This Topic Guide has been commissioned and reviewed by Public Health England (PHE), and developed by Health@Work. The purpose is to provide information to help organisations of all sizes and sectors consider inclusive employment in the workplace. The information contained in this guide is not exhaustive and is intended to provide a brief overview of the topic in order for organisations to consider their current practice. Advice and signposting links towards sources of support for those who wish to develop an equality and diversity strategy and enhance existing provision are also included.
EQUALLY AND DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Issues of equality and diversity are applicable to all businesses – whatever their size or sector.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it against the law to discriminate against individuals on the basis of age, disability and other protected characteristics.

By introducing relevant policies – and creating a culture of inclusion – businesses can reap the commercial benefits of ensuring an equal and diverse workforce, including improving performance, building a good reputation, and attracting and keeping staff.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

A diverse workforce demonstrates social responsibility and social awareness, and enhances the ability of a business to be competitive and tap into new markets. Diversity is a key strategy to increase employee satisfaction, understand the needs of customers and find staff to fill skills gaps.

Research shows that businesses have reaped benefits from properly managing equality and diversity issues.

According to research by The Work Foundation good diversity policies result in:

- improved performance
- improved employer image
- improved brand awareness
- improved ability to respond and change through creativity and innovation
- innovative approaches to products
- reflective diversity makes customers feel at home.

Research by the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) found that diversity enabled organisations to attract talented workers and position themselves as an inclusive employer of choice. Poor management can result in additional costs and reputational damage.

A diverse workforce helps support an environment where employees can fulfil their potential in an environment free from bias, discrimination, segregation or favouritism.

Being seen as an inclusive employer of choice is vital for organisations working in competitive markets. By taking a public stance of inclusion and adopting policies and procedures designed around fairness and equal opportunity, workplaces can make a positive statement to current and potential new employees and customers.
WHAT IS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

A diverse workforce is one that is made up of individuals with a wide range of characteristics and experiences. Some of the key characteristics of workforce diversity include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, ability, and sexual orientation.

Your company benefits from a diverse employee workforce when each employee or staff member contributes ideas based on their experiences and background. This encourages learning and creativity; important skills in company development.

Inclusion is a recognition that everyone comes from different backgrounds, and committing to working as a team. Diversity and inclusion are about making decisions based on fairness.

This means ensuring that if there is a risk of a staff member not being included because of a difference, all staff take reasonable steps to ensure they are fully included led by an inclusive approach to management.

It is good business practise to consider any potential difference among your staff, not just those protected by law. An example of this is an example of a new female member of staff in a meeting who wasn’t heard by the other (all male) team members when she made a contribution to a discussion of a tricky problem. The chair of the meeting could have stopped the meeting to ensure her contribution was heard, thus including her. This may also have reduced the time taken to get to the solution.
The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) is legislation which seeks to end discrimination. It has replaced previous legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Race Relations Act 1976. Now, it is against the law to discriminate against any individual or treat anyone less favourably in relation to certain criteria even if the discrimination is unintentional. These criteria are called protected characteristics and include:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Employers must ensure they do not have rules, policy or procedures that disadvantage one group more than another. It is important to ensure no one is discriminated against during recruitment, during employment and in relation to pay.

Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments disabled employees and ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged in the workplace compared to anyone else. The definition of disability under the Act is described on page 8.
WAYS TO CREATE A CULTURE OF INCLUSION AT WORK

To establish a workplace culture which promotes, encourages and supports inclusion, equality and diversity, you can:

- Implement an equality and diversity policy based on the principles of the Equality Act 2010, with the aim of creating a culture based on fairness, inclusion and mutual respect for all. You don’t have to have one by law but it shows a commitment to equality for your staff. Further guidance is available from the Equality Commission (see sources at the end).

- Raise awareness of the policy and understanding of the principles of inclusion by delivering training courses and awareness campaigns. For example sign up to Time to Change; a campaign to challenge mental health stigma. ACAS offer free online training on Equality and Diversity. Share examples of good practice among your staff.

- Implement an anti-bullying and harassment policy. This should ensure employees are aware of expected standards of conduct and what might constitute unacceptable behaviour. The aim of this policy is prevent any incidences of bullying or harassment occurring, but also to give those who feel they have been bullied or harassed an effective method of resolving any issues.

- Ensure good communication channels are in place across all levels of the organisation. This can include team meetings, minutes of which are available for all departments, 1:1 meetings with line managers, company newsletters, briefings on company strategy, question and answer sessions with senior management and staff suggestion schemes.

- Establish a fair recruitment and promotion process that does not discriminate against any particular people or groups of people. A job advert must not state or imply that any person will be excluded from consideration and every application is treated solely on its merit. However you can take steps to try to increase applications from ethnic minority groups. For example you could add a statement to your job adverts along the lines of “Applications from ethnic minority individuals would be particularly welcome as they are currently under-represented in our workforce”

- Ensure that the terms and conditions, benefits, pay and working conditions are the same for employees in the same grade or equivalent role

- Provide opportunities for any employee who feels they have been discriminated against to raise this through a formal grievance process. A clear policy and procedure should be available for all employees.
MEASURING IMPACT

- Use employee surveys and questionnaires to evaluate initiatives, to find out if policies are working for everyone, and to provide a platform for improvement.

- Record attendance at relevant training sessions.

- Include diversity objectives in job descriptions and appraisals, and recognise and reward achievement. Examples of objectives include attending an equality and diversity training course as part of induction or ensuring that the culture of the organisation is perceived by staff as welcoming and fair in its treatment of staff.

- Benchmark good practice against other organisations and adopt and adapt relevant ideas where appropriate.

- Network with others from inside and outside your organisation to keep up to date and to share learning.

- Celebrate successes and learn from experiences, Use them as building blocks for further progress.

- Ensure relevant policies and procedures are up to date and in full compliance with legislation. Communicate any changes to all staff members.
FURTHER SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

The Equality Act 2010
Access online self-assessment tool, free resources and find a local provider to support and accredit.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Equality Direct, through ACAS
A confidential equality advice service for small businesses.
Call 0300 123 1100 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 9am-1pm Saturday).
www.acas.org.uk/equality.

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index
This evidence-based benchmarking enables organisations to assess their achievements and progress on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) equality in the workplace including policy, staff engagement and career development.
www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/workplace/workplace-equality-index

Diversity in the Workplace, CIPD Factsheet
Updated 2014.
www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/diversity-workplace-overview.aspx

Harassment and Bullying at Work, CIPD Factsheet
Revised 2015.
www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/harassment-bullying-at-work.aspx

Race for Opportunity
A campaign by Business in the Community (BiTC) to improve employment opportunities for ethnic minorities across the UK. The website includes tools and case studies.
www.raceforopportunity.bitc.org.uk/toolkits_casestudies/index

One You
A key resource to promote adult health is the One You campaign. One You encourages people to reappraise their lifestyle choices, put themselves first and do something about their own health. Simply search One You online for a free online health quiz. There is also information and links to local sources of support to make a behaviour change.
https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou#F3opDqKx8db5p25L.97
ABOUT THIS TOPIC GUIDE

This Topic Guide has been jointly produced between Public Health England, health@work and Liverpool City Council. The purpose of this guide is to provide information and support to help organisations of all sizes and sectors improve health in the workplace and to work towards achieving accreditation of the Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

ABOUT THE WORKPLACE WELLBEING CHARTER

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter is an opportunity for employers to demonstrate their commitment to the health and well-being of their workforce. The positive impact that employment can have on health and wellbeing is now well documented. There is also strong evidence to show how having a healthy workforce can reduce sickness absence, lower staff turnover and boost productivity - this is good for employers, workers and the wider economy.

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter provides employers with an easy and clear guide on how to make workplaces a supportive and productive environment in which employees can flourish.

Organisations of all sizes can use the Charter standards. The Commitment level has been developed as a baseline for all businesses to achieve and acts as a useful checklist for smaller organisations to ensure legal obligations are met. The criteria for small businesses should not involve significant financial investments, and there are lots of free resources and guidance on the Charter website as well as support from your local provider.

Employers who volunteer to sign up will find help and support available through the Charter website. This will include a network of providers who can offer employers the services and advice they need to be accredited with the Charter, and help them to build the healthy workforce that business needs for the future.

www.workplacewellbeing.org.uk

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUR ACCREDITATION

If you are considering applying for Charter accreditation we recommend you search for a provider in your area using the Charter website www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk

Complete a self-assessment using the benchmarking tool on the website. Your local provider can offer advice and support to help with this process and advise on next steps.
REFERENCES


These guides have been jointly produced between Public Health England, Health@Work and Liverpool City Council.

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter National Award for England is a Registered Trademark