

An employer's guide to...

Creating an inclusive workplace

Contents

	Page
Section 1: Introduction	1
Section 2: What does an inclusive workplace look like?	3
Section 3: What are the benefits of an inclusive workplace?	4
Section 4: How can I create an inclusive workplace?	6
Section 5: How will I know if I'm successful?	55
Section 6: Practical ideas for small businesses	60
Section 7: A success story	65
Section 8: Questions and Answers	67
Section 9: Where to go for further information	70

This guide contains a range of **ideas** to **help you** use human rights principles to **create** an inclusive workplace.

Section 1

Introduction

An environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where the talents and skills of different groups are valued, and where productivity and customer service improves because the workforce is happier, more motivated and more aware of the benefits that inclusion can bring.

This guide will be useful for human resources professionals, operations directors and others with responsibility for people management, recruitment, training and development. It will also be valuable for use at a strategic level, when planning your organisation's key priorities and objectives.

The guide contains a range of practical ideas to help you create an inclusive workplace. It does not provide detail on the equality legislation that affects you as an employer; for guidance on this visit our website www.equalityhumanrights.com

Following up on the ideas in this guide will bring several benefits to your business. Promoting equality, human rights and inclusive working can help to increase productivity, improve motivation and retention, and provide an inclusive and adaptable service to customers and clients.

It is also a good idea because the benefits can spread much further than the walls of your organisation. Many people spend more waking hours at work than at home. Getting relationships right in the workplace is a way to start getting those relationships right in the wider community.

Incorporating inclusive working into the key values of your organisation can therefore have a threefold effect: good for your business, good for your staff, and good for the community around you.



Section 2

What does an inclusive workplace look like?

An inclusive workplace is one where the human rights principles of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy are promoted and are part of the organisation's everyday goals and behaviour.

In an inclusive workplace:

- There is a welcoming workplace culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and everyone feels valued.
- Policies are in place concerning equality and human rights, working conditions, dignity at work, employee welfare and fair recruitment and procurement practices.
- Members of staff at all levels are aware of the inclusive values of the organisation and are actively consulted and involved in policy development.
- The workforce is representative of the local community or customers (or if not, under-represented groups are encouraged to apply).
- All employees are encouraged to develop and progress, and any barriers faced by specific groups are identified and action taken to address them.
- Unnecessary hierarchies and occupational segregation, where groups of employees are congregated into certain areas, are discouraged.
- The organisation is aware of any potential tensions within the workplace, and takes action to anticipate and address them.
- Inclusive strategies are fully supported and promoted by senior staff.

Section 3

What are the benefits of an inclusive workplace?

More employers are coming up with solutions to create and promote an inclusive workplace in order to maximise productivity, attract new talent and increase employee commitment. Organisations' action on equality and human rights issues can have a significant impact upon their brand reputation, so inclusion makes good business sense.

Attract new talent

Working teams that are diverse in their make-up are able to come up with a wider range of solutions to business problems. Inclusive workplaces that openly communicate their values and strategies on equality, human rights and inclusion are capitalising on this as they are able to attract a wider pool of applicants and talent. Candidates from minority groups may be put off applying for positions in organisations that do not make their commitment to inclusion known.

Retain productive and committed staff

Inclusive workplaces that understand the needs of their employees and make staff feel valued and respected also have greater success in retaining staff. Having a range of policies and facilities in place to ensure that all employees are able to balance work with other aspects of their lives has a positive impact on job satisfaction, productivity and commitment. In contrast, in organisations where stereotypes persist and some groups of employees face barriers to success, these employees experience negative consequences on performance, health and wellbeing.

Create wider customer appeal and access to untapped markets

If your employees come from diverse backgrounds, and your company values are based around inclusion and fairness, your business has much greater potential to reach further into different sections of the community, appealing to a wider customer and supplier base. This can be done by recognising and then embracing and utilising the diverse skills, experience and knowledge that your staff have. These might come from the workplace or activities that take place outside of it.

Create culture change that spreads to communities

Inequalities and stereotypes spread into the workplace from the wider society outside its doors and societal barriers to equality, human rights and inclusion can be amplified in the workplace. But this process can also work in reverse, with cultural change within the workplace spreading outwards into the wider community, as colleagues learn more about each other and pass on this knowledge to others. Creating change at work can bring benefits that spread much further than the confines of one organisation's walls.



Section 4

How can I create an inclusive workplace?

This section offers step-by-step advice on the measures you can take to make your workplace more inclusive. There are five stages in this process:

One

Consider what you want to achieve and what the benefits will be.

Two

Undertake an inclusion review of your workplace.

Three

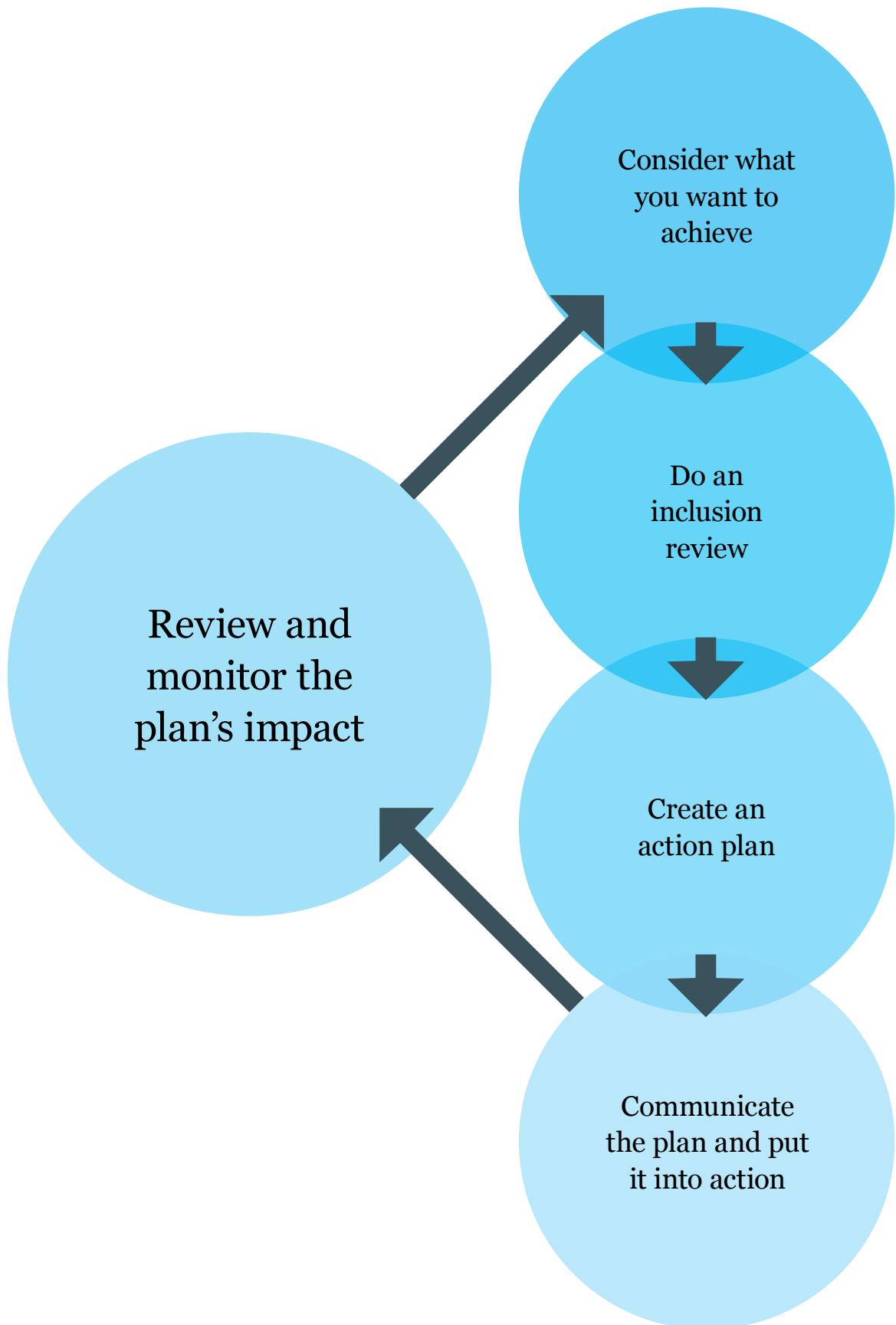
Decide where work is needed and create an action plan.

Four

Communicate the plan with staff and put the plan into action.

Five

Review, monitor and evaluate the plan's impact and use what you find to plan future action.



4.1 Consider what you want to achieve

This first stage of the process involves looking at your organisation: its size, the type of work it does, where it is located, who it employs, who uses its services, and what its goals are; and thinking about how it could become more inclusive.

Your organisation has particular characteristics, and business needs must be factored in. There may be sector-specific standards and legal requirements and duties with which you need to comply and you might provide services for very diverse or very similar communities and customers. You might experience particular skill or people shortages that you fill with agency or migrant workers, or you may be located within an industry or sector that has traditionally been filled with one gender, ethnic group or staff of certain ages. You might have a dispersed workforce in different locations that rarely comes together face to face.

All of these factors will influence what is contained in your action plan. Considering the situation of your organisation and how you would like to see it change will set the context for the next stage of the process, an inclusion review of your workplace.

4.2 Undertake an inclusion review

When reviewing inclusion and equality in your organisation, you should consider the following areas:

- The demographics of your organisation and customer base.
- Your formal policies and procedures.
- Informal or unwritten working practices.
- Arrangements for staff consultation and participation.

Organisational demographics

All organisations are different, so the first thing you will need to do is examine what the demographic make-up of your workplace is. Compiling and analysing data on your staff by age, gender, ethnic group, religion or belief, sexual orientation and disability, and noting where in the organisation's structure employees belonging to different groups work, will help you to identify any under-represented groups and areas of occupational segregation. You should check employees' salaries according to membership of different groups, and check rates of progression within and through the grades. It is also useful to look at retention and exit rates by these groups.

If possible, you should also collect information on the make-up of your customers. Finding out who uses your services and what their needs are is important if you are to ensure you have the right people, skills and approaches to meet these needs.

Formal policies and procedures

The formal policies and practices of your organisation can tell you a lot about how much you have previously thought about inclusion, human rights and equality. When reviewing these policies, you will find it helpful to look at:

Policies to deal with discrimination, bullying and harassment

Do you have clear and well-known policies that set out the behaviour you expect in the workplace? These should stipulate the importance of treating others with dignity and respect, set out what equality and human rights legislation says, explain what discrimination and harassment are, and state what the consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be. Are line managers clear about these policies and trained to act quickly when dealing with complaints?

Procedures to deal with tensions and difference between groups

If you employ different groups of workers who may be likely to disagree or to have misperceptions about each other, do you have procedures in place to deal with this? Do you have guidance on employing agency or migrant workers, making sure that they are not treated less favourably than permanent employees?

Disciplinary and grievance procedures

Do you have clear disciplinary and grievance procedures that are followed by all managers, accessible to employees and easily understood? Are these procedures fair to all, or could they impact negatively on particular groups of employees? Do employees have access to an independent arbitration or dispute resolution process if they do not agree with the outcome?

Policies on flexible working

Do you have procedures in place for dealing with requests to work flexibly in a fair and objective manner? Do you offer any provisions over the statutory minimum and are employees aware of these? What is your approach to retirement and are there options for older workers to continue working after they reach pension age, if they wish to do so?

Procedures for carers, parents and expectant parents

What policies do you have in place on maternity, paternity and adoption leave and pay, breastfeeding, parental leave and time off for dependents?

Sickness absence policies

Do you have a clear policy on sickness absence that is understood by line managers and takes into account pregnancy-related sickness and disability? Do you have procedures in place to help employees back to work and to consider individual needs in doing this?

Health and safety policies

Do you have clear policies in place on health and safety, with regular risk assessment and ergonomic checks to promote staff health and wellbeing? Are specific risk assessments routinely organised, for example for pregnant women or staff working in particular areas of risk? Could your policies have an impact on the religion or belief of staff: for example wearing religious dress or articles of faith, and are they proportionate?

Performance management procedures

Do you have clearly set out procedures on performance management that take individual needs and cultural differences into account, and are objective and transparent to all employees?

Pay and reward policies

Are your policies on pay and reward clearly organised, based on objective criteria and easily understood by employees? Do you have clear guidance on starting salaries, bonuses and performance-related pay? Have you undertaken an equal pay audit to make sure you don't have pay gaps by gender, disability or ethnic group?

Recruitment and promotion procedures

Are your procedures for recruitment and promotion transparent and equally accessible to all applicants? Do job descriptions focus on objective criteria that are solely related to the job in question, and could the procedures you use impact negatively on particular groups?

If some groups are under-represented among your staff, do you have strategies in place to change this?

Policies on training and development

Do you have regular training in place on equality and human rights? What procedures do you have to ensure that all employees have access to development and work-related training, and do these procedures take into account the particular needs of some groups of employees?

Procurement policies

Do the procedures you have in place for procurement include equality and human rights measures? In order to strengthen your commitment to inclusive working, do potential suppliers need to provide evidence in their tenders that they take equality and human rights seriously and treat their staff and customers with dignity and respect?

Service provision and customer equality policies

If you are a service provider, do you have a strategy in place to make sure that all customers are treated equally and fairly, and that needs of customers from diverse backgrounds are recognised and met? Are staff at all levels engaged in creating a human rights culture in the provision of services?

Informal or unwritten working practices

Examining informal working culture can be difficult to do, but the aim is to find out if there are gaps between what is written in your policies and everyday working practices within the organisation. Some areas to think about include:

Staff attitudes and behaviour

Is there an open and understanding working culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect? Are staff aware of the importance of equality, human rights and inclusion, and aware of the anti-discrimination policies in place and the procedures on acceptable behaviour? One way of measuring this is through an anonymous attitude survey (see Section 5). Another point to consider is employee willingness and confidence to disclose personal information: what are self-declaration rates like on sensitive issues such as sexual orientation or religion and belief?

Take-up of employee provisions

What are the take up rates of the provisions you have in place for flexible working, time off for dependents or access to religious facilities and requirements? If they are low, it may be that the working culture in your organisation is not supportive of the provisions in place, or that staff are not aware of what is available.

Working patterns and segregation

Do staff with diverse backgrounds and from different groups work together in teams and divisions? Or are similar groups

of staff clustered into the same teams, shifts and areas of work? If the latter is the case, it is likely that there may be divisions within the workforce on the grounds of gender, ethnic background, age, religion or belief, language, culture and class.

Activities

Are any activities in place to bring staff together and to promote inclusion and understanding? If so, are they well attended? Are they planned to take into account the access requirements of different groups, as well as caring responsibilities and cultural differences?

Recruitment and retention

Despite clear policies on recruitment and promotion, do some groups remain at the bottom of the career ladder? Do you find that employees from minority groups are more likely to leave than those who make up the majority? If this is the case, it could be that workplace culture is helping to create barriers for these groups.

Staff consultation and participation

Finally, are there clear procedures through which staff can communicate with managers and directors? Are staff and their representatives consulted on changes to policies and practices that will affect their working lives? Are they actively involved in initiatives around working culture? If this is not the case, it is more likely that your efforts to create inclusive working will not succeed, because employees may feel that measures are being forced upon them without the chance to give their opinions.

4.3 Create an action plan

Having reviewed your workplace in terms of equality and inclusion, the next stage is to decide upon the action you will take. Set out the key changes you would like to make as a result of your review. Prioritise these changes to help you decide where to start. Some measures you may wish to consider as part of your action plan are:

■ **Actively involve all employees**

- Consultation and participation.
- Encourage employees to take part in monitoring, and promote the reasons for doing so.
- Extra measures and adjustments.
- **Build a culture of inclusion and respect**
- Ensure the organisation's core values include a commitment to equality, human rights and inclusive working.
- Create, extend or improve policies on equality and human rights and make sure other policies are equality proofed.
- Take immediate action to address and tackle discrimination, harassment and bullying.
- Training for all staff on inclusive working, human rights and equality.
- Make inclusion a key management approach.
- Encourage and appoint equality and human rights champions.
- Encourage employee networks and forums.
- Promote culture-changing initiatives.

■ **Take an inclusive approach to recruitment, promotion and development**

- Make equality, diversity, human rights and inclusive working part of job descriptions.
- Monitor applicants and staff at different levels within the organisation.
- Equality and human rights training for all staff involved in recruitment and a fair and transparent selection process.
- Attract candidates from the widest pool available.
- Reward talent and achievement rather than stereotypical indicators of success.
- Value skills achieved outside the workplace.
- Encourage and enable development for all.
- Offer mentoring opportunities to junior and new staff.
- Offer work placements.
- Conduct exit interviews.
- **Encourage engagement with the local community**
- Employer assisted volunteering.

Actively involve all groups of employees

In order to create a working culture of inclusion, respect and opportunity for all, it is essential that everyone in the organisation, from senior management to the most junior staff, is engaged with and involved in the process of creating this culture, and feels that their opinions and experiences are valued. Measures to promote inclusive working need to be thought of positively among employees, not as something that is 'done' to them. There are several things to think about in this respect.

Participation and consultation

Before drawing up a plan of action it is essential to involve and consult employees to find out about their experiences, what they feel are the key issues affecting them and what action they would like to see taken to address these issues. Staff and any unions or other employee representatives should also be consulted at different stages in the plan's implementation, in order to get their feedback on the progress being made. The action plan should be a living document, capable of being adapted and developed over time.

There are many different ways that you can consult and involve employees and their representatives. Some examples are:

- **Staff surveys** can be used to gather information on a range of subjects, including the make-up of the workforce, responses and attitudes towards equality and human rights issues, and levels of job satisfaction among employees. Surveys can be designed so that responses can be analysed according to membership of equality group or other relevant factors. Confidential surveys will attract a higher response rate.
- **Focus groups** provide more opportunity for in-depth consultation and debate with a smaller number of employees. They could be a useful forum in which to collect feedback on draft policies and action plans, and can be an indicator of wider staff attitudes.
- **Engagement with employee networks and forums** can utilise an important representative voice of staff from minority groups and can provide useful input into policies and action plans.

Case study

Taking the lead

North Wales Police

North Wales Police undertakes a confidential staff cultural survey and develops an action plan based on survey results. Staff are asked questions about leadership, access to training, management style, and if they feel valued in their work. Responses are broken down by divisions and equality groups, and results are published on the staff intranet.

“It’s collectively a range of different activities – the cultural survey, exit interviews, monitoring of employees and applicants – that let us know whether the organisation is changing or not,” says Sue Davison, Diversity Officer at North Wales Police. “It’s about people becoming more confident and more aware that the organisation has greater understanding of individual needs. That’s what’s helping to make the difference.”

BT

BT has a secure online information system that staff can use to update their personal details. This system is completely confidential: only the individual employee can view their own details, while anonymous data can be extracted to monitor employment trends and ensure that no bias exists in human resource practices. Employee network groups work with human resources to try and improve self-declaration of more sensitive information such as religion and sexual orientation.

Tower Hamlets Council

At Tower Hamlets Council, human resources staff and employee equality forums are working together to encourage self-declaration rates. A guidance booklet has been produced for all staff to explain the reasons for monitoring and to assist managers to undertake monitoring of employment and services.

Encourage employees to take part in monitoring, and promote the reasons for doing so

Monitoring should be a part of your organisation's business planning process and inform its strategy. For employers covered by the public sector equality duties, it is a legal requirement. It is understandable however, that many people are sceptical about passing on personal information to their employers. Making sure that employees understand the importance of equality monitoring and the key role it can play in helping to develop an inclusive workplace is an important part of generating staff involvement and engagement. Ensure that they know what information will be collected, why this will be done, and how the data will be used.

Take extra measures and make reasonable adjustments

Encouraging and enabling participation and consultation may involve putting in place extra measures so that some groups of staff can be actively involved. For example, it may be necessary to provide and present information and to receive feedback in a range of alternative formats for employees who are disabled or whose first language is not English.

Build a culture of inclusion and respect across the workplace

Ensure the organisation's core values include a commitment to equality, human rights and inclusive working

In order to demonstrate the importance of inclusion within your organisation, you need to take responsibility for workplace culture and spread equality and human rights beyond the human resources team, across the organisation. Give inclusion recognition by ensuring that it is integrated into all key business and performance objectives and that inclusive thinking becomes part of everyday working life.

There are many everyday aspects of business that, when looked at from an equality point of view, can help to make your organisation more inclusive. For example, by ensuring that equality and human rights issues are integrated into your procurement processes, you are setting a standard that suppliers must follow. You can also use these processes to attract a more diverse pool of suppliers and support businesses in the local community.

Case study

Think about what you say

North Wales Police

The organisational values at North Wales Police are 'excellence, courage and compassion', and are underpinned by a ground rules initiative which spells out 10 behaviours and attitudes that are expected from staff in the workplace. One of these is 'think about what you say and how you say it'. All staff, from Chief Constable to the most junior, must complete the Police Race and Diversity Development Programme, which is an equality standard assessment rather like a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). They are required to produce evidence on how they consider equality in their job, and the evidence is then assessed.

"The idea is to allow people to think about their own job, and what might be some of the equality issues they'll face," explains Sue Davison, Diversity Officer at North Wales Police. "We need to know that people are making that connection."

Mersey Care Trust

The Mersey Care Trust has worked hard to integrate human rights into its core values. The Chief Executive played a critical role in promoting the Trust's human rights strategy by providing visible leadership. For example, when a new policy was introduced that involved service users in the performance management of staff in order to promote a rights-based approach to service provision, the Chief Executive opted to be among the first group of people to be assessed in this way.

Create, extend or improve policies on equality and human rights to ensure they are inclusive and make sure other policies are equality proofed

Policies on equality, anti-discrimination and human rights at work are key components of an inclusive workplace, acting as a point of reference for all and setting out the standard of behaviour that everyone should expect as well as the provisions and rights provided for employees. Your workplace inclusion review may have identified some policies that are working well. There may also be policies that can be improved, revised or extended. When doing this, take advantage of the guidance materials available (see Section 9) and consult with employees and their representatives to find out what they need from policies. Make sure that policies are accessible to all staff and that staff members are aware of what policies contain.

In addition to reviewing and creating policies on equality and human rights, you should also ensure that your general employee policies are inclusive in nature. These policies should cover employees' statutory rights, for example to request flexible working, time off for dependents, or to maternity leave and pay, but you may also wish to consider what provisions you can provide beyond the statutory minimum. People are usually more dedicated, productive and motivated when they are happier with their working arrangements. Providing a range of flexible benefits and working conditions (for example around hours of work, location, working age, arrangements for parents and carers, provisions for leave and recognition of cultural requirements) can attract a much more diverse group of employees and a wider pool of talent to your organisation.

You should also consider any policies you have around the use of language in the workplace. Employees should be able to use the language of their choice in the workplace where this is reasonable, proportionate and practical. There are business advantages to be gained from speaking to customers, partners and communities in their preferred language, and valuing the language skills of your staff will help these advantages to be realised.

Case study

Know where you stand

BT

BT employs 86,000 people in the UK, of which around 14,500 are homeworkers. Many other employees also work from home occasionally. Working culture and methods have been adapted to incorporate these employees, who are working remotely or travelling as part of their role. As Dennis Gissing, Head of People Practices at BT, says, once the mechanisms are put into place for flexible working, through clarity of people's roles, clear objectives, regular one-to-ones and performance management, the organisational benefits become clear.

“In terms of benefits to the organisation, we can see increased productivity, better retention, better attraction of people because we can often offer more flexibility to people to balance their work with their needs and responsibilities at home, such as childcare or other caring commitments. We've also seen a decrease in absenteeism. In addition, we're cutting down on costs because we don't need so many buildings to house people.”

“From a societal point of view, there's a very definite green benefit, in that our emissions are reduced, people aren't travelling so much, and it also enables communities to thrive better, because people spending all their time commuting won't have time to spend in their local communities or to support local shops, schools or charities. Flexibility is a win-win for us from a societal, business and costs point of view, and for attracting and retaining the best people.”

Staff figures at BT show the success of these policies, with 97 per cent of women returning to the company after maternity leave. Since abandoning a fixed retirement age of 60 in 2005, BT now has at least 2,000 employees over the age of 60.

“Flexibility is a win-win for us from a societal, business and costs point of view, and for attracting and retaining the best people.”

Policies and practices on pay and reward should also be inclusive in nature. It is important to make sure your pay system is transparent, and that everyone can understand it. Where possible, make sure that decisions on the pay of employees are made centrally. The more discretion you allow to line managers, the greater the risk of anomalies between individuals' pay.

It is a good idea to have clear policies on starting salaries, bonuses and other performance-related elements of pay. If there is discretion or a lack of transparency in starting salaries it is likely that some groups of employees will be paid more than others despite doing the same work. Bonuses and other performance payments should relate to clear, objective criteria and should be regularly monitored and reviewed.

Your workplace inclusion review should have identified if there are differences in pay between groups of employees. If this is the case, you will need a specific action plan on pay so that you can begin to address and close any gaps you find. You can find where to get information and advice on equal pay and relevant legislation in Section 9.

Take immediate action to address and tackle discrimination, harassment and bullying

A 'zero tolerance' policy on harassment, bullying and discrimination is an important way to demonstrate your organisation's commitment to creating an inclusive workplace. Make sure that you have clear policies on how negative behaviour will be dealt with, and that these policies are clearly communicated to all staff through training (see Section 9 to find out where to get further advice on this). Managers should receive special training so that they are confident in dealing with any situations that arise.

Training for all staff on inclusive working, equality and human rights

Training on equality and human rights for all staff is crucial if working culture is to be changed. This should include both learning about the different equality areas and what employers and employees must do to avoid discrimination, and exploring cultural and other differences between staff so that respect and understanding is promoted. Training should be participative and address both the conscious and unconscious ideas and stereotypes that can persist within workplaces. It should provide a chance for employees to learn from both the trainer and each other, as myths and stereotypes are discussed and tackled.

Case study

Training for all

The British Library

The British Library employs 2,200 staff across two main sites in England. All new employees take part in induction and mandatory training on diversity and equality awareness, and diversity and equality is integrated into other types of training such as recruitment and selection, or managing absence. Uplift and refresher training is regularly run for existing staff.

The library also runs bespoke training and awareness sessions targeting specific organisational needs. For instance, as part of the library's preparations for their 'Sacred' exhibition covering Judaism, Islam and Christianity (which coincided with the introduction of legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in goods and services), all key managers, human resources and 355 frontline service staff received training on religion, belief and cultural needs. As Diane Brown, Diversity and Policy Manager at the British Library, explains:

“We were expecting lots of visitors of different religions and belief, many of whom would be orthodox, and we realised that we needed to uplift the awareness, skills and knowledge of our

staff in order to make the experience fully valuable. Staff met with colleagues from across the library in varied frontline services and shared experiences. That was really valuable in terms of both teamwork and a consistent approach to customer services and also to delivery and cost in terms of releasing staff from the front line for training and filling courses.”

The training provided an opportunity for staff to talk about other relevant areas, Brown says:

“It was an opportunity to look and think through what customers and employees needed in terms of awareness with regard to religion and belief. We found that staff wanted to help customers with particular needs, but they lacked confidence in knowing how to approach the individual and their expectations. The training allowed people to understand that more.”



Diane Brown and Sandra Myers-Edwards, British Library

Make inclusion a key management approach

Without dedication to equality and human rights by managers and senior staff, attempts to create an inclusive workplace are likely to fail. Senior managers must set the standard for others, and play a vital role in promoting inclusion, by:

- Ensuring that policies on equality and human rights are fairly implemented.
- Ensuring that equality and human rights are seen as key strategic priorities.
- Championing equality and human rights, acting as role models by treating others with dignity and respect.

If senior staff do not take inclusion issues seriously, then no matter how many policies are in place to tackle discrimination and unfair treatment, lack of action by managers acts as an example to be followed throughout the organisation.

Line managers play a very important practical part in promoting inclusive working. They have direct day-to-day contact with staff so it is essential that this contact takes place within a context of dignity and respect, and that the values of inclusion are integrated into all aspects of daily management. Managers need to be able to recognise and value difference when organising daily work and as part of performance management.

For example, ensuring that working practices don't unintentionally exclude some employees sends a message to staff that everyone's contribution is valued. This might mean trying to arrange meeting times that don't exclude those with family commitments, or arranging networking and social opportunities in an inclusive environment that doesn't make participation difficult for employees of particular religion or belief, or those who are disabled.

Line managers have an opportunity to encourage and reward inclusive behaviour among their staff when setting and assessing performance objectives. For example, an objective suitable for all staff would be to 'act with dignity and respect and work towards and welcome a diverse workforce'.

Case study

A helping hand

Bernard Matthews

Bernard Matthews employs approximately 2,600 people at its head office, factories and farms in Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire. Traditionally, people from the local areas made up the majority of employees but when the availability of local workers began to decline, the company made the decision to employ migrant workers.

Before this could happen, it was important to set up an infrastructure and support system so that the new workers could be effectively inducted into the workplace, and that existing and new employees could interact and work well together. This included the introduction of dual language training instructors, interpreters and English language classes.

As Denise Mann, Head of HR Operations, explains:

“Our ethos is to do the best we can for all our employees. It is very important we help migrant staff integrate into the local community, and make sure that the infrastructure we have got in the workplace deals with their needs, so they feel part of the wider Norfolk and Suffolk

community. Naturally they are expected to work hard, like any employee, but in a situation where your first language isn't being spoken and you're not in the country you're used to, we can help to overcome some of the teething problems associated with relocation.”

The company has a zero tolerance policy on discrimination and victimisation. Managers are trained to implement the policy and to bring diversity and inclusion into their day-to-day relationships with staff, by acting as role models. Any complaints are dealt with immediately and it is made clear that dismissal is a possible outcome of discriminatory behaviour.

Denise Mann explains the thinking behind this policy:

“It doesn't matter who you are, or what position you're in: every member of staff is entitled to the same levels of respect. We work hard to ensure that the 'treat everyone as you'd expect to be treated yourself' policy is communicated across the shop floor.”

All new employees receive induction information and training sessions in a range of languages on equality, discrimination and the standards of behaviour that are expected from staff. In addition the company holds a human resources drop-in surgery every day where employees can discuss any problems in confidence. It has also worked closely with the union representing staff at Bernard Matthews, developing a range of measures to make workers of all nationalities feel 'part and parcel' of the company. This included the signing of a minimum standards agreement on equal treatment for all workers, including agency staff.

While it can be difficult to measure the full impact of the initiatives that have been taken, the company can identify a number of improvements. Productivity is maximised across the factory, and the return rate for employees of all nationalities who leave the company is very high. Initial complaints from home workers that migrant workers were receiving more favourable treatment have ceased, and employees of different nationalities now support each other and socialise outside work too. As Denise Mann explains:

“This makes people realise that fundamentally everybody is the same: they all worry about their families, enjoy a joke and care about the same issues.”

“Our ethos is to **do the best** we can for all our employees. It is very important **we help** migrant staff **integrate** into the local community.”

Denise Mann, Head of HR Operations



Case study

Breaking down barriers

North Wales Police

Senior managers act as equality champions within the North Wales Police force. There are several champions, including champions for gender, disability, LGB (lesbian, gay and bisexual), age and race equality.

“It’s about demonstrating commitment, being visible and supportive of equality, and giving it legitimacy,” says Diversity Officer, Sue Davison. “The champions are very approachable and will mentor and support individuals. They form another route for breaking down barriers.”

University of Glasgow

At the University of Glasgow there are equality champions representing gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religion or belief and disability. They each chair an equality group, which is also attended by managers representing different parts of the organisation. Each of the champions sits on the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee, which is a high-level senior management group chaired by the university principal that meets three times a year. Here they raise issues emerging from their equality group meetings, share good practice across equality groups and make strategic decisions.

Encourage and appoint equality and human rights champions

Equality and human rights champions are usually senior members of staff who act to promote awareness of issues around inclusion throughout the organisation. They may sit on corporate management committees and play a role in integrating human rights and equality in the core work of the organisation. They can also act as role models and mentors. In some organisations the champions may come from a range of grades and levels, and have the slightly different role of engaging their colleagues with equality and human rights issues and assisting with training and awareness raising events.



Mark Polin, Chief Constable and equality champion, North Wales Police

Case study

Cross pollination

BT

Employee networks at BT have worked in partnership with different functions within the company on a range of projects. Trans employees were closely involved in the development of BT's policy on gender identity transition at work. Members of the disabled employee network are consulted on new BT products to make sure that they are fully accessible, and the lesbian, gay and bisexual network was an influential force in determining BT's support for the development of new information on travelling abroad on the International Lesbian and Gay Association's website.

Encourage employee networks and forums

In medium and large organisations employee networks and forums provide an important space for staff to meet and discuss common issues. Employee networks not only promote inclusion, they also bring business benefits, acting as reference groups for new policies and procedures.

Groups are usually organised around a common interest or identity; for example carers' forums, women's networks or inter-faith staff groups. They could also be broader, for example human rights forums. In most cases, it is appropriate for groups to be open to all without any qualifying criteria. Open groups promote inclusion and have a wider function in assisting everyone to understand diversity. An employee network for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, for example, may include parents of gay children, or colleagues of gay people who want to show their support.

Groups can be run in order to try and facilitate confidentiality where this is an issue; for example having meetings out of the workplace or at lunch time so that members don't have to obtain permission to attend. Forums in some larger or dispersed organisations have set up intranet sites for virtual meetings and information exchanges.

Case study

Changing mindsets

Tower Hamlets Council

Tower Hamlets Council employs over 10,000 people and provides services for a diverse, multicultural community. A range of activities is organised with the aim of bringing staff together to celebrate, debate and learn more about different issues around inclusion and equality. The starting point for these events is often the council's employee equality forums. Last year the ethnic minority forum held lunchtime staff seminars on race equality 10 years after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) forum ran a range of events to celebrate LGBT history month. The Muslim forum organised a series of events to challenge misconceptions during Islam awareness week, and for the last two years there has been a staff debate on religion and sexual orientation on international day against homophobia.

As Michael Keating, Service Head of Scrutiny and Equalities at Tower Hamlets, points out:

“One seminar isn't going to change the world, but it's about trying to create a culture in which there's space for people to explore their anxieties or just ask questions. There's a lot of misconception and that does potentially breed prejudice, but at the same time people are willing to try and explore these issues in quite a sophisticated way. Working out how you create those spaces is absolutely crucial.”

Promote culture-changing initiatives

The best policies on equality and human rights will not be effective in creating an inclusive workplace if hidden or unconscious biases and stereotypes remain untouched. Further action may be needed in order to encourage employees to question their thinking about, and actions toward, each other.

There are a range of activities that can be organised within the workplace to promote cultural learning and sharing of ideas and outlooks. Bringing people together to debate and discuss different issues can be an important learning tool, as can organising events where employees from different backgrounds celebrate cultural events, share information, food, entertainment or participate in activities together.



Take an inclusive approach to recruitment, promotion and development

If some groups are under-represented in your organisation, or remain at the bottom of the career ladder, facing barriers in progressing, consider what measures you can take to change this. What can you do to make sure that everyone has the chance to enter the organisation and progress if they wish to do so?

Make equality and inclusion part of job descriptions

Segregated or excluding workforces can reproduce themselves in the recruitment process if candidates are chosen because they are similar to existing employees and will fit in with existing workplace culture. To create change, use the recruitment process to promote the organisation's values on equality and human rights, making commitment to inclusive working and respect for others part of the job description. Incorporating equality and human rights into the recruitment process can help ensure that successful candidates are committed to these concepts too.

Case study

Transparent recruitment

North Wales Police

As a matter of routine, interview questions for positions at North Wales Police are based on competencies for the role. All candidates are asked an equality and diversity question as part of their interview. As Diversity Officer Sue Davison explains:

“It doesn't matter what rank or grade the job is, individuals at interview are asked a question that ensures their understanding of equality and diversity. Perhaps asking for examples of where they've challenged inappropriate behaviour or how they've tackled an equality issue before; the idea being that those same values, attitudes and behaviours would carry forward into the new job.”

Monitor applicants and staff at different levels within the organisation

By collecting and analysing data on the people applying for positions within your organisation and the people who are successfully appointed, you can work out if your recruitment and selection procedures are fair, or if they impact adversely on particular groups. The same procedures should be followed with internal promotion and development opportunities. By collecting and analysing this information regularly, you will be in a much better position to pick up early warnings of unfair recruitment practices or the need to attract and support under-represented groups.

Attract candidates from the widest pool available

Collecting and analysing equality monitoring data on your employees will help you identify if you have under-represented groups among your staff. If this is the case, you can take action to try to redress this balance. Consider how you advertise positions and which media you use: is a diverse group of potential candidates likely to find out about the positions or only some groups? If you use photographic adverts try to ensure that different groups of people are featured. Avoid word-of-mouth recruitment as using this method will not allow you to reach out to different groups.

Stating on job advertisements and recruitment information that you are an equal opportunities employer, using the 'positive about disabled people' symbol, and having information publicly available on your website about your equality and human rights policies are good ways to show your commitment to inclusion and to encourage candidates from minority groups to apply. If you would like to attract particular groups of applicants (for example women or ethnic minority groups) who are currently under-represented in your organisation, you may wish to include a statement that you welcome applications from these groups as part of the advertisement. You may also wish to advertise positions in publications or websites that these groups are likely to view (see Section 9 for where to find guidelines on this).

Make sure that all staff involved in recruitment and promotion receive equality and human rights training and that the selection process used is fair and transparent

Staff involved in making decisions and dealing with job applications need a strong understanding of equality and human rights issues to ensure that they do not inadvertently discriminate. While candidates should not be asked questions about caring commitments or disability as part of the selection process, some may require flexibility or reasonable adjustments to be made in the overall recruitment process. If staff involved in recruitment are not aware of these needs, talented candidates may be excluded from the process.

When selecting successful candidates, selectors should be trained to make job criterion-related assessments only. Opportunities for selectors to exercise discretion should be minimised. Decisions must be transparent and based on a fair evaluation of the candidates' ability to meet the job specification and key competencies.

Requests for documentation proving candidates' eligibility to work in the UK should be made to all applicants, aside from their nationality or race, in order to avoid making assumptions about candidates' backgrounds and unintentionally discriminating against them. Make sure you are aware of the different documents that fall into this category (see Section 9 for sources of information on this).

Reward talent and achievement rather than stereotypical indicators of success

Ensure that any selection tests and procedures used are fair and designed only to measure job criterion-related information. Remember that cultural factors may affect the ability of some applicants to succeed. For example, candidates whose first language is not English may struggle when using tests that demand a high level of English. Is this level necessary in order to do the job in question? It may be beneficial to familiarise all candidates with the types of tests they may face in advance, helping those who are unfamiliar with taking recruitment tests to feel more comfortable and to perform their best on the day.

Rewarding stereotypical signs of success and dedication such as long hours or presenteeism when making decisions on promotion can exclude many talented and dedicated employees who cannot work long hours because of caring responsibilities or disability, but still contribute a great deal to your organisation as loyal, skilled and experienced workers.

Value skills achieved outside of the workplace

Candidates from some groups may lack work experience or qualifications because they have formerly faced barriers within employment or education. Before you advertise job vacancies, it is a good idea to conduct a job analysis in order to determine exactly what skills, experience and competencies are needed to do the job. It may be that that some work-related experience is not necessary if candidates can show that they have other experience gained outside employment, and the ability to apply this experience in different situations. Once a job analysis has been done, job specifications can be drawn up that are inclusive in nature and that candidates can meet by drawing on a wider pool of experience and knowledge.

“Rewarding **stereotypical** signs of **success** and dedication such as long hours or presenteeism when making decisions on promotion **can exclude** many talented and dedicated **employees.**”

Case study

More appealing

BT

When BT began its Openreach function, which provides direct network access to all communication providers in the UK, it needed to recruit 15,000 new engineers. As only two per cent of engineers were women, the resulting recruitment drive had a strong diversity focus in order to try and address this imbalance. The company took care to ensure that its recruitment practices would not put women off, and would actively encourage them to apply.

“We looked at our channels of recruitment, making sure that adverts were gender neutral and that our website had women engineers talking about their role,” says Dennis Gissing, Head of People Practices.

“We focused very much on the fact that we weren’t looking for direct technical skills. We were looking for people who could demonstrate aptitude for learning technical skills, but they need not have engineering apprenticeships or highly technical qualifications. Actually we were looking for softer skills just as much, in terms of dealing with customers, for example. The campaign was the beginning of a process,” Gissing explains. “We recruited around 10 per cent of our intake as women, which was much higher than before, but obviously still not 50 per cent. It’s a step-by-step culture change moving forward.”

Encourage and enable development for all staff

In order to create a fully inclusive workplace in which all employees can participate and reach their potential, it is important that everyone is given access to training and development opportunities. Some staff may need particular provisions to be put in place before they can take advantage of the opportunities you offer. In order to ensure that staff are not inadvertently excluded from development opportunities you should undertake an equality review of these opportunities, and consult staff about their requirements.

As part of your workplace inclusion review you may have noticed that particular groups of employees tend to work in a limited number of areas, or are only in lower grades, usually because they face barriers in progressing to other areas. If this is the case it is useful to think about how you can help to develop and build these employees' skills so that their potential to progress can be realised. In addition to training courses, there are several other ways in which this can be done, for example by offering job shadowing opportunities in other departments or chances to take part in cross-project working in different areas. If your employees are represented by a union, you might wish to work in partnership with the union to set up union learning representatives.



Case study

A helping hand

Tower Hamlets Council

Tower Hamlets, in partnership with a local university, runs an aspiring leaders course that allows staff from under-represented groups to develop their management skills and progress through the organisation. The course is flexible and involves a range of aspects, including mentoring and working on different projects across the local authority, as well as study opportunities.

Michael Keating, Service Head of Scrutiny and Equalities at Tower Hamlets, says:

“We have a workforce to reflect the community strategy and we work hard to make it a reality. It isn’t simply a matter of numbers, but also creating different debates and perspectives. If people live locally you hope that they translate those debates into the way they view their neighbourhoods and interact with their neighbours when they go home at night.”

Offer mentoring opportunities to junior and new staff

Mentoring is the development of a one-to-one relationship in which the mentee is helped to plan and achieve their personal goals with the help of a senior colleague’s experience and knowledge. Mentoring can

be particularly useful for staff who face either conscious or unconscious barriers to progression, and it can offer a range of benefits not only to the employee who is mentored, but also to the mentor and the wider organisation.

As well as offering the mentee a chance to benefit from their mentor’s skills, mentoring also offers the opportunity for both parties in the relationship to see work from another person’s perspective and to reassess assumptions they may previously have made about other people in the workplace. Mentors find that the time and work they invest in the relationship is repaid because they develop new skills: for example in listening, communicating and management style.

Employers and organisations benefit too, as managers who become mentors develop new skills which impact on both workplace culture and customer service. Meanwhile as mentees gain in self-confidence and skills, employers may observe increases in productivity and employee retention, and the talent they possess is given optimum opportunity to be utilised by the organisation.

Case study

Perfect pairing

Lovells

Lovells is an international law firm offering a broad range of legal expertise. In its London office there are 1,300 partners and staff. It has a range of equality and diversity measures in place, including a new mentoring project, sponsored by its women's staff network.

“Launching the women's network was part of supporting the ongoing diversity initiatives at the firm. With increasing numbers of women joining Lovells, we are continuing to develop initiatives and support mechanisms that will assist us in retaining female talent,” says Katherine Mulhern, Partner in Capital Markets and co-chair of the women's network.

The pilot mentoring project, set up in September 2009, was initiated as a result of employee demand: women at the firm said they would welcome the chance to speak to a senior colleague about a range of issues such as career progression and work-life balance. So far 27 pairings have been made, and the scheme has attracted women from a range of areas within the firm.

Marian Bloodworth, of Counsel in the Employment Group and co-chair of the firm's women's network says the success of the pilot project is encouraging:

“It has clearly tapped into a need, and the feedback, from the mentees in particular, has been so positive.”

Guidelines on the basic principles behind mentoring, such as confidentiality, commitment and respect, are issued to pairs, but the project is flexible, with the pairs able to choose and direct what they want to get out of it. Pairs are carefully matched to ensure that each mentee is partnered with the mentor most appropriate for their goals and needs. Matches are always made outside the mentee's line management.

As Alison Unsted, Diversity Manager at Lovells, explains:

“It was important to ensure that mentors were fully aware of what their role could involve. We brought in an external coaching and mentoring company for a roundtable session so that everyone could explore what the role involved.”

Some mentors asked what the end product of the relationship should be. As Marian Bloodworth says:

“We told them: ‘Just the fact that you’re there for that person in a supportive way to answer their questions or to bounce ideas off, giving an hour of your time every quarter to listen, steer and help them is of value in itself.’ They won’t necessarily have a promotion at the end, or 10 new clients, but they will feel more confident in terms of what they’re doing.”

The project is already bringing benefits for mentees, as Bloodworth explains:

“It provides a networking opportunity for women in the firm to talk to more senior people who they may not normally see. As soon as people start building their networks they inevitably have better business prospects, whether it’s internally or externally.”

There are also benefits for mentors, who, as Alison Unsted says:

“...are reminded of what life is like for trainee solicitors and women in more junior positions, because it might have been quite some time since they were in that position themselves.”

“The other thing that it’s done is align us with clients, who have been interested to hear that we’re doing it,” says Bloodworth. “Increasingly we find that clients have very strong expectations in terms of diversity. Through initiatives such as these we can demonstrate that we are doing more than paying lip service to equality and diversity.”



Alison Unsted, Marian Bloodworth and Katherine Mulhern, Lovells

Offer work placements

Offering work placements is another way to widen the pool of talent that you attract, giving groups that may find it difficult to gain work experience a chance to demonstrate their ability to contribute to your organisation. It also gives volunteers the chance to build up skills, experience, confidence and therefore employability. Placements can also have a positive impact on workplace culture, as new faces bring new ideas and outlooks, and existing employees can learn and benefit from this.



Case study

Giving you a start

Marks & Spencer

Marks & Spencer offers 'Marks and Start' voluntary work placements for disadvantaged groups, including homeless, disabled, young people and lone parents. Candidates for the placements, which last between two and four weeks, are sourced by Marks & Spencer's charity partners: Gingerbread, the Prince's Trust, DisabledGo and Business in the Community. These organisations prepare candidates for their placements, helping them to recognise the skills that they already have and building self-confidence and motivation. Over the last six years almost 3,500 people have completed the programme. Of the volunteers placed at Marks & Spencer, 40 per cent go on to find work with the company or elsewhere within three months of completing the placement.

Participants are allocated a 'buddy' who will be their main point of contact. They also undertake induction training and a series of coaching cards during their placement. At the end of the placement participants receive an accredited certificate, and the partnership organisations continue to work with them on finding employment.

Claire Ford, Community Partnerships Manager at Marks & Spencer, explains:

“Even if the placement doesn't lead to a job, Marks and Start is a major step forward to help people get into work. Just to have this on their CV and the opportunity to do two weeks' work experience creates a huge boost in their confidence.”

In addition, the programme creates development opportunities for existing staff, who can use the experience they gain from 'buddying' to become staff coaches. And as Ford points out:

“Buddies and coaches feel really motivated when someone they've taken under their wing and trained gets a job.”

Some ex-participants go on to become buddies for new candidates and some buddies do further work with the charity partner.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that in stores where Marks and Start is run, staff perceptions about particular groups have changed. Managers at the Rotherham store found that employees were moved by stories of the participants involved in the scheme, and became much more reluctant to judge or label people.

Claire Ford goes on to explain the business benefits of the programme to the company:

“At M&S it's very important for us to have a cross-population appeal. A diverse workplace with staff from a range of backgrounds means that customers have someone they can relate to when they're in store. We work hard to try to make sure that happens across the country.”

In addition, staff originally recruited through the Marks and Start programme have high retention and low absence rates.

Working in partnership on programmes like Marks and Start is also beneficial, as Ford describes: ‘We simply couldn't have done it without our charity partners. They do so much of the preparation, selection and training – all the things that might make employers nervous of going into this area because of the resources that may be required. Through Marks and Start we've created good and long-lasting relationships with our charity partners – it's a win-win situation.’

“Even if the **placement** doesn't lead to a job, Marks and Start is a major **step forward** to help people get into work. Just to have this on their CV and the **opportunity** to do two weeks' work experience creates a huge boost in their **confidence**.”

Claire Ford, Community Partnerships Manager

Conduct exit interviews

Exit interviews with staff leaving the organisation can provide vital information on the status of human rights and equality within the workplace, highlighting areas for future improvement. Employees leave jobs for many different reasons, but in cases where they have felt excluded, undervalued or have experienced hostile workplace culture, this may be the only time that they feel comfortable in speaking about it. The results of exit interviews should be compiled and analysed, along with other consultation and monitoring information, by membership of equality groups. The findings can be used to contribute to future action plans and to improve employee retention, productivity, satisfaction and wellbeing at work.

Encourage engagement with the local community

Involving your business in the local community is a great way to maximise the benefits that come from creating an inclusive workplace. Actively engaging with the community can be a rewarding and valuable experience for employees, who will bring back what they learn into the workplace. Community engagement also presents opportunities to promote your organisation and its inclusive values, creating new links with potential customers and employees.

Consider what your organisation can offer, and what the local community needs. Can this be tied into activities that will increase employee skills and experience? One activity that can produce changes in attitudes and behaviour, and promote increased understanding and respect among employees, is volunteering. Businesses that have set up employer-assisted volunteering programmes have noticed a range of benefits as a result, in terms of employee skill development, changed outlooks and attitudes, and their reputation both within the local community and more widely.

Case study

Time to help

BT

A new employer-supported volunteering initiative was launched at BT in April 2009. Each employee is entitled to three paid days off a year to undertake voluntary work if they wish to. A range of opportunities are listed on the volunteering section of BT's staff intranet. By November 2009 20,000 volunteering days had been taken across BT.

As Dennis Gissing, Head of People Practices at BT, explains, volunteering is a great way of changing attitudes and promoting inclusion:

“When you work in a big company, very often your world is around that organisation as you spend a lot of your time there. It could be that most of your friends work there. Volunteering can make you realise how narrow your world might actually be.”

“People can be nervous about difference, because they don't want to offend. People can put up their own barriers for no real reason. The volunteering programme can put people in situations with which they're not familiar; help them learn, help them be more inclusive. It can change your attitude to your work colleagues, your family and friends, and give you a better connection to the community. It's a great way of breaking down barriers.”

Volunteering also brings a range of other benefits, both for employee development and for community relations. Gissing points out that:

“It's putting people in real-life situations where they're going to develop and hone their skills. We also think that a lot of people will take their three days, but actually give a lot more because they'll get connected with that charity, community or organisation. So we put something back into the community and we develop our people.”

Case study

Dedicated to others

KPMG

KPMG in the UK is a leading provider of professional services including audit, tax and advisory. It has 22 locations in the UK and over 10,000 staff and partners. One of KPMG's key values is: 'We are committed to our communities', and one of the activities promoting this value is employer-supported volunteering, as Mike Kelly, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at KPMG Europe LLP explains:

"All of our people are provided with 3.5 hours per month to volunteer, and we are proud to support our people to use their skills to benefit the wider community."

One of the volunteering projects that KPMG people can become involved in is a project run in partnership with the Refugee Council, aiming to equip refugees who may be qualified and experienced in the financial sector in their own countries to find employment in the accountancy and finance sectors in the UK. KPMG volunteers spend time supporting refugees through the UK job application and interview process, helping them to write CVs, practise their interview techniques, improve their confidence and develop their knowledge of the UK marketplace.

"Volunteering with the Refugee Council provides KPMG people with the opportunity to use their professional experiences to provide assistance and mentorship, gain a personal perspective on a social issue in the UK, and gain an insight into other cultures and experiences," says Kelly.

In 2009, KPMG volunteers provided support to 20 refugees in London. This year, the project will expand beyond London, and there are plans to launch a mentoring programme with the Refugee Council to provide mentors on an ongoing basis to refugees, supporting them with employability issues.



An employment coaching session at KPMG
46

4.4 Communicate and implement the action plan

Once you have developed your action plan in consultation with employees and groups representing them, it is time to put the plan into action and to make sure that everyone in the organisation is aware of it. The way you choose to do this will depend on the size and nature of your organisation, but this section contains some methods you might wish to consider.

Implementing the plan

For each measure you want to put in place, and each change you want to make as part of your action plan, it is useful to spend some time thinking about what the outcome of that action will be, how you will measure the impact of the action, and what the key implementation and review dates will be.

Set up regular reviews so that you can assess the progress that is being made and provide updates to your employees.

Action	Outcome	Lead staff responsible and senior sponsor	Milestones	Completion date	Review dates
Training for all staff on equality, human rights and inclusive working	<p>Increased staff awareness and knowledge</p> <p>Equality and human rights as key part of regular training programme</p>		<p>Initial training for all staff completed</p> <p>Programme for new starters in place</p> <p>Regular refresher or update training in place</p>		

Communicating the plan

There are lots of ways that you could let employees know more about your inclusion action plan and its implementation. Some possible options are:

- Arrange launch events or seminars for the action plan, to which all staff are invited.
- Promote new policies and make sure they are accessible to all staff.
- Create an equality or inclusion section of your staff intranet, where the plan can be viewed.
- Disseminate information on the plan in other formats.

Launch events and seminars

One of the best ways to make sure employees know about changes and developments is to tell them directly. And a clear method of demonstrating your organisation's commitment to inclusion and equality is to launch your action plan at an event or series of events for all staff. You might wish to use the opportunity to promote intercultural learning between colleagues or start up new initiatives forming part of the plan, such as mentoring opportunities.

Promote new or existing policies and make sure they are accessible to all staff

The most well-written and thought-out plans and policies are of no use if employees do not know about them. Make sure that you inform everyone where they can find the action plan and related policies and who they can contact for more information. You might wish to arrange information sessions for staff so that they can find out more. Training should be arranged for all managers on policies and procedures around inclusion, dignity and respect.

Case study

Promoting with events

Gentoo

Gentoo is a people and property business based in north east England with 1,767 staff working predominantly in housing management and construction. It recently held an equality and diversity month, during which the business' new equality and diversity strategy was launched and a series of handbooks on different equality areas were promoted. A range of awareness raising events took place throughout the month, including an equality quiz, all of the answers for which could be found on the staff intranet or in the handbooks. Staff also took part in a competition to create a new 'diversity matters' logo for Gentoo, and the winning entry is now used in corporate documents.

During the month all staff received a 'group brief' equality and diversity DVD presentation and the business briefing for senior managers also focused on equality and diversity.

"Something I think we've done quite well is identifying different hooks to get different parts of the business on board," explains Pam Walton, Equality and Diversity Coordinator at Gentoo.

"For the senior managers this is very much about the business case, whereas when we're talking to frontline staff we tend to stress that actually, equality and diversity is just another aspect of excellent customer care."

The series of staff handbooks were distributed to all employees and are also available on the staff intranet and on Gentoo's external website. The subjects they cover include cultural awareness, disability, sexual orientation and gender.

"When the handbooks were first distributed to all staff we had phone calls from people who had questions, or managers who wanted more information about how to respond to questions," she says. "People were talking about them and finding them really interesting. The handbooks made topics like sexual orientation and transgender much easier to discuss and understand. And you have to think that the questions and comments you get are just the ones that have come to you – there must be a lot more discussion going on about it."

The handbooks were designed both to help employees in their everyday work with customers, and to help promote culture change in the workplace.

“We came from the viewpoint of how does this relate to us as a housing provider?” she explains. “The handbooks put practical information into people’s hands to help them do their day-to-day jobs.”

Putting the information out into the workplace and allowing time and space for discussion is vital in creating culture change.

“At the end of the day you really don’t know – your staff come into work and you make assumptions, but you really don’t know who they are or how they live outside of work. It’s important to open these topics up and to generate awareness-raising and discussion. Now that there’s more discussion, and people have a point of reference, it opens these sensitive areas up. This can only be good and can only help to make things more comfortable.”

Create an equality or inclusion section on your staff intranet

This section should be visible and known to staff, and can contain your action plan, as well as policies on equality, dignity and respect in the workplace, information on employee networks and forums, schemes such as mentoring, and details of upcoming training and events.

Disseminate equality information in other formats

In many workplaces, not all employees have access to a computer or a staff intranet, so it is important to communicate information in a range of other formats. This might be in newsletters, during team meetings or on staff noticeboards. It is important to remember that in order to reach all employees you may need to translate materials into other languages or provide it in alternative formats for disabled staff.



Equality 'snakes and ladders' training at Gentoo

Case study

Spreading the word

The British Library

Communicating information and action plans on inclusion, diversity and equality at the British Library is done in several different ways as not all staff have access to computers.

“You have to have a wide variety of communications,” says Diane Brown, Diversity and Policy Manager at the Library. “The Library’s intranet is very good for keeping news of everything that’s going on, but we also have people who don’t use computers every day, for instance those who work in basement storage. There are noticeboards, plasma screens and team briefs for cascading information. We also send out hard copies of the staff and diversity newsletters.”

Communication of information and discussion of issues around diversity and equality is always valuable, she points out:

“There are little pockets of people in all organisations that can be resistant to change, and accommodation of diverse needs and making change can take time and effort. But I’m always impressed by the number of people who are committed, enthusiastic and ready for discussion. It’s interesting to have all the different perspectives so that people can take on board new ideas.”

“I’m **always impressed** by the number of people who are committed, enthusiastic and ready for discussion. It’s interesting to have all the **different perspectives**.”

Diane Brown, Diversity and Policy Manager

4.5 Review policies, practices and informal working culture on a regular basis

It is vital that you regularly monitor, evaluate and review any action you take on workplace inclusion, in order to assess what is working well, what needs more attention, and anything that has been missed. This is the only way you can measure what you achieve and collect the good practice that can inform future initiatives.

Data should be collected and evaluated on a regular basis, and employees should also be consulted and updated regularly. Using your first inclusion review as a baseline, you can see the improvements created by the implementation of your action plan each time you repeat a monitoring or consultation exercise or review your policies, and in each subsequent inclusion review you complete. See the next section to find out more about measuring the success of your plan.



Section 5

How will I know if I'm successful?

Measuring the impact that your actions on inclusive working have is very important, both to demonstrate what you have achieved, and to plan future action. Creating culture change is not easy, but the measures set out below will help you to evaluate success and share it with others.

Consult staff

Repeat the consultation work you did before creating your action plan: what do employees and their representatives feel has changed? What work do staff feel still needs to be done? Repeat the staff attitudes survey to find out if more understanding of difference and of the importance of equality and human rights has been created.

Review policies

Look at your policies again and measure what has changed. Are you now satisfied that the policies you have in place are inclusive and have been 'equality proofed'? Are staff aware of these policies and has take-up of employee provisions improved?

Look at monitoring data

Consider if the way in which you collect data on employees and customers has changed and improved. What areas are now monitored, what is the response rate like, and what action has been taken as a result of collecting and evaluating the data? Analysing the data collected from monitoring on an annual basis will help you measure progress and prompt activity in any problem areas indicated by the data.

Look again at the demographic make-up of your organisation: has it become more diverse or representative of the local community? Consider information on the job applications you have received and the staff who have left: what does it tell you? Has take-up of training and development improved among minority groups and have there been any changes in promotion patterns or occupational segregation? If managers have been trained on equality, human rights and inclusive working, how has this impacted on retention, morale and sickness absence?

Benchmark

Compare yourself against a standard, along with other organisations. You can use national or sector specific resources for benchmarking, which also help to share good practice and ideas. Success in meeting some benchmarks can lead to national recognition as an exemplar employer (see Section 9 for where to get more information on this). In larger organisations you could set up an internal benchmark, so that different areas of the business can learn from each other, working towards the same targets and using the same indicators of success.

Case study

Share good practice

Tower Hamlets Council

All team work plans at Tower Hamlets go through a process of peer review, and one aspect of this is 'equality proofing' of the plans. Each year a group of officers from across the local authority are recruited or volunteer for the peer review process, and each year a different cross-section of teams are reviewed. Equality and diversity is one of the assessment categories used, and reviewers consider a range of issues including whether monitoring information about service users has been collected and analysed, and if equality impact assessments have been done. As Michael Keating, Service Head of Scrutiny and Equalities at the council, explains:

“It not only reminds people of the importance of ensuring that they have done some thinking about equality within their plan, but it also sets it as part of the whole. They're also assessed about value for money, those sorts of things, so strength is added to equality by including it with other key considerations.”

The results of the peer assessment are compiled into a report that is presented to the corporate management team, and fed back to individual directorate management teams. The report is written in a tone to ensure that it is interpreted as a learning tool rather than the results of a test. In addition, the reviewers build up a skill, learn more about equality and diversity, and take the questions asked as part of the review process back to their own work and teams.

Collect and share good practice, and celebrate achievement

When you identify successful measures that have created change in your organisation, make sure that you celebrate this change and learn from it. Collecting and promoting good practice and success stories can raise morale and satisfaction among employees, and endorse your organisation externally as an inclusive, forward-thinking business.

Case study

Celebrating success

Barnardo's

Barnardo's is a leading children's charity, employing 6,000 paid staff and 11,000 volunteers across the UK. For the last four years it has run an internal equality and diversity award scheme, which provides models of good practice for all functions within the charity to aspire to and gives recognition to those functions that are making good progress.

Barnardo's directors and corporate directors are required to make a submission to the award each year. They are asked to explain what action they have taken within a range of areas, including leadership and engagement in equality, delivery of equality and diversity training and monitoring access to training, and recruitment monitoring. They are also asked to submit examples of proactive equality practice. The submissions are scored by a panel of staff representatives from Barnardo's corporate equality board, which includes the chairs of staff forums.

As Teresa Williams, Senior Equality and Diversity Adviser at Barnardo's, explains:

“The award is not intended to ‘name and shame’ but to acknowledge and share good practice. The three top scorers receive an award at a high-profile internal event attended by a large number of staff and managers. Last year this was at our staff conference; the previous year it was at the launch of our race equality strategy.”

The award scheme allows different Barnardo's regions and functions to measure progress on equality, identifying gaps in practice and action points for the future. It also provides data to illustrate emerging trends across the organisation.



Section 6

Practical ideas for small businesses

Workplace inclusion is just as important for small businesses as it is for larger ones, and many smaller firms are reaping the benefits of their efforts to create a workplace that is relevant and appealing to its surrounding community and customers, and attracts the best local talent.

The five stage process outlined in Section 4 can be used by any size business, but as a smaller employer you will wish to tailor each stage to make it practical and appropriate for you and your staff.

When developing your action plan at stage three of the process, you might decide to focus on some of the ideas below.

Actively involve employees and customers

Involve and consult staff about the key issues facing them and what they feel should go into the action plan. While it may be easier to bring everyone together and collect views in a small firm, it is also possible that staff will be reluctant to give their views in front of other staff or managers. You could consider inviting anonymous views and comments.

Build a culture of inclusion and respect

In order to create a productive and motivated workforce that encourages talented staff to remain with you, there are several actions that you can take:

- Create, extend or improve policies on equality and human rights to ensure they are inclusive and make sure other policies are fair and accessible to all. Make sure staff are aware of these policies and how to take up the benefits you offer.
- Provide training for all staff on quality and human rights, and specific training for managers on these issues, including advice on dealing with tension between different staff, bullying and harassment.
- Have a 'zero tolerance' policy on discrimination, harassment and bullying, and make sure that senior staff act as role models for this policy.

Recruitment, promotion and development

Make sure you attract and keep the best people into your business, by using open and fair recruitment procedures and providing opportunities for development on an equal basis. To help you do this, you should:

- Attract candidates from the widest pool available. Advertise vacancies in different places and avoid word-of-mouth-recruitment. If you would like to attract staff from under-represented groups think about including a statement in the advert encouraging applications, or advertising in publications or websites these groups might view (see Section 9 for where to find guidelines on this).
- Make sure that staff involved in recruitment use a fair and transparent process, and that the decisions they make are based on job requirements only. Make sure they have a good understanding of equality issues so that they don't inadvertently discriminate.
- Reward talent and achievement and value skills achieved outside the workplace. Some candidates may lack work experience or qualifications because they have faced barriers in employment or education. For each vacancy that arises, ask what experience is really necessary, and could wider skills gained in volunteering or community activities be just as useful?
- Encourage and enable development for all staff. Remember some staff may need particular provisions to be put into place before they can take

advantage of the opportunities you offer: for example, you should consider the needs of disabled staff and those with caring commitments when offering training and development opportunities.

- Offer buddying or mentoring for new and junior staff. This can be a relatively low-cost practice, as senior or experienced staff offer advice and support to new or junior staff, helping them to feel welcome and more confident and encouraging them to contribute and progress within the firm.
- Offer work placements. Providing opportunities for people to gain work experience, new skills and confidence through a placement or mentoring relationship not only creates benefits for the individual, but also for your business. Those on placements can help increase productivity as well as bring new ideas and outlooks. Offering placements also demonstrates your commitment to the local community, acting as an excellent promotional tool.

See Section 9 for details of where you can find more information on workplace policies and practices for small employers.

Engage with the local community

Small businesses are particularly well placed to work with local communities and many are already doing so in an informal manner that creates strong links and two-way benefits. Consulting with customers is a good way to start off this process. This will help you to think about how your business can be tailored and your staff trained to meet and understand diverse needs. You may also wish to get involved in local events or community organisations, in order to further promote your business as inclusive and customer focused.

Case study

Working with the community

The Image Group

The Image Group is a large format digital print specialist based in Eccles, Greater Manchester, and employing 28 staff. Most work flexible hours between 8am and 6pm, and production staff work shifts between 6am and 9pm. The business tries to be as inclusive as it possibly can within the financial and operational constraints it faces as a small business. For example, all employees are entitled to two weeks paternity leave on full pay, and there is a NVQ development programme available for production staff.

Recently the company offered a six-week work placement in the factory to a volunteer, arranged via the charity Refugee Action. As Dave Brunt, Operations Director explains:

“Tariq had worked in a similar area in his home country, cutting and finishing printed products, but he needed UK work experience and references to help him get work here. He understood that he wouldn't earn a salary, but that he would gain from the experience. If he ever needs a reference now it won't be a problem.”

There were some practical considerations to take into account. For example, the business was a considerable distance from

where Tariq lived, and there were no direct routes of public transport.

“In order to make the placement workable, we arranged a ‘buddy’ for Tariq, who lived close to him,” Brunt explains. “The buddy was given a company vehicle for the duration of the placement, so that he could drive them both to and from work.”

This buddy also acted as Tariq's shift partner, providing on-the-job training and support. The placement was flexible as Tariq was also studying at college, so he wasn't expected at work every day.

The placement brought a range of benefits, as Brunt says:

“For most of our staff this was the first time that they had met a refugee. Everyone got along very well and we were really impressed with Tariq's knowledge. We knew he had relevant experience from his home country, but he ended up showing our guys some new techniques. Tariq's buddy in particular learnt a lot from the experience. Tariq also learnt about our newer machinery, which was different from what he'd been used to. It was a really helpful experience for both parties.”

The Image Group found that work placements can enhance productivity as well as help the individual concerned.

“We don’t compete on price, we’re all about service – that’s how we win our orders, and our biggest growing section is recommendations. Having someone with previous experience who could help us do this was a bonus. Obviously the economy at the moment isn’t great, and we’re glad to help anyone if we can, but, as a small business, if there are financial implications for us, it’s more difficult. But all we had to do with the placement was get Tariq to and from work. It was a win-win situation all round. It’s certainly something we’d do again in the future.”





Matthew Curtis, Marks & Spencer

Section 7

A success story

Marks & Spencer

Each year the achievements of the most successful participants and stores involved with the Marks and Start work placement programme are recognised at an awards ceremony.

One former winner of the ‘Marks and Start Achiever’ award is Matthew Curtis. After a disabling traffic accident and a long rehabilitation process, Matthew found himself unemployed for several years. After a four-week placement at Marks & Spencer, organised in partnership with DisabledGo, he was successful in finding permanent work at the store and recently got engaged to a colleague he met through the programme.

Matthew describes how Marks and Start has helped him:

“I think this programme is so worthwhile. It’s really given me my confidence back. I feel that I have a purpose in life – not just sitting at home watching the TV. I love meeting people and my life has gone from one extreme to the other – nothing to a lot.”

“My colleagues are perfect. Even colleagues I don’t work closely with are friendly and supportive. They really look after me and understand that I may need a little more support and time to get to know things. For me the overriding reason for coming into work is the atmosphere and my colleagues.”

Matthew hopes to be able to repay the support he has received:

“I want to progress within Marks & Spencer. What I really appreciate is that the store is so supportive of this; they are allowing me to progress at my own speed.”



Section 8

Questions and Answers

Here are some Questions and Answers featuring some of the most common concerns for employers around inclusive working.

We already have a range of equality and diversity policies and practices, but do we really need to consider human rights too? Aren't human rights more relevant for business overseas?

There is a strong link between human rights and equality. While we often hear in the media about human rights concerns overseas, the Human Rights Act applies in the UK and states that everyone is entitled to certain minimum necessary fundamental rights and freedoms to enable them to flourish. The human rights values of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy provide an effective framework for you as an organisation to draw upon both when dealing with customers, and in employment practices. Adopting a human rights approach is perhaps the most inclusive thing you can do.

We have limited resources and staff time to allocate to these issues. Why should we prioritise this?

Many of the ideas covered in this guide needn't cost a lot of money or take up lots of staff time. Some of the options set out in Section 3 will be more relevant to your business than others, and you may need to adapt them to make them work for you.

Prioritising inclusive working in a way that is practical for your organisation will bring a range of benefits, both in the short and long term, and your efforts will be repaid in terms of attracting and retaining staff and increasing productivity, customer appeal and access to new markets, and creating relationships with the communities you serve.

How can I treat all my staff equally at the same time as recognising some people's particular needs and differences?

The basis behind a human rights approach in employment is that all staff should be treated with dignity and respect, and everyone should have the chance to fulfil their potential and participate within the organisation. For some people, this will be more difficult than others, and these people may need extra support in order to benefit from opportunities on an equal footing to their colleagues. Equality legislation sets out when it is lawful, and, in the case of disabled people, legally necessary, to treat some people differently (see Section 9 for further information on this).

Taking account of particular needs and adjustment does not mean that you are neglecting those people who do not have these needs. It means that you are creating the conditions necessary for everyone to successfully contribute to your business. In treating all employees fairly, respecting and understanding difference, you are sending out the message that everyone's contribution is valued, and helping to spread this message across the organisation.

What if some staff don't welcome the plans?

The key to ensuring that your plans are welcomed by all is consultation and participation. Involve staff and their representatives in the development of your action plan, and communicate with them regularly on the progress being made. When announcing plans make sure you explain why you are taking action and what the outcomes will be.

Equality and human rights training for all employees, along with culture-changing initiatives such as mentoring, work placements and information-sharing events, all help to promote the benefits of inclusive working and reduce any tension between different groups. Culture change cannot happen overnight, but the ideas set out in this guide will help you to begin the change and the resulting benefits.

How can I deal with sensitive issues like religion or sexual orientation without causing tension or disagreement?

While these issues can be sensitive, it is important to discuss them openly in order to increase understanding and promote respect for difference. Clearly setting out the standards of behaviour you expect, and providing training and information for all staff on issues such as religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability encourages debate, discussion and learning within an appropriate context, and breaks down barriers that may exist around such topics.

Inclusive recruitment practices increase your chances of bringing employees from different backgrounds together, thereby improving the opportunities for these employees to learn from each other, and spread this learning outside of the workplace.

We are a small business. Is this really relevant for us?

Creating an inclusive workplace brings benefits for organisations of all sizes. Many small businesses already have strong links with local communities, and these could be developed further without significant cost implications. Having a smaller number of employees can also be an advantage, for example when implementing new ways of working, or consulting and involving staff. Have a look at Section 6 for some practical ideas for smaller organisations.

‘Clearly setting out the standards of behaviour you expect, and providing training and information for all staff breaks down barriers’

Section 9

Where to go for further information

Guidance on good employment practice and equality and employment legislation

Equality and Human Rights Commission
guidance for employers:
www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration
Service (Acas):
www.acas.org.uk

Business Gateway (Scotland)
www.bgateway.com

Business in the Community
www.bitc.org.uk

Business Link
www.businesslink.gov.uk

Close the Gap (Scotland)
www.closesthegap.org.uk

Employers Forum on Age
www.efa.org.uk

Employers Forum on Disability
www.efd.org.uk

Employers Forum on Belief
www.efbelief.org.uk

Flexible Support for Business (Wales)
www.business-support-wales.gov.uk

Institute of Community Cohesion
toolkit for employers
<http://icoco.web.coop/home>

Stonewall
www.stonewall.org.uk

Guidance on human rights

Equality and Human Rights Commission
human rights information and inquiry
www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights

British Institute for Human Rights
www.bihr.org.uk/

Guidance on good practice in procurement

Improvement and Development Agency
equality guidance on procurement
www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=9308150

Office of Government Commerce Make
Equality Count guidance
www.ogc.gov.uk/policy_and_standards_framework_equality.asp

Supplier Diversity Europe handbook
www.supplierdiversityeurope.eu/news_details.php?id=82

Information on the work placement and volunteering schemes featured

Business in the Community's Business
Action on Homelessness project
www.bitc.org.uk/community/employability/homelessness/index.html

DisabledGo
www.disabledgo.com

Gingerbread
www.gingerbread.org.uk

Refugee Action
www.refugee-action.org.uk

The Refugee Council
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Information on union learning

www.unionlearn.org.uk

Guidance on employing migrant workers and the points-based system

UK Border Agency advice for employers
www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers/

Guidance on employing refugees

Refugee Council guide for employers
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/practice/employersguides/

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following for their assistance:

Teresa Williams, Barnardo's

Denise Mann, Bernard Matthews

Diane Brown, British Library

Dennis Gissing, BT

Pam Walton, Gentoo

Tanya Burak and Victoria Plimsoll, KPMG

Alison Unsted, Marian Bloodworth and Katherine Mulhern, Lovells

Claire Ford, Antonia Norman and Matthew Curtis, Marks & Spencer

Sue Davison, North Wales Police

Dave Brunt and Neil Cousins, The Image Group

Michael Keating, Tower Hamlets Council

Contacts

England

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
FREEPOST RRLG-GHUX-CTR
Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3AQ

Main number 0845 604 6610
Textphone 0845 604 6620
Fax 0845 604 6630

Scotland

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
FREEPOST RSAB-YJEJ-EXUJ
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DU

Main number 0845 604 5510
Textphone 0845 604 5520
Fax 0845 604 5530

Wales

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
FREEPOST RRLR-UEYB-UYZL
3rd Floor, 3 Callaghan Square, Cardiff CF10 5BT

Main number 0845 604 8810
Textphone 0845 604 8820
Fax 0845 604 8830

Helpline opening times:
Monday to Friday: 8am - 6pm

Calls from BT landlines are charged at local rates, but calls from mobiles and other providers may vary.

Calls may be monitored for training and quality purposes.

Interpreting service available through Language Line, when you call our helplines.

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language please contact the relevant helpline to discuss your needs. All publications are also available to download and order in a variety of formats from our website

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Designed by Studio this&that
www.studiothisandthat.com

www.equalityhumanrights.com