



Does your company consider and monitor the race, gender, disability and age of its workforce in recruitment, training and management practices?

Question developed with [The Human Rights & Equality Commission](#)

Rationale for question

This question explores whether a company enjoys diversity and offers everyone in its workforce a fair chance to participate and contribute to the business. It is about using intangible assets to obtain beneficial business outcomes, simply by allowing people to reach their full potential. Beyond meeting the bare requirements of legislation, there are many benefits to a business in promoting equality and diversity including: a better grasp of the needs of customers and potential markets; innovation in products and services offered; better recruits into the work force and becoming an employer of choice for a wider cross-section of the community; more favourable regard in public and private procurement and supply chains; a good business reputation and a workplace culture based on healthy, functional and effective human relationships.

When considering this issue, a good starting point is to look at what is already happening in the business. This might be as simple as asking staff for their opinions, to identify problems and any opportunities for improvements. It might be worth looking at the success

of other organisations. Many of the practical options are quite straightforward, such as offering flexible working or using different recruitment methods. It might be appropriate to use professional help and/or conduct a formal equality audit or equal pay review (which can be used as a baseline for continuous monitoring).

Establishing an effective policy, one that states both values and how to put them into practice, shows everyone that the company is serious about promoting diversity and equality. The policy should help staff to understand how they should behave and tell other people what they can expect of your company. The policy can then be used to guide actions that make real improvements in working practice. Paper policies alone may not be successful so it may be necessary to evaluate and monitor these actions regularly, to drive change and ensure improvement.

Promoting diversity and equity starts with staff recruitment. Simple actions can have a really positive effect overall. For example, encourage job applications from groups that are under-represented in your organisation, perhaps by developing local links with schools, community groups or support organisations. Ensure written job specifications and skill requirements are as objective as possible, so they don't indirectly discriminate against certain groups. Ask interview candidates if they have any specific requirements (for example, wheelchair access) and make reasonable adjustments in advance: this gives people with disabilities the right conditions to compete in the selection process.

General working practices can help support a diverse workforce. It is, for example, possible to offer flexible working, job share, career breaks, or to provide childcare facilities or a quiet room to meet religious obligations. Consider providing assistance, such as special equipment, to make sure that disabled people can both enter and continue employment. Such actions will generally help staff relations, reduce absence and improve productivity.

And tell people what you are doing. Promoting diversity is actually making things better for everyone.

Staff training and career development should be available without bias. This may require a bit of thought. The location, duration and content of training and professional development should be designed to ensure people can participate without problem. For example, a parent with children might find training opportunities difficult to manage if they mean longer hours or abnormal work patterns. Organising an event in an unsuitable venue may exclude disabled staff. Certain teambuilding activities may be incompatible with religious practices or older age. Even a simple beer in the pub on a Friday night may be quite exclusive, for cultural, gender and religious reasons as well as practical ones like getting home late.

Training is widely available, for managers and for the workforce, to make sure they understand the importance and implications of promoting diversity and fairness in the workplace. There are organisations that offer training listed in the Resources section of this question.

Defining terms

'Consider', in this context, refers to having practice or policy.

'Monitor', in this context, refers to evaluating and tracking the effectiveness of the practice or policy. The approach to monitoring will vary for different companies. For example, larger organisations may have formal processes, such as tracking data and publishing results, whereas smaller organisations may be less formal, such as face-to-face discussions. Regardless of the form of monitoring, the organisation should be able to prove that their technique is effective.

Primary and Secondary answer requirements

ANSWERING YES

Companies must:

1. consider and monitor, as defined above, the diversity of its workforce with respect to race, gender, disability and age; and
2. describe their practices and policies in recruitment, training and management.

Companies may:

1. state where the information above is published and provide a hyperlink, if available; and
2. detail the trends they have identified during monitoring.

ANSWERING NO

Companies must:

1. explain why they do not meet the requirements to answer YES to the question, listing the business reasons, any mitigating circumstance or any other reasons that apply.

Companies may:

1. indicate any relevant practices and policies, even if they do not fully address the specifications for answering YES; and
2. mention any future intentions regarding workforce diversity.

ANSWERING NOT APPLICABLE

Companies must:

1. confirm that they are made up of directors only and have no employees.

DON'T KNOW is not a permissible answer to this question.

NO ANSWER YET is only permissible under extraordinary circumstances and then for only a limited period.