



Equality And Diversity Policy

Purpose of the Policy

The policy exists to form a statement of accepted practice by Co-operatives South East (CSE) members and those organisations that have contractual relationships with CSE. It serves as the baseline from which all members are expected to conduct themselves within CSE and demonstrates a commitment to a high awareness of equality and diversity issues.

The Co-operative Background

The co-operative movement has a long history of the promotion of equality and diversity and indeed much of the early employment law legalisation arose from the philosophy, efforts and lobbying of the Co-operative Movement. Co-operative organisations should adhere to a distinct set of values and principles, which incorporate diversity and equality values, ie: self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

In the tradition of the founders of the Co-operative Movement, co-operative members should also believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

The Intention of the CSE Equality and Diversity Policy

CSE is committed to promoting equality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all members and people who come into contact with CSE. In the implementation of this policy CSE will:

- ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, age, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, socio- economic background, geographical location, or any other inappropriate distinction
- promote diversity and equality for members, associates and those who the organisation impacts upon, and value the contributions made by individuals and groups of people from diverse cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and distinctive backgrounds
- promote and sustain an inclusive and supportive environment which affirms the equal and fair treatment of individuals in fulfilling their potential and does not afford unfair privilege to any individual or group

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- wherever reasonable and practicable, in relation to any staff that CSE may employ, promote flexible working hours and home working opportunities and treat part time staff fairly and equally
- challenge inequality and less favourable treatment in the work of CSE or in organisations that CSE impacts with
- ensure that members of the CSE experience a 'level playing field' for achieving opportunities
- promote greater participation of under-represented groups of people by encouraging positive action to address inequality, both within CSE itself and within the work carried out by CSE
- promote an environment free of harassment and bullying on any grounds in relation to all members, staff, associates, visitors and those whom the organisation impacts upon

Implementation

Where appropriate, action plans will be developed and maintained in relation to areas such as race, disability, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation and work-life balance. Appropriate monitoring will be put in place. Equality and diversity awareness will be built into all CSE planning and review processes.

Responsibility for Implementation

The members of CSE have joint and separate responsibilities for the effective implementation of the policy.

Last reviewed December 2011