

What is Respect for People?

Constructing Excellence and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) partners seek to achieve radical improvements in performance within the construction industry. Change and improvement will only happen through people, in particular the efforts of the workforce. Providing respect and the right conditions to support their endeavours are essential.

Ultimately, Respect for People is a two-way thing; showing respect to our workforce, while simultaneously winning respect from them and from the general public. The results will benefit everyone.

Why have an Equality and Diversity Toolkit?

Construction needs to become more representative of the total labour available, to eliminate stereotypes and assumptions, and recruit and develop the best, most talented people. The need for a skilled, professional and steady workforce has long been recognised as essential for delivering good performance. Managing equality and diversity will help the industry to achieve this ideal. It will also help to improve the image of construction as a sector that can offer an attractive and life-long career.

Equality and Diversity is about acknowledging and appreciating all the ways in which people differ, not just the more obvious ones of gender, ethnicity, disability, and age, but also the less visible differences such as social background, culture, personality and work style, religion or belief and sexual orientation. You can use these differences to your advantage to enhance creativity, innovation and productivity. Managing diversity means managing people who are neither like you nor who necessarily aspire to be like you, but who can make an effective contribution to your organisation.

This toolkit helps you to identify issues that need to be addressed and provides links to agencies and information that can help you respond to the challenge of managing equality and diversity. Anyone can use this toolkit but not all the questions will necessarily suit your circumstances.

The toolkit supports the achievement of national and international standards, should you choose. Please see *"Reaching the Standard"* included in your pack.

The toolkit has three parts:

- Instructions for use.
- Equality and Diversity Checklist against which to score your performance – including the radar graph where you can plot your results.
- Help Sheet to assist you in improving weaknesses identified in the checklist.

This toolkit is one of six toolkits designed to be used together:

- Equality and Diversity in the Workplace.
- Working Environment.
- Health and Safety.
- Training Plan.
- Work in Occupied Premises.
- Workforce Satisfaction.

Why should I be interested in Equality and Diversity? – The business case

It is widely recognised that the companies and projects that are effective in tackling equality and diversity in the workplace are the most attractive to potential employees. They tend to have fewer difficulties recruiting, their image is enhanced and their staff turnover is substantially reduced. Independent evidence shows that it costs between £4k and £9K in direct costs alone to replace each staff member who leaves. This applies equally to construction projects whose programme, quality and efficiency can be compromised by high staff turnover or inability to attract good people.

Dealing with equality and diversity is a matter of good management and usually shows an active approach to employee health, safety, working environment and conditions. It is not a 'bolt on extra'; it is the best indicator of management commitment to Respect for People.

How to use the Equality and Diversity Toolkit

This toolkit is intended for use in a company or project situation. It has been shown to work best in a company or long-term project (1+ years).

There is no right or wrong way to use the checklists. The method shown below evolved during our trials. You should amend the processes to reflect your circumstances.

Step 1: Review every section to ensure that all questions applicable to YOUR circumstances are included.

Make sure you consider which questions you want to examine. If you are not sure leave the question IN. All other questions should be ruled through so they are not answered.

The checklist may be photocopied for re-use.

Step 2: Score each question.

Everybody should be invited to complete the checklist, answering from their own experience, and the results combined to give an overall score for your company or project.

The method of scoring varies, so use the key to the scoring system as a guide.

There is a notes column for you to jot down any areas of concern. This will help in planning actions.

Step 3: Work out your score for each section.

Score for section =
$$\frac{\text{total score for the section}}{\text{number of questions answered in the section}}$$

Boxes are provided for this purpose.

Step 4: Plot your scores on the radar chart.

See the checklist for further instructions.

Step 5: Examine the radar chart for areas of strength and improvement and communicate the results.

Once completed the radar chart should be reviewed for strengths and weaknesses and circulated to all those who completed the checklist, and others, so that they are aware of the current performance. Typically this may be by posting on a notice board, Intranet, company newsletter and face-to-face discussions, etc. Managers often find it useful to have an action plan developed to which they can refer in the event of questions about the scores presented. Remember it is acceptable to include things that cannot be dealt with at that time, provided a valid reason exists.

The Help Sheet can point you in the right direction if you need further assistance.

Step 6: Measure your progress.

Benchmarking existing performance with others and examining progress over time tells managers how well their practice measures up and whether actions are delivering results.

Step 7: Repeat the process regularly.

The trial suggests that the checklist should be scored at least annually. More frequent intervals are beneficial to establish progress and to see whether any resulting changes are producing better results.