

BRIGHTON + HOVE

**LEADER** 

Local Employers Acting on Diversity, Equality + Race

[www.leaderbrighton-hove.org](http://www.leaderbrighton-hove.org)

# The LEADER Brighton & Hove Charter



## 1. Background

Ask a group of business people if they think it's important to develop and implement ethical, fair and diverse people policies within their organisations and the chances are that virtually all of them will agree that it's an excellent idea.

Yet despite this 'thumbs up', many groups of people still face psychological and physical barriers when it comes to applying for jobs and, indeed, being offered jobs within an organisation. Ask the same group of business people why this is the case and the chances are they will pinpoint a lack of support and information on how to implement fair and diverse people policies, or they may not even be aware that at some level in their organisation, this is actually happening.

Brighton & Hove has the highest percentage of Black Minority Ethnic Groups in South East outside London, it is estimated that there are around 7,000 East Europeans working in the City.

The recent City Employment and Skills Plan, 2007, high-lighted that economic growth has been driven more by increases in employment than by productivity gains in recent years.

In the City gross value added (GVA) per head remains below the national average, suggesting that there is still scope for broadening the economic base and improving productivity. This, coupled with escalating housing prices, is creating a dual economy where local people are forced either onto the outskirts of the City or indeed to leave and the only people able to afford the living costs have to work in London to survive resulting in a drain on skilled labour.

Under the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act one person in four now fits the criteria for having a mental health problem; one in five people have a disability. Interestingly 97% of disabled people were born without a disability.

The demographics of the population are changing and therefore so is the workforce. The National Government commissioned Leith Report ([www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch)) has identified that by 2010 only 20% of working population will be white, male and non-disabled (Brighton & Hove males account for 45.4% of workforce currently). By 2012 the report forecasts that over 50% of the working population will be over 50 years of age.

## 2. Introduction

- Building on the successful model in Southampton, LEADER offers a network for employers across all three types of sector to come together to share good practice, information and ideas that improve business performance, foster employability and look at diversity and equality issues in a fresh way that meets their needs.
- LEADER works to support and promote ethical and socially responsible enterprises. This means a healthy workforce and work/life balance in tune with 21<sup>st</sup> century work-values that unlocks talent and that plays to the strengths of a diverse workforce.

The purpose of this Charter is to:

1. Enhance understanding about the factors that transform labour markets enabling a flexible, highly skilled workforce in Brighton & Hove that can compete with the global market place.
2. Promote the employment of underrepresented groups, which according to the latest reports mentioned above, will make up the future workforce.
3. Represent a formal commitment by the local employers to develop and implement ethical, fair and diverse people policies.
4. Offer a quality mark of distinction to recognise those employers making this commitment. It will support employers to become 'Employers of Choice' and set themselves apart as examples of good practice.
5. An objective of the Charter will be to assist the local residents of Brighton and Hove to gain skills and experience and develop stable and paid employment.
6. Enable the City of Brighton & Hove to reduce local unemployment and improve skills levels.
7. Bring about the regeneration of the City by the people who have a stake in its future which will result in a more buoyant local economy.

"Higher levels of prosperity per head across the South East without increasing the region's ecological footprint can only be delivered through higher productivity and by bringing more of the resident population into economic activity." (Source: Regional Economic Strategy)

## 3. Audience

This Charter is for all employers in Brighton & Hove committed to the Diversity Agenda.

The LEADER Brighton & Hove Steering Group, who will be responsible for the management, development and monitoring of this Charter is comprised of the following businesses and organisations;

Chartered Institute of Personnel Development Sussex Branch  
 Federation of Small Businesses  
 Engage Partnership  
 Midnight Communications  
 Brighton & Hove City Council  
 Martin Searle Solicitors  
 Sussex University Hospital Trust  
 DMH Stallard  
 Quantam Recruitment  
 University of Brighton  
 021 Creative  
 Jobcentre Plus  
 Primary Care Trust  
 Brighton Pier

## 4. The Benefits

The following points relate to the business advantages to be gained from signing up to this Charter;

- A good reputation as an 'Employer of Choice', which is invaluable for attracting the best employees with the right skills either locally or from across the UK. Much research identifies that today's workforce make ethical employment choices
- Access to the current best practices around employment, diversity and equality and an opportunity to network with other like minded local professionals in quarterly LEADER Forums
- The associated publicity of being part of this high profile initiative both on this website and getting use of the LEADER logo on your marketing materials
- An 'Ethical Business' reputation, which has a stronger and stronger impact on supply chain decision making
- Stronger links with the public and voluntary sectors to get access to the latest labour market intelligence for forecasting purposes
- The latest Employment Law Information to keep you out of court
- The right support to close any skills gaps in your business, leading to improved productivity
- Methods to attract a more diverse workforce reflective of the local community, which impacts positively on product innovation
- Improved employee retention rates, saving your business thousands of pounds
- Reduced advertising rates in The Argus's Tuesday LEADER recruitment section
- Access to a free recruitment advertising and matching service through the Engage Partnership
- Information on the latest training and skills initiatives taking place locally
- Priority places at LEADER Events
- Guidance on disabilities, how to manage employees, how to access funding support
- Potential Public and Employer Liability Insurance saving
- Fulfilment of your Corporate Social Responsibility Policy

“Coastal South East.....an area which has seen continued economic and social decline.” We must secure new confidence and vitality alongside regeneration if we are to avoid a spiral of decline”. (Source Regional Economic Strategy 2006 – 20016 SEEDA)

## 5. Signing Up to the Charter

This Charter represents a formal commitment to the promotion and support of ethical and diverse recruitment practices. It is a quality mark for best practice and innovation and its delivery will culminate in a cutting edge partnership between the private, public and voluntary sector. It will maximise the quality of the training and recruitment of local people into the local economy and subsequently bring about a reduction in the skills shortage in the economy.

## 6. Business Commitment

The businesses signing up to this Charter have made a formal commitment to;

- Develop and use good practice around diversity and equality
- Ensure their HR policies and procedures reflect good practice around diversity and equality
- Champion and promote diversity and equality
- Focus recruitment policies on employing people from under represented groups where possible
- Train current staff where necessary to raise the opportunities for skills development and employability
- Provide flexible working hours to suit those with other serious commitments such as caring responsibilities or disabilities to enable them to return to or remain in employment
- Offer mentoring services to one another and to those seeking to enter employment

## 7. Contact Details

For more Information please go to [www.leaderbrighton-hove.org](http://www.leaderbrighton-hove.org)

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Business:.....

Address:.....

Date:.....

The Brighton & Hove LEADER Group is a partnership between the private, public and voluntary sectors.

**Disclaimer:** The content of this Charter has been published in good faith on the basis of information supplied to Engage Employment Solutions Ltd. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, this cannot be guaranteed.