



Education & Skills
Funding Agency



Conflict of Interest, Anti Bribery & Fraud Policy



1. Introduction

Skills People Group consists of the following companies.

- *Construction Skills People*

The company is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in its business activities and as such, we will not tolerate any form of bribery or fraudulent activity within the organisation or directed to any person with whom we have contact.

Every employee and individual acting on the organisation's behalf are responsible for maintaining the organisation's reputation and for conducting company business honestly and professionally.

The Bribery Act 2010 came into force on 1st July 2011 which made it a criminal offence to offer, promise or accept a bribe. All employees and associated persons are required to comply with this policy, in accordance with the Bribery Act 2010.

2. Overview

This policy outlines the company's position on preventing and prohibiting bribery, fraudulent activity, and activities which conflict with the interest of the company.

The company will not tolerate any form of bribery or fraudulent activity by, or of, its employees, agents or consultants or any person or body acting on its behalf. The company is committed to implementing effective measures to prevent, monitor and eliminate bribery and fraudulent activity. Any activity which may be a conflict of interest with the company, must be authorised by a director, and disclosed to the Head of HR.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to employees, learners, visitors, contractors, and anyone acting on behalf of the company including associate assessors/tutors.

4. Conflict of Interest Policy Anti-Bribery & Fraud Policy

4.1 Conflict of interest

The company require all its employees, agents or consultants or any person or body acting on its behalf to perform their duties with the utmost integrity and professionalism, which includes the avoidance of such situations giving rise to actual or potential conflicts of interest. This policy sets out the expectations regarding real and potential conflicts of interest and the procedures to be followed in the event of a conflict of interest arising.

A conflict of interest arises when what is in a person's best interest is not in the best interest of another person or organisation to which that individual owes loyalty.

Dictional Definition

Conflict of interest is a situation in which someone cannot make a fair decision because they will be affected by the result.

Source: Cambridge Dictionary

4.2 Bribe

A bribe is a financial advantage or other reward that is offered to, given to, or received by an individual or company (whether directly or indirectly) to induce or influence that individual or company to perform public or corporate functions or duties improperly.

Dictionary Definition

Bribe means to try to make someone do something for you by giving them money, presents or something else that they want. **Another meaning:** Money or a present that you give to someone so that they will do something for you, usually something dishonest.

Source: Cambridge Dictionary

4.3 Fraud

Fraud is the wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain.

Dictionary Definition

Fraud the crime of getting money by deceiving people.

Source: Cambridge Dictionary

Employees and others acting for or on behalf of the organisation are prohibited from making, soliciting, or receiving any bribes or unauthorised payments. As such you should not offer, promise, give, request, agree to receive, or accept any bribes:

- *During employment.*
- *When conducting company business; or*
- *When representing the organisation in any other capacity.*

5. Procedure for Offering or Accepting Gifts and Hospitality

Any gifts, rewards or entertainment received or offered from clients, public officials, suppliers, or other business contacts should be reported immediately to your line manager. The company require that all staff always act with honesty and integrity and to safeguard the organisation's resources for which they are responsible.

In certain circumstances, it may not be appropriate to retain such gifts or be provided with the entertainment and employees and associated persons may be asked to return the gifts to the sender or refuse the entertainment, for example, where there could be a real or perceived conflict of interest. Small tokens of appreciation, such as flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

If you wish to provide gifts to suppliers, clients or other business contacts, prior written approval must be obtained from a director. These will be authorised only in limited circumstances and must be proportionate, reasonable, and made in good faith.

Employees must disclose any business or personal relationships held as well as financial or property interests held that could potentially result in conflict of interest. This disclosure must be submitted and authorised by a director or the Head of HR.

Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

6. Reporting suspected Conflict of Interest, Bribery and Fraud

Any concerns should be reported to the HR department as soon as possible. Issues that should be reported include:

- Suspected or actual attempts at bribery and / or fraud.
- Concerns that other employees or associated persons may be being bribed, participate in fraudulent activity, or have conflicting interests with the company; or,
- Concerns that other employees or associated persons may be bribing third parties, such as clients or government officials.
- Concerns that an employee is involved in multiple interests, one of which could possibly corrupt the motivation for an act in the other.
- Learners who have a concern about bribery or fraud must report their concerns via the HR email – hr@skillspeoplegroup.com

In line with our whistle-blowing policy, any person who reports instances of bribery, fraud, or any conflict of interests along with suspected bribery, fraud, or conflicts of interests in good faith will be supported by the company. We will take your concerns seriously and will ensure that you are not subjected to detrimental treatment because of your report. An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent.

7. Integrity of Assessment and Verification

It is the responsibility of all employees to recognise situations in which they have a conflict of interest or, might be seen by others to have a conflict; to disclose this conflict to the Head of HR.

No-one with a personal interest in the outcome of an assessment is to be involved in the assessment process. This includes the: assessor, tutor, delivery specialist, internal verifier, invigilator, and any other interests as such could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions.

Reasonable steps will be taken to avoid any part of the assessment of a learner (including moderation) being taken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of assessment / training (are there segregation of duties)

Adverse effects defined as an act, omission, event, incident, or circumstance that gives rise to prejudice learners or potential learners or adversely affects.

The company maintain a risk register of all identified or potential conflicts of interest and actions taken to control or mitigate these.

8. CITB Scheme Rules

Delivery staff who work for more than one provider must declare this information to any new or existing training provider they work for. All trainers will be sent a copy of the declaration of interest form and maintained by HR on its matrix.

9. Action by the company

The company will fully investigate any instances of alleged or suspected bribery, fraud, and conflict of interest. Employees suspected of bribery and / or fraud and / or activities which are a conflict of interest may be suspended from their duties while the investigation is being conducted.

The company will invoke its disciplinary procedures where any employee is suspected of bribery or being involved in fraudulent activity, and proven allegations may result in a finding of gross misconduct and immediate dismissal.

Any instances of detrimental treatment by a fellow employee towards any person who raises their concerns will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

The company may also report any matter to the relevant authorities, including the Director of Public Prosecutions, Serious Fraud Office, Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office and the police. The Company will provide all necessary assistance to the relevant authorities in any subsequent prosecution.

10. Penalties

A breach of the organisation's anti-bribery, fraud, and conflict of interest policy by an employee will be treated as grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Bribery is a criminal offence that may result in up to 10 years' imprisonment and/or an unlimited monetary fine for the individual accepting, offering, or attempting to cover up a bribe along with an unlimited fine for the organisation.

11. Records

Accurate, detailed, and up-to-date records of all corporate hospitality, entertainment or gifts accepted or offered must be kept by line managers and issued to the HR department.

If you are offered any gift or hospitality, you should report the matter to your Line Manager. Line Managers should keep a record of this and report to the HR department.

If you offer any gift or hospitality to any person, or organisation, you must first obtain permission from a director and the offer must be properly recorded in line with the above.

12. Retention

Employee files will be securely retained. Assessment and verification retention fall in line with awarding organisation retention periods.

For further details of retention periods, refer to the Document Retention Policy.

13. Right to Access Rights to Information

Learners, employees, and third-party partners have individual rights to access personal data that is being held about them either on computer or in manual files. Any person who wishes to exercise this right is required to submit a subject access request to The Data Protection Officer.

Head office number is 01246 589444.

For further details Rights to Access Information, refer to the Subject Access Request Policy.

14. Policy Review

The company review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them and the policy to take account of changes to legislation.

This policy will be reviewed annually by HR and the Director of Quality and Operations or, in line with changes to legislation.

Document Control

Date of change	Version	Overview of amendment	Amended by / Job title	Approved by	Approval date
16-10-18	4	Policy revised, and cover sheet added	Quality Manager	Senior Management Team	16-10-18
10-03-19	5	Policy revised & integrated fraud, bribery & conflict of interest policy into one, retention & rights to access information have been included.	Sarah Booth (HR)	Tom Armstrong (Director)	10-03-19
02-07-19	6	Section 4 1 – Conflicts of interest expanded on, and the dictionary definition has been added. 4.2 & 4.2 – Dictionary definition added. Section 7 – Integrity of Assessment, and Verification added. Section 13 – Head office telephone number included. Section 14 – Policy review added	Julie Lawton (Quality Manager)	Tom Armstrong (Director)	02-07-19
17-06-20	7	Section 11 – Line Managers are to keep records of gifts / hospitality and inform HR	Sarah Booth (HR Assistant)	David Read (HR Manager)	16-07-20
10.09.21	8	Section 7 – It is the responsibility of all employees. Section 14 – Policy to be reviewed by HR and Director or Quality and Operations	Perry Adams (HR Advisor)	Sacha McCarthy (Director of Quality & Operations)	10.09.21
12.09.22	9	Full annual policy review, no amendments made	David Read (Group HR Manager)	Sacha McCarthy (Director of Quality & Operations)	12.09.22
25.10.22	10	Amendment made to page 4 – process for learners reporting a concern of bribery and fraud.	Brendan Knowles (Head of Quality and Performance)	Brendan Knowles (Head of Quality and Performance)	25.10.22
05.12.23	11	Amendment to List of Companies in the Group. Amendment to Section 2, 5 and 7 – Title change - Head of HR added.	David Read (Group HR Manager)	Sacha McCarthy (Director of Quality & Operations)	05.12.23