

Making the case for diversity



THE CBI'S DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Principles to promote equality of opportunity

SPONSOR



**DLA PIPER RUDNICK
GRAYCARY**

The CBI's commitment to diversity

The CBI is firmly committed to equality and diversity in employment. Business benefits when employees are recruited, trained and promoted without reference to race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

This statement is designed to help employers check that they are achieving the maximum benefit from applying equality of opportunity in their employment practices and to promote the business benefits of diversity in the workplace.

Taking equality and diversity seriously means:

- Treating people equally irrespective of grounds such as ethnic group, gender, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation
- Updating policies and practices to reflect new developments
- Taking account of good practice, depending on the size, resources and situation of a particular company. Guides to good practice are produced by the respective equality commissions and are available free of charge (see page 5 for details)
- Engaging, as appropriate, in employer networks to benchmark and exchange experience on diversity issues.

The CBI's engagement with diversity

The CBI's work promoting the equality and diversity agenda includes:

- Promoting the business benefits of diversity through conferences, publications and speeches
- Research and analysis based on member surveys
- Lobbying government to ensure equality legislation is effective and business-friendly
- Providing information for members on equality and diversity
- Representing business on government-led equality taskforces and EU social dialogues
- The CBI Equality Forum – providing a place for business people to discuss equality and diversity issues and to advise on the CBI's response to them.

The law on equality and diversity

Equality in employment is regulated by a combination of UK laws and UK regulations, some originating from European Union directives. The legal framework that governs equality and diversity in the workplace is given below.

RACE: The Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003.

GENDER: The Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, both of which have been amended frequently, most recently in 2003.

DISABILITY: The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (to be amended 2005).

AGE: There are currently no laws outlawing discrimination on the grounds of age, but regulations that will make such discrimination illegal are to be introduced in 2006.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003.

RELIGION AND BELIEF: The Employment Equality (Religion & Belief) Regulations 2003.

CODES OF PRACTICE: These are produced by the relevant equality commission and are designed to explain the law. Contact details for each of the commissions are provided on page 5.

A SINGLE EQUALITY COMMISSION: This is due to start work in 2007. It will have responsibility for all equality areas as well as human rights.

NORTHERN IRELAND: The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. Northern Ireland already has a Single Equality Commission, and is currently in the process of drafting a Single Equality Bill.

‘There is both a business case and a moral argument for diversity in business, because it is absolutely right to apply the basic principles of respect and fairness to all.’

Sir Digby Jones, CBI director-general

Making equality and diversity a priority

COMMITMENT: prepare a clear diversity statement with visible support from senior management. Larger firms should consider appointing a 'diversity champion' at board level.

COMMUNICATION: publicise your equality and diversity policies to staff and stakeholders. This can be done via recruitment and induction literature, annual reports and staff noticeboards or emails.

TRAINING: ensure staff, trainers and line managers are skilled in implementing your equality and diversity policies and provide employees with training to meet business needs, where appropriate.

TAKING POSITIVE ACTION: make sure you are targeting the widest possible audience when recruiting new employees and consider offering work experience to those from under-represented groups. Make reasonable adjustments to allow those with a disability access to your workplace and resources.

FAIR PROCEDURES: review recruitment, selection, promotion and training processes: ensure all practices and requirements are lawful, fair, and do not limit opportunities for a particular group.

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS: consider ways in which you can complement the needs of your business, and your workers include:

- Part-time work/job sharing
- Term-time working
- Working from home
- Career breaks
- Flexible leave to cover non-Christian religious holidays
- Offering crèche facilities.

COMMUNITY LINKS: develop links with community groups, schools, sports clubs etc. This will enhance your company's image and encourage economic development.

EVALUATION: check how well you are succeeding in the promotion of equality and diversity – for example, through staff attitude surveys. Set targets to effect continuous improvement and guard against complacency.

Useful websites

ACAS – An independent employment relations service – www.acas.org.uk

AGE POSITIVE – A government initiative to help employers tackle issues raised by forthcoming legislation to ban age discrimination in 2006 – www.agepositive.gov.uk

COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY – Provides guidance, advice and information on issues of racial discrimination and racial equality – www.cre.gov.uk

DISABILITY RIGHTS COMMISSION – Provides guidance, advice and information on issues relating to disability – www.drc-gb.org

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION – Provides information on issues of sex discrimination and equal pay – www.eoc.org.uk

EQUALITIES COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND – Promotes all equality issues in Northern Ireland – www.equalityni.org

MULTIFAITHNET – A website detailing the cultural differences, customs and requirements of different religions – www.multifaithnet.org

SMALL BUSINESS SERVICE – A DTI agency that provides support and advice for small businesses on a wide range of issues, including equality – www.sbs.gov.uk

STONEWALL – A lesbian, gay and bisexual group that provides information and guidance on equality issues relating to sexual orientation – www.stonewall.org.uk



Further information

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Equality & Diversity Group website:

www.dlapiper.com/ukdiversity

DLA PIPER RUDNICK GRAY CARY is a legal services organisation with offices across Europe, Asia and the US. The Equality & Diversity Group (E&DG) is part of our commitment to providing integrated business-led solutions combining legal advice with best practice HR principles. The E&DG works in partnership with clients to deliver equality for all, within an inclusive culture, that seeks, respects, values and harnesses difference, enabling staff to use their unique talents to the full.

Embracing diversity enables organisations to be more competitive in a client-led market which increasingly wants to deal with ethical and socially responsible employers delivering innovative solutions meeting their individual needs.

For a copy of this report in a large text format, please contact

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