

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

INDEX

1. Background
2. Equality
3. Statements on policy regarding:
 - Recruitment and selection
 - Employment practice in the workplace
 - Educational and community development
4. Implementation of policies regarding:
 - Recruitment and selection
 - Employment practice in the workplace
 - Educational and community development
5. Grievance and disciplinary proceedings
6. Monitoring and evaluation
7. Glossary of terms

This policy was approved at the management committee meeting 3rd March 2008

1 Background

Lancashire has a population of 1.16 million people, which by 2028 is forecast to grow by 9% to 1.26 million.

Like the rest of the country, we have an ageing population. People aged 0 to 18 currently make up about 25% of the population, but this proportion is decreasing and is estimated to fall to 21% by 2025. People aged 65 and over currently make up about 17% of our population but are expected to account for 23% of our population by 2025.

Our younger age groups are more racially diverse than older age groups. 9% of people aged 0 to 18 are of black and minority ethnic heritage, compared to only 1.5% of people aged 65 and over. However, as these young people age themselves, our population as a whole will become more racially diverse.

Our population is made up almost equally of men and women – 48.5% men and 51.5% women. This percentage begins to widen in older age. For example, the percentage of women aged over 90 is 79%.

20% of people in Lancashire have a limiting long-term illness (LLTI) compared to 18% in the whole of England and Wales. This percentage ties in with both the age profile of our population and levels of deprivation in the county. So, for example, Fylde and Wyre (which have higher percentages of older people) and Burnley, Hyndburn and Pendle (which have higher levels of deprivation) all have higher proportions of people with a LLTI. In each district the percentage of people with a LLTI increased between 1991 and 2001. This is likely to continue as our population ages.

Lancashire has rich cultural and racial diversity. Around 5% of our population is black and minority ethnic heritage, including people of African Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Cantonese, Jewish, Kashmiri, Indian and Pakistani heritage, and gypsy and traveller communities. Also, since May 2004, over 4,500 Eastern Europeans have registered to work in Lancashire. Around 3,500 are Polish and eight in ten migrants are aged 18 to 34.

The size of black and minority ethnic populations across the county ranges from 18,785 in Preston to 860 in Ribble Valley.

Over three-quarters of people of black and minority ethnic heritage live in the districts of Pendle, Preston, Hyndburn and Burnley. These districts have the highest levels of deprivation in the county.

In the 2001 census, 83% of our population said that they had a faith. Most were Christians and there were large populations of Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist and Bah'ai faith. 10% of people who answered said they had no faith, and 7% did not answer that question.

Data on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) population is not available from national statistics. The government is using the figure of between 5% and 7% of the population approved by Stonewall, which means that in Lancashire our LGBT population will be between 58,000 and 80,000.

2 Equality and the law

We recognise that as an organisation we have a legal duty to comply with equalities legislation. Recent legislation outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, religious belief and age.

We will work towards good practice to comply with legislation that exists for public authorities recognising that we may carry out certain duties on behalf of public authorities at any given time.

Legal compliance is an active responsibility of all staff, volunteers and trustees and needs to be evidenced by policy compliance as well as practice.

LGEC is committed to provide a working environment in which the rights and dignity of all its members are respected, and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment including bullying. All staff have a duty to report incidents of discrimination against any individual or group of individuals.

3 Equal Opportunities: policy statements

3.1 Statements on policy regarding recruitment

Diversity at the LGEC means 'taking an inclusive approach which values individual difference in terms of disability, ethnicity, culture and language, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation and geographical location. All our people, at every level of the organisation, have different talents, experience and knowledge and which can be used to enhance LGEC's activities in every area: service delivery, staffing, volunteering, governance, fundraising, communication and our physical environment'.

LGEC aims to apply fair and objective criteria to assess merit. It aims to ensure that no job applicant or employed person will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, age, ethnic or national origins, nationality, colour, religion or creed, marital status, responsibility for dependants, age, sexual orientation, disability or class. Selection criteria or procedures will be reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of relevant merits and abilities.

LGEC is committed to treat fairly all those that undertake paid and unpaid work, whether working full time, part time or on a casual basis. Bullying and harassment as well as complaints will be dealt with using grievance procedures as laid down in contracts of employment. Disciplinary action will be taken where appropriate to combat bullying and harassment.

We will negotiate flexible working arrangements for interviewing, selection and work for people unable to access the current premises, which unfortunately cannot be made fully DDA compliant.

LGEC is committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and will bring it to the attention of all employees, volunteers and management committee members. The programme of action will aim to improve diversity and equality practice within LGEC, including our partners. The programme would include training.

3.2 Statement on policy regarding practice in the workplace

LGEC is committed to a policy of equality and non-discrimination in its day-to-day working and aims to ensure that any discriminatory practices will be actively discouraged.

3.3 Statement on policy regarding educational and community development function

A specific commitment to educational outreach will be anti-discriminatory in its philosophy, practice and materials. Working practices in community development and education will endeavour to ensure that services do not discriminate directly or indirectly. Working practices aim to be fair, as inclusive as possible and will respect cultural requirements. There may be occasions when cultural requirements may be in tension with inclusion of all groups and this must be acknowledged.

Positive actions will be encouraged and incorporated into policies and working practices to engage groups underrepresented in the staffing of the organisation and in service users. These groups will be identified by the organisation's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

4 Implementation of policy statements

4.1 Implementation of policy regarding recruitment

4.1(i) Relevant laws regarding employment

LGEC will give full consideration to the requirements and intent of current legislation and further aim to implement good practice to promote equality and diversity. British and European legislation will be adhered to where it applies to this organisation. This includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

- Race Relations (Amendment) 2000
- The Employment Equality (Religion & Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Equality Act 2006
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

4.1(ii) **Job Descriptions and Job Specifications**

Those who are responsible for drawing up job specifications and job descriptions must ensure that such documents do not contain provisions which are overtly discriminatory e.g. by demanding unnecessarily high qualifications or skills which are not directly related to the job. There may, on occasion, be valid reasons to discriminate, if this can be justified in the terms of the above legislation.

The suitability of posts for job sharing and other flexible working will be actively considered for all jobs advertised. Any requests will be carefully considered and a written explanation will be offered if this is required by the applicant.

4.1(iii) **Advertising**

All posts at LGEC will be publicly advertised and put through Job Centres (Jobcentreplus). When appropriate, care will be taken to place advertisements in such a way that they reach disadvantaged groups e.g. through use of minority ethnic press, Disablement Advisory Service and Community Relations Councils.

All advertisements will contain the following statement:

“LGEC is striving to be an Equal Opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all under represented groups including disabled people and people from BME communities.”

Advertising and selection procedures will be kept under review to ensure that the equality and diversity policy is implemented as effectively as possible.

4.1(iv) **Shortlisting procedure**

Shortlisting will be based purely on the information supplied in the application form.

The composition of the shortlisting team will be a minimum of two people and will aim to be representative of all genders when possible.

We will aim for at least one of the short listing and selection team to have undertaken training on non-discriminatory employment practice in order that the policy may be implemented effectively. At least one panel member should have undertaken recruitment and selection training.

Overseas qualifications will not be undervalued and consultation with the British Council or relevant professional agencies will be undertaken to evaluate particular qualifications given.

Care will be taken to avoid stereotyping, i.e. that recruitment, training or promotional decisions are not based on pre-conceived notions of the capabilities or other characteristics of particular groups. Members of particular groups would neither be directed to nor excluded from particular jobs on the basis of untested assumptions about them as individuals.

4.1(v) Interviewing

The interviewing panel will aim to consist of three members, and minimum of two should be involved in the process. There should be representation of all genders when possible. All members of the panel should have read the Equality and Diversity Policy and least one member should have undertaken the recruitment and selection training.

4.2 Implementation of policy regarding practice in the workplace

4.2 (i) It will be the responsibility of the CEO at LGEC to bring this policy to the attention of all employees, volunteers and management committee members, who should be conversant with its practical application and day to day working in the Centre with regard to both employees, volunteers and member of the public who use the Centre.

Behaviour which can be interpreted as contrary to the spirit of this policy, for example racist or sexist remarks or actions, or graffiti, will be regarded as undesirable and offensive, and will be discouraged. In extreme cases such remarks or actions may be seen as grounds for disciplinary procedures.

Employees who feel that they have been victims of any kind of discriminatory behaviour of the kind outlined above may invoke grievance proceedings as outlined in LGEC's standard contract of employment.

4.2 (ii) Training

LGEC will aim to provide:

- a) Training and guidance for those responsible for implementing this policy.

- b) Induction for employees in order (amongst other things) to acquaint them with the workings of this policy.

ALL STAFF will be required to undertake training in the areas of Diversity and Equality regularly.

4.3 Implementation of policy regarding educational function

4.3 (i) Educational philosophy

The educational philosophy of LGEC positively endorses the spirit of this policy.

4.3 (ii) Educational practice

In practical terms this means that all educational work will seek to disseminate a positive policy of teaching against discrimination on the grounds mentioned above.

4.3 (iii) Educational resources

All materials available at the Centre Library or on sale in the shop, and used for educational purposes with members of the public outside the Centre will as far as possible be vetted for attitudes which are not compatible with the spirit of this policy. Employees involved in educational outreach work should be aware of the possibilities of unsuitable material used to perpetuate unacceptable and offensive stereotypes of race, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation and nationality.

5. Grievance and Disciplinary Proceedings

Any actual or potential employee, volunteer or client of the Centre who perceives discriminatory practice in any of the workings of the Centre, in relation to employment or work, should raise this matter with their line-manager or the CEO.

Matters which are contrary to the law (see above) will be dealt with by the appropriate bodies using existing industrial relations machinery. Matters which are not potentially illegal but contrary to the spirit of this policy will be dealt with through LGEC's standard disciplinary proceedings as outlined in staff member's contracts of employment.

6 Monitoring and Evaluation

LGEC will monitor and review the diversity and equality policy as and when required. We will regularly review working practices with a view to improve equality standards. Training and workshops provided by the LGEC will be

monitored and evaluated. Monitoring and evaluation will be encouraged from our partners.

7 Glossary

Community Cohesion

Community cohesion in Lancashire means people working together and respecting the differences in our society

Discriminate

To treat someone less favourably, or to apply conditions which disadvantage certain people

Equality and diversity

Equality and diversity are about valuing differences, and for LGEC to be an organisation in which everyone has an equal chance to learn and work, free from discrimination and prejudice

Equality strand

There are six strands of equality currently covered by legislation: age, disability, faith, gender, race and sexual orientation

Gender reassignment

The process of being legally recognised as the opposite sex to that shown on your birth certificate

Harass

To behave in a way which humiliates, offends, degrades or intimidates someone

Social inclusion

Everyone having the opportunity to give to and benefit from society

Direct discrimination consists of treating a person, on racial grounds, less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same circumstances.

Indirect discrimination consists of applying in any circumstances covered by the Acts, a requirement or condition which, intentionally or not, has a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group.

Equal Opportunities

LGEC is committed to provide a working environment in which the rights and dignity of all its members are respected, and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment including bullying.

Disability

LGEC refers to the Disability Discrimination Act for guidance on defining disability. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. More clarity on this definition can be found on the Equality Commission's website at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/foradvisers/usingyourrights/Pages/discrimination.aspx?section=3#definition>

This policy has been prepared with reference to Lancashire County Council's publication 'Making a Difference' for guidance.