CLUB DE MADRID

The Shared Societies Project:
Leadership for Dialogue, Diversity and Social Cohesion

Building a world safe for difference

Replicable example of practice

Commitment V

Take steps to deal with economic disadvantages faced by sections of society who are discriminated against, and ensure equal access to opportunities and resources.

Suggested Approach:

Introduce affirmative action schemes to ensure that individuals from groups disadvantaged as a result of discrimination develop the capacities and confidence, and are encouraged, to take advantage of opportunities to initiate business opportunities

Equal Opportunity Policy at First Group plc.

Country: USA/UK

Background

- Numerous studies have shown that private enterprise benefits from a diverse working environment.
- Diverse working environments can nurture innovation
- First Group plc. is a transport company with holdings in both the US and UK and an annual revenue of 6 billion pounds sterling and 130,000 employees
- First Group plc. highlights that it benefits economically as a company from ensuring a diverse staff environment where equal opportunity is at the core of management decisions. This enables the company to utilize all available resources and talents and to ensure the company benefits to the maximum possible from the skill set available to it.

Goals

- To employ individuals based on their skills and without prejudice based on race, color, nationality or national or ethnic origin ("race"); sex or marital status; disability (e.g., a long term mental or physical impairment); sex change status; sexual orientation; religion or philosophical belief; political belief; trade union activity or; age.
- To make efforts to eradicate discrimination and harassment from the workplace.
- Provide employees with a harmonious work environment that offers equal treatment and makes equal opportunities available to employees.

Method

- First Group plc. has a clear policy delineating their equal opportunity employment approach
- The ultimate responsibility for the enforcement of the policy is with the Board of Directors, however all employees are regarded as also responsible for upholding the principles of equal opportunities
- Remuneration, promotions and retention practices ensure that no discrimination has been part of the decision making process
- Disciplinary measures will be taken against individuals who violate the equal opportunity policy
- Mechanisms to recruit, identify individuals for training/job development, and promotions must be made in a manner that precludes the possibility of discrimination
- Staff who feel that discriminatory actions/practices have been taken by individuals should report this to the relevant human resources office
- Monitoring and evaluation of the mechanism employed to ensure equal opportunity are taken regularly
- Personnel data is collected at regular intervals and analyzed to ascertain whether there are particular groups which are under represented and if so why this might be so; examine employment procedures and how these may unintentionally (or intentionally affect particular groups); enable appropriate corrective action if needed; enable adjustments to the company policy if these are deemed necessary/relevant

Impact

- A more amicable, harmonious and thus profitable work environment

Enabling conditions

- Willingness by the company/senior management to introduce mechanisms within the companies operating procedure

References/contacts for farther information

- For information on the policy see: http://www.firstgroup.com/equal_opportunities.php

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