belief (Equality Act 2010)

B-Skill Ltd is actively working to ensure that no employees or learners are discriminated directly upon. That is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their religion or belief. B-Skill is also committed to ensure that employees or apprentices are not discriminated indirectly upon, meaning to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular religion or belief without a good reason.

Equal Pay (Equality Act 2010)

B-Skill Ltd is actively working to ensure that all employees and apprentices are paid fairly and according to formalised pay scales encompassing qualifications and experience, seniority, range of duties and performance.

Marriage/Civil Partnership (Equality Act 2010)

B-Skill aims to ensure that all employees and apprentices who are in a marriage or civil partnership are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. Civil partnership is recognised and reflected in B-Skill policies in accordance with the law.

B-Skill is also committed to:

Rehabilitation of Offenders (The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974)

B-Skill Ltd acknowledges two key responsibilities in this area:

- ❖ To those people who may have 'spent' criminal convictions
- ❖ To people who may be considered to be members of 'vulnerable' groups

There will be no discrimination in the recruitment of personnel who may have spent criminal convictions, however B-Skill Ltd will consider the safety of vulnerable groups who receives its services and will seek to protect young people under the age of 18, the elderly and mentally impaired, certain professions such as the care industry, self-regulatory organisations including finance services and also Government bodies. B-Skill will work in line with the B-Skill Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and the B-Skill Prevent and Safeguarding Policy, procedures and processes.

Members of staff are encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities helpful in providing bespoke training opportunities. By liaising with external bodies and government agencies B-Skill is formulating a strategy to encourage participation from ethnic and racial minority group members.

British Values

B-Skill Ltd takes responsibility for upholding the acceptance of fundamental British Values very seriously and will play an active role in promoting these values. These values are embedded into the ethos of B-Skill and we expect all staff, whatever their role, to exemplify these values.

In actively promoting these values, all learners and staff are encouraged and supported to develop their knowledge, understanding and practice of these principles.

The British values are:

Democracy

- Your opinion counts

Democratic processes for staff and learners ensure that decisions and plans which are made are done so with consideration of a collective voice which is representative of B-Skill staff and learners. Learners are encouraged to share their views on how policies may affect them by completing learner surveys and attending focus groups. Staff are encouraged to contribute their views by completing staff surveys, contributing to team meetings and one to one meeting's.

The rule of law

- No one is above the law
- Laws protect everyone
- Innocent until proved guilty

To ensure the safety and protection of both staff and learners B-Skill is governed by their own policies and procedures. Our rules and expectations are clear, fair, regularly promoted and reviewed. Codes of conduct, Health & Safety guidance, disciplinary and grievance procedures and celebrations of success all reflect how staff and learners support one another by adhering to these rules.

Individual liberty

- Freedom of speech

B-Skill learners and staff are encouraged to share their views freely, in a respectful manner and in a safe environment where their thoughts and ideas will be listened to. This is captured through staff and learner surveys, team meetings, meetings with senior managers and our Compliments and Complaints policy.

Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

- All backgrounds and cultures
- All ages
- All genders and sexualities
- All religions and beliefs

Respect is one of the core values at B-Skill. B-Skill staff and learners demonstrate respect for one another in all that they do by working together to celebrate and positively promote different opinions, beliefs and faiths. Staff and learners are encouraged to challenge prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour. Staff and learners are encouraged to develop their knowledge and awareness of a range of social and economic issues which affect our local communities and in doing so are able to celebrate equality and diversity and show respect towards others.

B-Skill seeks to create an environment that enables learners to become rounded members of society who treat others with respect and tolerance.

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Should a member of staff, apprentice or learner on another B-Skill programme, need to disclose any of the following:

- ❖ A crime
- ❖ A failure to comply with legal obligations
- ❖ A miscarriage of justice
- ❖ A health and safety threat
- ❖ Damage to the environment
- ❖ Deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above five matters

B-Skill Ltd will take no adverse action. B-Skill will ensure that the employee, apprentice or learner on another B-Skill programme, feels it safe to make the disclosure and that they will suffer no detrimental treatment by doing so or that any evidence will be destroyed.

B-Skill has a Public Interest Disclosure Procedure in place to enable and encourage individuals to raise matters of concern that are in the public interest (often referred to as whistleblowing), such as: malpractice, impropriety or wrongdoing, at a high level within the organisation, without fear of reprisal, so that they may be investigated and where appropriate acted upon. B-Skill actively supports the Government's Prevent agenda to counter radicalisation and extremism therefore individuals are encouraged to raise genuine concerns where they may identify any member of staff, apprentice, or a learner on another B-Skill programme, who may be at risk of being drawn into acts that support terrorism, without fear of reprisal.

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Training & Development

All B-Skill employees are required to undertake regular Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.

New staff are required to undertake Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training as part of their induction programme which will make them aware of the policy expectations.

B-Skill provides all staff with mandatory training in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). This is an online training programme which provides employees with the knowledge and skills required to meet B-Skill's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and covers the law, individual responsibilities and how it applies to them and their role.

B-Skill will provide further specialist Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training in line with the roles and responsibilities of staff.

Recruitment - Employees

It is the Company's policy to recruit people with the necessary skills, experience and qualifications to deliver organisational objectives and who have the ability to make a positive contribution to the values and aims of the organisation.

B-Skill is committed to safeguarding and promoting welfare of children, young people and adults in all its training activities. B-Skill recognises that in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share our commitment.

The best person for each vacancy will be recruited, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion & belief, sex and sexual orientation in line with the Equality Act 2010. Candidate information captured through equal opportunities monitoring will not be shared with the recruitment team and will only be used for monitoring purposes by the Human Resources team.

Internal applicants are encouraged to apply for promotion opportunities within the organisation.

Vacancies may only be filled after a Recruitment Request Form is completed and a job description is attached and submitted to the HR Manager for discussion and approval by the Board.

Job descriptions will contain, without discrimination, the clear requirements based on the needs of the role and will, as standard, contain the employees' responsibilities relating to equality, diversity & inclusion and Safeguarding and Prevent Duty.

Once the recruitment method has been agreed, either by utilising an agency, advertising on websites/newspapers/job boards/circulars or any other appropriate, this will be arranged by HR.

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Copies of all advertisements will be advertised internally and displayed on the Company SharePoint system, informing existing staff that they are welcome to apply.

Advertisements should be clear and state briefly:

The requirements of the job
The necessary and desirable criteria required of the job applicants
What B-Skill does, its activities and working practices
The job location
Reward package
Length of the contract and whether permanent or short term
The procedure for applying for the post

All advertisements will contain our commitment statement in respect of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and will include information related to the Committed to Equality Standard.

All applications should be treated confidentially and circulated only to those individuals involved in the recruitment process.

Those staff involved in the recruitment process must act in accordance with the Company's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Equal Opportunities Policies.

Short listing should be carried out to match the applicants as closely as possible to the job and person specification and a short list of candidates for interview will be agreed.

Interviews should be undertaken with no less than 2 members of staff at all times, including being trained in Safer Recruitment, and it should involve the direct line manager/supervisor and HR. It is B-Skill policy that a member of the HR team must be involved in the recruitment process at all times.

The invitation to interview will tell candidates that they should advise the organisation in advance of any particular arrangements which need to be made to accommodate them on arrival or during the interview, for example, ramp access or lighting levels.

Prior to the interview, consideration will be given to see whether any adjustments need to be made to accommodate an interviewee who has indicated a disability.

Where appropriate, skill tests will form part of the interview. If the Company requires psychometric tests to be carried out, these will be done by a fully qualified validated and trained person. Candidates will receive their own feedback from the psychometric tests from that trained person irrespective of whether their application is successful or not.

When a suitable candidate has been identified, an offer of employment can be made subject to;

- references being received which are satisfactory to the Company. The company

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will not approach a current employer unless the candidate has given express permission

- sight of qualification documents (appropriate to the job)
- sight of a document confirming the individual's right to work in the UK (see appendix)
- a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check where the post requires the staff member having "regulated activity" with young people or vulnerable adults or requires them to visit other places of work where they may come into contact with young people or vulnerable adults.
- each letter offering employment will be accompanied by Terms and Conditions of Employment in the form of a Statement of Employment Particulars relating to that position and a form for the applicant to sign denoting acceptance of the job on those conditions. A deadline for receiving a response from the candidate will be included in the offer of employment

In the case of internal promotions, the employee who is to be promoted must be made aware of the conditions attached to the promotion, for example changes to salary or any additional benefits, targets to be met, as well as what will happen if they should be unsuccessful in their new role.

All appointments will be made, subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period. New employees progress will be monitored closely by their manager/team leader during that period.

For new employees and internal promotions/changes in job role, there will be a period of probation and this may be extended if there is some doubt whether the employee is suitable for the role. A recommendation as to whether the employment should be confirmed, extended, or terminated will be discussed at the probation interview.

At initial recruitment stage, all candidates will be asked if they need permission to work in the UK and will be requested to provide the required documentation as proof that they have permission to work in the UK.

Recruitment – Learners

It is company policy to ensure that we promote our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in respect of recruitment of all apprenticeships and learners for other B-Skill programmes. All advertisements should encourage applicants from under-represented groups.

Dignity at Work – Freedom from Harassment and Bullying

B-Skill Ltd believes that everyone has a basic Human Right to be treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

What is Bullying and Harassment?

A list of examples and definitions of what may be considered bullying and harassment are listed below for guidance and practical purposes. Anyone who claims bullying or harassment at work will define their own meanings and that the behaviour is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes them distress. B-Skill will immediately investigate any claims of unfair treatment reported by staff members, associates, apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes.

Recognising Bullying and Harassment

Bullying may be characterised by offensive, intimidating, malicious or offensive behaviour, or abuse or misuse of power through means intended to humiliate, undermine, degrade or injure the recipient.

Harassment in general terms is unwanted conduct, affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace in relation to any personal characteristics of the individual, a persistent or isolated incident.

The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning or unacceptable to the recipient.

Behaviour that is considered bullying may be seen as firm management by another.

B-Skill Ltd condemns the following behaviours as unacceptable:

- ❖ Spreading malicious rumours or insulting a staff member/associate/apprentice/learner on another B-Skill programme
- ❖ Ridiculing or demeaning someone, picking on them or setting them up to fail
- ❖ Exclusion or victimisation
- ❖ Unfair treatment
- ❖ Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- ❖ Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials
- ❖ Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- ❖ Preventing individuals progressing by blocking promotion or training opportunities

Bullying and harassment may not necessarily be face to face, they may be by written communications, electronic mail (so called flame-mail), phone and automatic supervision methods such as recording of telephone conversations if this does not apply to all team members.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying involves the use of electronic communication devices to bully people. These include mobile phones, tablets, iPods, laptops and PCs. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp are also used by cyberbullies to put out their communications. Children using social media unsupervised may be at risk. Vulnerable adults may also be at risk if they are using social media, as they may be more emotionally and mentally susceptible to the abuse.

What is on-line Grooming?

Grooming is a word to describe people befriending children and vulnerable adults to take advantage of them for sexual preferences. Grooming is also used by extremist groups to radicalize individuals in to supporting and potentially committing terrorist acts.

On-line Grooming is the same, only people are using social media platforms and networks to form relationships with children or vulnerable adults pretending to be their friend.

Reporting Bullying and Harassment

Any incident of bullying or harassment reported by a B-Skill Ltd member of staff, associate, apprentice or any learner on a B-Skill programme, will be treated respectfully, with empathy and respect and investigative action will be taken. B-Skill Ltd will take all measures possible to ensure the safety of the victim and ensure strictest confidentiality. No B-Skill Ltd employee, associate, apprentice or learner on another B-Skill programme, need fear retribution if they make a report of unwanted, unwelcome or unfair treatment including on-line by social media for example via Facebook, WhatsApp or any other social media platform. Witnesses will also be treated fairly and with equal concern, consideration and support.

Anyone wishing to report an incident of bullying or harassment can do so to their line manager, the HR Manager, The Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead or a member of the B-Skill safeguarding team. (please see the B-Skill Safeguarding & Prevent Team Contact List for contact details)

Action on reported Harassment Incidents

B-Skill Ltd is committed to ensuring that staff, associates, apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes can work in a fair, safe, healthy and respectful environment and will consider any incidence of bullying and harassment with empathy and consideration.

On receiving an official complaint:

- ❖ Action on receiving a report of harassment or bullying will be taken at the soonest opportunity.
- ❖ An investigation into allegations will start immediately and at the latest within 5 days
- ❖ The complainant will receive written acknowledgement of the report
- ❖ The responding person will be notified in writing of the complaint against them and will be invited to an investigative meeting
- ❖ They will be informed that the complaint may result in disciplinary action
- ❖ The respondent may be accompanied at all times, if so requested

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- ❖ The meeting will be chaired by the most appropriate person, usually the Operational Delivery Manager for that area of responsibility or a suitable member of the senior management team
- ❖ Records of investigations, disciplinary actions taken will be recorded on personnel files for up to 6 months

On receiving an unofficial complaint:

An unofficial complaint may take the form of comments to colleagues, fellow apprentices or learners on other B-Skill programmes, managers or specialists; which the victim does not wish to make official.

In this case, the HR Manager or an appropriate member of the management team will discuss with the complainant the actions to be taken which may result in a series of informal 3-way meetings between complainant, respondent and a facilitator. The purpose of the meetings will be to resolve the harassment or bullying issues.

People being bullied or harassed may appear to overreact to something that seems relatively trivial which may be the “last straw” following a series of incidents. There is often a feeling of retribution if they do make a complaint and colleagues may be reluctant to come forward as witnesses, as they may fear the consequences themselves. They may also be so relieved not to be the subject of bullying that they collude with the bully to avoid attention.

Reducing the threat of Bullying and Harassment

B-Skill Ltd has an appointed E&D Review Group made up of senior managers and specialists including the HR Manager who liaise with outside bodies including the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as appropriate, to maintain a high level of awareness, and ensure that apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes receive fair representation and treatment and reflect modern society.

Fair Treatment at Work - Our Commitment to Apprentices and Learners on other B-Skill Programmes

We want all our apprentices, learners on other B-Skill programmes, employees and associates to feel good about going to work or attending one of our learning centres and that they are treated respectfully, equally and fairly by fellow apprentices, learners, colleagues, team members and managers. It is also crucial that meetings with learning & development coaches/tutors are conducted fairly and constructively and that each meeting has a positive outcome.

B-Skill Ltd is committed to a programme of monitoring and evaluating to ensure all aspects of the work we undertake with apprentices at their place of work and with other learners on B-Skill programmes, are of value to both apprentice/learner and employer, and give equal and fair opportunity for the apprentice/learner to develop and progress in their chosen apprenticeship programme framework/qualification.

How we will do this - Initial Assessment

Providing apprentices, learners on other B-Skill programmes and employers with the highest standards of support and guidance we can give by:

- ❖ Treating everyone individually and considering their personal circumstances and needs, recognising the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the people with whom they work

Before starting an apprenticeship or learning programme, each new apprentice/learner will be given guidance on choosing the most appropriate qualification and level of study. At this meeting apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes, will also find out about English, Maths, ICT and functional skills, and any other relevant qualifications which when combined with the Vocational qualification, form the individual learning framework. To ensure that everyone can complete their programme of learning, information is gathered on the apprentice's/learner's literacy and numerical abilities to establish any additional support, which may be required.

We are also aware that home and personal circumstances can have a significant influence upon progress and all relevant factors which the apprentice/learner wishes to highlight are considered in terms of impact on the apprentice's/learner's progress and any special individual support which can be offered.

At B-Skill Ltd we understand the levels of commitment and enthusiasm needed by apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes when embarking on vocational/personal development and also involve managers, specialists and other team members where possible, to act as work place mentors who can offer guidance and support to apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes.

The emphasis is on openness, honesty and co-operation to support the apprentice and learners on other B-Skill programmes in their successful completion and achievement.

Learning Development Coach/Tutor Support

All B-Skill Ltd learning & development coaches/tutors are suitably experienced and qualified to deliver the required programmes. Learning & development coaches/tutors who work in our different vocational programmes will be experienced in their own right, will have formal qualifications and/or are working towards an occupationally specific trainer/tutor/teaching qualification. This means that all apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes will always receive honest and fair assessment and feedback along with high quality teaching and learning and appropriate and fair treatment.

The role of the learning & development coaches/tutor is to help apprentices/learners understand the requirements of their chosen learning programme and how these can be met by providing personal statements and a variety of evidence. Meetings between trainer/tutor and apprentice or learners on other B-Skill programmes are held regularly, usually every four weeks, at an appropriate time and place.

Every step of the process is carefully planned with the apprentice and with the learner on another B-Skill programme; in consultation with the employer, highlighting evidence which is to be gathered and any additional support or information which the apprentice/learner may need in order to achieve success. Suitable and realistic time scales for achievement are set and regularly reviewed to ensure that apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes are clear about their progress and can personally measure their achievements.

Learning and Development Opportunities

All apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes have access to and are informed of relevant training events which they may attend to build their underpinning knowledge. Development events are offered by B-Skill Ltd, or apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes are sign-posted to colleges where suitable or appropriate for the apprentice/learner, in their locality or place of work. All apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes will have an E-Portfolio/Learning File which also contains support material and is used by the trainer/tutor and candidate in 1:1 learning sessions or as a personal resource.

Additional Learning Needs

B-Skill Ltd will provide additional support to apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes whose literacy and numeracy skills may make it difficult for them to maintain progress. Individual diagnostic assessments will be made to ensure that relevant and meaningful support is received. Once the learner has completed a robust learner assessment and a need is identified, a support plan will be put in place which will include a range of coping strategies and interventions to support that individual.

Learning and Development Materials

B-Skill Ltd is aware of the variety of learning styles, locations, intelligences and cultures which influence their presentation of the 'Learner Induction Pack'.

A variety formats will be made available as needed. Apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes are advised of other support materials available in the public domain and for those who do not have exclusive access to a computer, advice is given on public facilities available, such as libraries and internet cafes, as appropriate to the individual's learning.

Candidates Requiring Special Support

B-Skill Ltd is equipped to offer group and individual support to people who require special coaching and guidance to update numeracy and literacy skills. However, we also acknowledge that there are diverse needs amongst apprentices and learners on other B-Skill programmes and will adapt services to meet the needs of candidates, for example, by providing readers or audio material for visually impaired or blind candidates.

Marketing

B-Skill Ltd is aware of the racial and ethnic diversity within which it works. We are striving to make access to our services more readily available to people for whom English is a



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second language, by improving the quality of marketing materials in a number of languages which will invite interest from all sectors of the community.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted on Company policy and procedures from time to time.

Monitoring

B-Skill is committed to equality monitoring of apprentice/learner admissions, progression and achievement. Comparisons are currently made by ethnicity, age, gender, under-represented groups and disability. The results of such monitoring will be reviewed; any action will be based on the result of this monitoring.

Review of Policy

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if required due to changes in legislation or best practice.

If you require this policy in any other format please contact the B-Skill HR Department
