

Promoting diversity in the workplace

Businesses exist in competitive and changing markets, which mean that all employees must make significant contributions to business success and add value. But everyone is different, so businesses need to be able to harness individual workers' unique differences and convert them into competitive advantage. This is why managing diversity is so important to enhancing business performance. Most businesses have some sort of policy on equal opportunities or promoting the diversity of the workforce. Many of these policies are aimed at:

- protecting employees from discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age.
- responding to changing demographics and working patterns - many employers use flexible working to meet customer demands and retain valuable employees with caring responsibilities.

Firms that take steps to improve diversity in the workplace earn real business benefits. Companies who employ people on the basis of their abilities and potential, regardless of their sex, race, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion can benefit in many ways, including:

- Higher morale and productivity, improved retention rates and lower recruitment costs.
- Better understanding of customers' needs and greater insight to reach untapped markets.
- Help in addressing skills shortages.

Services Available

Disability Employment Adviser – Provides tailored help to assist disabled people to move into work. The DEA can offer job grants to employers, arrange for specialist equipment and aid to be supplied and to offer guidance to employers about the Disability Discrimination Act. The DEA can offer support to employers to help keep someone in employment if they have developed an illness or have had an accident.

Work Choice / Access to Work – Aims to help employers recruit and retain individuals with disabilities. Support may be available to adapt your work place to the needs of particular individuals. This would apply to new and existing staff.

Employment Unit – aims to create employment opportunities particularly for disabled people and to assist people with disabilities to find and sustain work.

Working Health Services Dundee – Working Health Services is a Tayside wide Vocational Rehabilitation Service for either employees of a small to medium sized business (less than 250 employees) or individuals who are self employed. More information on this service is available in the Workforce Development section.

For further information regarding the services available contact:

Discover Opportunities Centre

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www.discoveropportunities.org.uk