

An introduction to equality and diversity



A handbook for ITeC employers



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The purpose of this handbook is to give you information about equality and diversity.

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The Business Case for Equality

A guide for HCC Training employers

Providing equality of opportunity enables businesses to ensure they provide good quality services and products for everyone in the local community, yet only half of all employers have an equal opportunities policy.



The benefits of having your own policy are:

Enhanced customer satisfaction

An equal opportunities policy and a high standard of service that meets the needs of all sections of the local community will enhance the reputation of your company and show your customers that you conduct your business fairly.

Strengthening community roots

Close involvement of individuals from all groups will affirm your organisation's business commitment to the locality.

Meeting local needs

Understanding the needs of customers from all groups leads to greater customer loyalty and a wider customer base.

Becoming an employer of choice

Staff recruitment and selection practices that take full account of equal opportunities lead to an enhanced reputation as an employer and a wider pool of applicants.

Averting the costs of discrimination

Racial, sexual and disability discrimination is expensive. It costs money. It undermines staff morale and the reputation of an organisation. It makes an organisation unattractive to employees, customers and suppliers.

Basic guidance on avoiding discrimination can be found in the Commission for Racial Equality guides, "Equal Opportunities is your Business too," and their CD ROM, "Racial Equality and the Smaller Business." Ask your HCC Training representative for details. We can also provide a sample policy on paper or disk.

The ITeC Equality & Diversity Policy

EMPLOYER VERSION

Introduction

We are committed to equality of opportunity

The ITeC staff, apprentices and employers believe strongly in equality of opportunity for all. We promote inclusion, respect, fairness and the rights of the individual. We oppose prejudice, discrimination, harassment and unfairness of any kind. At the ITeC, we treat people as individuals, and do all that we can to support them in reaching their goals.

We celebrate diversity

We recognise that each person is different and we value these differences. We are working to make the ITeC a diverse environment with people from all minority groups represented. We promote the ITeC to:

- ⊙ People from different ethnic and religious backgrounds
- ⊙ Females and males
- ⊙ People with a disability and people without

This policy applies to you!

...and everyone else connected with the ITeC. This means our management, staff, apprentices, employers and anyone we ask to work with us.

Hull City Council's policies

Hull City Council has several policies that are relevant to Equality and Diversity:

- ⊙ Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy
- ⊙ Equality for All - Service Policy Statement
- ⊙ Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Procedures
- ⊙ Personal Harassment Complaints Procedure

We follow these policies in all matters to do with employment and serving the people of Hull. We created our own policy to make sure that the needs of our staff, apprentices and employers were fully covered.

Discrimination and the law

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is treating someone unfairly because of their background, circumstances, beliefs or who they are. We believe that discrimination should always be challenged. These are some of the many reasons why a person could suffer discrimination:

- ⊙ Race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin)
- ⊙ Gender (including sex, marriage and gender re-assignment)
- ⊙ Disability
- ⊙ Being a lesbian or gay man
- ⊙ Religion, creed or belief

- ⊙ Age
- ⊙ HIV or Aids
- ⊙ Home address
- ⊙ Social or economic status
- ⊙ Criminal record
- ⊙ Being a traveller

Our policy on bullying

At the ITeC, we believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work. Harassment and bullying are considered unacceptable behaviour and are not tolerated. Here are some examples of harassment:

- ⊙ Any unwanted physical contact
- ⊙ Isolating or ignoring someone
- ⊙ Racist remarks
- ⊙ Display of offensive material
- ⊙ Offensive jokes (there is a difference between having a sense of humour and causing offence - if you offend someone, it is not a joke)
- ⊙ Unwelcome remarks about a person's dress, appearance, race etc.
- ⊙ Shouting or swearing at another person
- ⊙ Offensive, threatening, humiliating, patronising, suggestive or intimidating remarks
- ⊙ Spreading rumours about someone
- ⊙ Personal insults or insulting emails

ITeC apprentices are advised to contact their personal tutor immediately if they are bullied, or if they see anyone else being bullied. If you suspect that an ITeC apprentice is being bullied, please contact us straight away.

- ⊙ Fiona Joy, Equality & Diversity Advisor: (01482) 325576 ext. 104
- ⊙ Jacky Jordan, ITeC Manager: (01482) 325576 ext. 108

We aim to deal with complaints of bullying and harassment internally and informally to produce a speedy effective solution to the problem with the minimum embarrassment. Bullies can only exist if we allow them to.

The law

We recognise and abide by all laws relating to equal opportunities. Here are some of them:

- ⊙ The Human Rights Act 1998
- ⊙ The Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Race Relations Regulations 2003
- ⊙ The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 & 1986 and the Equal Pay Act 1970
- ⊙ The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- ⊙ The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- ⊙ The Employment Equality Regulations 2003
- ⊙ The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (to be introduced late 2006)

What we are doing to promote equality of opportunity

Equal Opportunities Working Party

The HCC Training Equality & Diversity working party meets every two months. Representatives from each centre agree and implement strategies, policies and action plans and discuss other equalities issues. The ITeC representative is Fiona Joy.

Training, information and guidance

All staff and apprentices are introduced to Equality & Diversity at Induction. ITeC apprentices attend a half day Introduction to Equality & Diversity session and receive a handbook, which contains a copy of this policy. A compulsory full day training course is available for all Hull City Council staff.

Equality & Diversity is on the ITeC site meeting agenda every month. Staff members are given a monthly update, which they pass on to apprentices and employers at the learner review. All staff members have access to an Equality & Diversity Staff Manual to store and access information. There is also a notice board outside the ITeC common room.

Citizenship

ITeC students are encouraged to be active citizens. They are introduced to Citizenship during their Equality & Diversity training and are offered the opportunity to complete the Citizenship Certificate, by setting and achieving five goals. The Citizenship Certificate was devised at the ITeC and is now used and recognised throughout the city.

Marketing, promotion and monitoring

All ITeC marketing materials are checked to ensure they do not promote stereotyping. We are developing our marketing methods and resources to make sure they are accessible to young people in all Hull's local communities.

Some professions are seen as dominated by males and females. At the ITeC, we think this is wrong and we are working to change outdated views. We believe all stereotyping is unfair and restricts the potential of employees and employers alike. The ITeC holds regular taster days and other events to encourage young people from non-stereotypical groups to apply for our courses.

The ITeC has systems in place to record Equality & Diversity data and to monitor the percentage of young people from minority groups on our courses. We use this data to assess the success of our promotional activities.

What we are doing to promote fairness

Monitoring progress

The progress and development of ITeC staff and apprentices is formally monitored. All staff members have an Achievement and Development interview every six months. All apprentices have a progress review with their named tutor every eight weeks.

Grievances and appeals

Wherever possible, the ITeC will try to resolve complaints relating to Equality & Diversity quickly and informally. However, if the informal process is not effective for any reason, staff and apprentices can use the formal Hull City Council grievance procedure explained at Induction.

Meeting your needs

Applicants receive a copy of our Learner Entitlement and Support document with their ITeC application form. If you are aware that your apprentice has any special needs or requirements, let us know and we will do everything we can to help. If your apprentice has any special requirements concerning his or her religious beliefs, we will be more than happy to help. Speak to your ITeC representative or contact Fiona Joy. This document can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

Our policy on Race

We hope our policy covers all areas of discrimination. However, in the light of the McPherson Report, we would like to make special reference to the Hull City Council Service Policy footnote on institutional racism. The ITeC recognises the threat of institutional racism, and we want to make clear that we do not tolerate racism of any kind.

Racist language, remarks and jokes are not tolerated.

What you can do

- ⊙ Follow the Ten Point Plan and write your own Equality & Diversity Policy
- ⊙ Get copies of the Commission for Racial Equality guides
- ⊙ Treat the people you meet with respect and fairness
- ⊙ Report bullying, discrimination and unfairness
- ⊙ Help us to promote the ITeC to minority groups

Following the Ten Point Plan

The Commission for Racial Equality has written a Ten Point Plan for employers to support you in starting to promote equal opportunities. First you should write an equal opportunities policy, covering recruitment, promotion and training. The Ten Point Plan is included in this handbook. Ask your ITeC representative if you want a copy of the CRE guide, "Equal Opportunities is your business too," or contact the CRE yourself. They can also supply you with the CD ROM, "Racial Equality and the Smaller Business." Their web site address is: www.cre.gov.uk You can also agree to abide by the ITeC's policy by signing below:

Employer's commitment

I agree with the ITeC Equality & Diversity policy and will abide by it.

Employer: _____

Date: _____



Equality legislation

Human Rights Act 1998

Most laws tell us what we cannot do. The Human Rights Act is different. It lists the rights we are entitled to as citizens of Great Britain. These rights include:

- ❖ the right to life
- ❖ freedom from torture or inhuman and degrading punishment
- ❖ freedom from slavery, servitude, enforced or compulsory labour
- ❖ right to liberty and security of the person
- ❖ right to a fair trial
- ❖ right to respect for private and family life
- ❖ freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- ❖ freedom of expression
- ❖ freedom of assembly or association
- ❖ right to marry and found a family
- ❖ prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of conventional rights
- ❖ right to education in conformity with parents' religious and philosophical convictions

The Race Relations Act 1976 and The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

These acts mean it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic origin.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is singling out a person, or a group of people, for worse or better treatment than others. Discrimination can be direct, for example, treating a person less well than you would others because of their race. Discrimination can also be indirect. This means doing something which, whether you mean to or not, puts someone at a disadvantage because of their race.

What are prejudice and stereotyping?

Prejudice is having an unreasonably or unfair dislike or preference. This can mean disliking a person or a group of people for no good reason. Stereotyping can mean assuming that all of the people from a particular group are the same.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 was created to stop racial discrimination by any organisation whose function is to serve the public. The act also makes it the duty of public authorities, like Hull City Council, to actively promote racial equality.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their gender, or because they are married. Again, both direct and indirect discrimination are prohibited. It applies to both males and females.

The Equal Pay Act 1970 (amended 1983)

Under this act you are entitled to equal pay and other conditions with an employee of the opposite sex if you are both doing the same sort of work.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because they are disabled. Companies providing a service to the public need to make sure disabled people receive a fair service. To do this, they must make adjustments to their service, such as giving extra help. They must also remove any physical barriers which prevent the disabled person accessing the service.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Harassment is any unwanted behaviour which intimidates, degrades, humiliates or offends. Harassment in the workplace can be the same as bullying. You are protected against this by law.

Remember that if you are harassed or bullied at work or in the ITeC, or you see anyone else being harassed or bullied, you should tell your tutor straight away.

The Employment Equality Regulations 2003 (Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief)

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their sexuality. The Sexual Orientation regulations apply to lesbians, gays, heterosexuals and bisexuals. It is also against the law to discriminate against someone because of their religion or belief. The Religion and Belief regulations cover religion, religious belief and some other beliefs.

Age legislation

From 2006 it will be against the law to discriminate against someone because of their age. This will protect both old and young people.

For further information on equality law contact Fiona Joy.

The Ten Point Plan for Employers

The following is a ten point plan to help employers promote equality of opportunity in their organisations. These are guidance points only and employers should seek further details about each of the areas:

1. Develop an equal opportunities policy, covering recruitment, promotion and training.
Note: Under the amended Race Relations Act, public authorities must publish a race equality scheme or policy – this may form part of their equal opportunities policy.
2. Set an action plan, with targets, so that you and your staff have a clear idea of what can be achieved and by when.
3. Provide training for all people, including managers, throughout your organisation, to ensure they understand the importance of equal opportunities. Provide additional training for staff who recruit, select and train your employees.
4. Assess the present position to establish your starting point, and monitor progress in achieving your objectives.
5. Review recruitment, selection, promotion and training procedures regularly, to ensure that you are delivering on your policy.
6. Draw up clear and justifiable job criteria, which are demonstrably objective and job-related.
7. Offer pre-employment training, where appropriate, to prepare potential job applicants for selection tests and interviews; you should also consider positive action training to help ethnic minority employees to apply for jobs in areas where they are underrepresented.
8. Consider your organisation's image: do you encourage applications from underrepresented groups and feature women, ethnic minority staff and people with disabilities in recruitment literature, or could you be seen as an employer who is indifferent to these groups?
9. Consider flexible working, career breaks, providing childcare facilities, and so on, to help women in particular meet domestic responsibilities and pursue their occupations; and consider providing special equipment and assistance to help people with disabilities.
10. Develop links with local community groups, organisations and schools, in order to reach a wider pool of potential applicants.

Extracted from the Commission for Racial Equality web site.



Contacts

For more information about equal opportunities, speak to your ITeC representative or contact:

Fiona Joy

Telephone: (01482) 325576 Email: fjoy@hcctraining.co.uk

Useful web addresses:

ITeC www.hullitec.co.uk

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) www.acas.org.uk

Equal Opportunities Commission www.eoc.org.uk

Commission for Racial Equality www.cre.gov.uk

Disability Rights Commission www.drc-gb.org

Diversity UK www.diversityuk.co.uk

Equality Direct www.equalitydirect.org.uk

Employers for Work-life balance www.employersforwork-lifebalance.org.uk

Tailored Interactive Guidance on Employment Rights (DTI site)
www.tiger.gov.uk

Work Life Balance Centre www.worklifebalancecentre.org

Every month or so, the ITeC publish an update on equality and diversity. Your ITeC advisor will give you information from the update at your learner's review. S/he will give you a copy of the update on request.

We are always looking for new information about Equal Opportunities and would appreciate your help. If you find anything you think is interesting, please contact Fiona Joy.