Freedom of Speech Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy affirms the Training Provider's commitment to upholding freedom of speech within the law. It ensures that learners, staff, and visitors can express views and engage in open dialogue, while maintaining a respectful and inclusive learning environment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees and contractors
- All learners enrolled in training programmes
- External speakers and visitors
- Events hosted or endorsed by the company

3. Legal Framework

The policy is guided by:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education Act 1986 (Section 43)
- Equality Act 2010
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023

4. Principles

- Everyone has the right to express lawful opinions, even if controversial or unpopular.
- Freedom of speech must be balanced with the rights of others and public safety.
- Hate speech, incitement to violence, or discrimination is not tolerated.
- Peaceful protest is permitted but must not disrupt learning or infringe on others' rights.

5. Responsibilities

- Staff and Trainers must promote respectful dialogue and challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- Learners are expected to engage in discussions respectfully and lawfully.
- Event Organisers must ensure external speakers comply with this policy and undergo safeguarding checks.

6. External Speakers

All external speakers must:

- Be vetted under the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.
- Agree to uphold British Values: democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance.
- Avoid speech that could incite hatred, violence, or criminal activity.

7. Borderline Speech

Speech that may offend but is lawful will be permitted, provided it does not create an environment of harassment or intimidation. The Training Provider will assess such cases carefully to maintain balance.

8. Complaints and Concerns

- Learners may raise concerns via the Learner Complaints Procedure.
- Staff may use the Staff Grievance Policy.

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- A designated panel will review disputes and make final decisions.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and updated as needed to reflect changes in legislation or company values.

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