

THE LEADER CHARTER

2008



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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 Leitch Report (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 of employers, hailing primarily from the private, sector all coming 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 business needs.

Leader works to support and promote ethical and socially responsible enterprises. This means a healthy workforce and work/life balance in tune with 21st century work-values that unlocks talent and that plays to the strengths of a diverse workforce.

The purpose of this Charter is to 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.

The Charter promotes the employment of under-represented groups, which according to the latest reports mentioned above will make up the future potential workforce.

The Charter represents a formal commitment by the local businesses and organisations to develop and implement ethical, fair and diverse people policies. This commitment will be monitored through an annual review.

“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)

The Charter commitment will be monitored through an annual review to evidence this has taken place.

The Charter offers a quality mark of distinction to recognise those businesses making this commitment. It will support businesses to become 'Employers of Choice' and set them apart as examples of good practice.

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.

An aim of the Charter will be to enable the City of Brighton & Hove to reduce local unemployment and improve local skills levels. It will enable regeneration of the City by the people who have a stake in its future which will result in a more buoyant local economy.

3. AUDIENCE

This Charter is for all businesses and organisations in Brighton & Hove.

The Leader 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 (Chair), Federation of Small Businesses, Midnight Communications, Brighton & Hove City Council, Martin Searle Solicitors, Sussex Eye Hospital (Vice Chair), DMH Stallard, Quantam Recruitment, University of Sussex, University of Brighton, Engage Brighton & Hove Jobcentre Plus, Hotel du Vin, The Old Ship Hotel, Hub 100, Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, Employment Opportunities for Disabled People

4. THE BENEFITS

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

- A firm and publicised commitment to the development of the local community enables the business to develop an 'Employer of Choice' reputation to attract employees with the right skills from Brighton & Hove and across the UK
- Establishment of best practice around employment practices in relation to equality and diversity
- The publicity and promotion of being associated with this well regarded venture
- 'Ethical Business' Reputation which has a positive impact on supply chain decision making
- Strong local links with the public and voluntary sectors assist in getting the latest labour market intelligence for forecasting purposes
- The right support to close the skills gap, leading to improved productivity
- Improved route ways to recruit local people from under represented groups
- Improved employee retention rates; employees from under represented groups are fiercely loyal, motivated and change jobs infrequently
- Information, guidance and support around recruiting a diverse workforce reflective of the customer base and useful for service innovation
- The potential for reduced recruitment costs with a free advertising and matching service
- Access to information related to training and skills development
- Opportunities to feed into training curriculum to ensure that the training available is reflective of the current needs of the sector



“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)





- Information on the latest Employment Laws
- Guidance on disabilities, how to manage employees, how to access funding support
- Information on events
- Information on funding opportunities for workforce development around equalities and diversity
- Fulfilment of your Corporate Social Responsibility Policy and the template to develop one
- Public and Employee Liability Insurance Saving

5. SIGNING UP TO THE CHARTER

This Charter represents a formal commitment to the promotion and support of ethical and diverse recruitment practices over a 12 month period. 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

Claire.mitchell@engagesolutions.org.uk or 07812 177427

SIGNED: _____

NAME: _____

BUSINESS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

DATE: _____

The LEADER GROUP is a partnership between the private, public and voluntary sectors.

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