

DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS IN LINE MANAGEMENT

Public sector organisations have a statutory duty to consider diversity and equality in all that they do. It is no longer sufficient to address potential unfair discrimination as it arises; instead organisations must seek to actively promote equality for all and to avoid discrimination.

This document provides guidance on how to integrate diversity and equality into your role as a line manager.

Diversity

Diversity is about recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of members of staff, stakeholders and members

The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. This may consist of visible and non-visible differences including gender, sexuality, values, age, background, race, disability, religion or belief, personality and work-style. Harnessing these differences creates a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, talents are being fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met.

Equality

Is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is mainly about fair treatment and compliance with legislation (the Equality Act 2010) designed to address unlawful discrimination against those who share a protected characteristic, as follows:

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

What is the business case for a diverse and equal approach

- gaining commitment and co-operation from employees
- projecting a positive image as an inclusive organisation
- being an employer of choice and attracting high quality applicants for vacancies from all groups of people
- reducing the risk of not being representative of the target audience
- acting in an ethical manner
- achieving customer satisfaction and increasing the supplier base
- team members develop new skills and knowledge
- improved efficiency with outcomes being of a high standard

Your Responsibilities as a Line Manager

Recruitment and Selection

- Ensure that you and members of your team have received diversity awareness training and have attended the requisite recruitment and selection course, prior to being a member of a selection panel.
- Consider equality and diversity issues when drawing up recruitment documentation including the advertisement, job description, person specification, achievement record, interview assessment score sheet and the panel report.
- Ensure that questions do not unlawfully discriminate against those with any of the above protected characteristics.
- In relation to recruitment, all posts will be considered as suitable for flexible working unless there are clear business reasons why this cannot be done. Where a request for flexible working cannot be accommodated consider alternative arrangements in discussion with the applicant. Where an application is not agreed, written reasons must be provided.
- Do not specify or consider physical attributes unless they can be objectively justified, are an essential requirement for the role and reasonable adjustments are not feasible.
- Do not make reference to any of the protected characteristics or carer responsibilities (e.g. for children or dependant adults) in interview panel reports.
- Make recruitment decisions based on the requirements of the job (i.e. those set out in the person specification) rather than a person's characteristics.

Induction

- Treat all employees in the same fashion. Do not make assumptions about any individual.
- Draw the employee's attention to the Dignity at Work section of the Employment Code, the BBSRC Harassment policy and other relevant information.
- Show the employee all facilities e.g. prayer/study room, sickness room, disabled toilets, ramps, door releases etc.
- Prepare in advance for the probationer's first day – find out if they have any specific needs and deal with these as necessary. Ensure all employees are asked about the same things – don't make assumptions about an individual's needs.

Probation

- Set achievable objectives, taking into consideration the new employee's needs, reasonable adjustments etc.
- Put in place appropriate training and support.

If there are any performance related difficulties, apply the following as appropriate:

- Before addressing any concerns with the employee, allow them the opportunity to explain if there is any reason preventing them from performing to the required standard.
- Ask the employee if there are any reasonable adjustments that could be considered, which would allow them to fulfil their role to the required standard.
- If the employee is not meeting the required standard, consult your local HR manager.

Pay

- Ensure that all employees are aware of the pay and allowances section in the BBSRC Employment Code and have an understanding of the pay system.
- If nominating an employee for a performance award or a special bonus, ensure that the nomination is based on their individual merit and ability in post.

Training and Development

- Ensure that training needs are addressed and development opportunities are explored.
- Do not make assumptions about an individual's willingness or ability to undertake training and development opportunities.

Working Time

- If the employee is having difficulties fulfilling their contracted hours, discuss with them options for flexible working hours.
- Try to make certain that meetings/training events are scheduled at a time convenient for all to attend, including those with caring responsibilities (children or dependant adults).
- Make sure that meetings are scheduled in a way that respects as far as possible religious observances.

Staff Welfare

- Take any report of bullying or harassment seriously and deal with issues immediately, as detailed in BBSRC's Harassment Policy (see also sections A3 and A12c of the Employment Code).
- Attempt to resolve staff conflict with support from HR.
- Publicise in your team the availability of the staff support group or employee assistance programme (if available).

Attendance Management

- Communicate the process for employees to report absence according to BBSRC guidelines.
- Manage absence in a fair and consistent manner.
- Ensure 'return to work' meetings take place after each period of absence.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

- Keep personal data or information confidential.
- Do not discuss an employee's disability, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, sex, age, race, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity, or gender reassignment with anyone outside of HR. This information must be kept confidential even beyond the close of the working relationship and on leaving BBSRC.

Other Considerations

- Ensure that everyone is given the same opportunity to contribute and participate (e.g. at meetings, access to training and development opportunities, and overtime).
- Ensure that individuals are given the same opportunity to participate and that reasonable adjustments are made as necessary for disabled people to enable inclusion.
- Avoid stereotyping and allow everyone to participate fully according to their skills and abilities. Treat individuals in accordance to the contribution they can make irrespective of any knowledge or presumption e.g. regarding their sexual orientation.

Sources of Further Information

Your local HR Department

Your local Diversity Champion

Human Resources and Corporate Services Group, BBSRC Office

Linked Documentation

BBSRC Employment Code – Section A3 - Dignity and Diversity at Work Policy

BBSRC Best Practice Guidance Notes