



WORKPLACE CULTURE

Think Business, Think Equality

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INTRODUCTION

This guidance is for small and medium businesses who want to improve gender diversity in their workplace. It accompanies the *Think Business, Think Equality* online self-assessment tool. The free online tool enables you to assess your current employment practice, and provides tailored advice and guidance on how your business can benefit from gender diversity.

Delivering workplace equality makes good business sense. Having fair and flexible working practices allows you to attract and retain the best talent, reduce recruitment and training costs, and makes your business more productive, more innovative, and more profitable.

This guidance provides businesses with information and advice in relation to how workplace culture impacts differently on men and women, and what this means for your business. There is a checklist on page 33 which suggests actions that businesses should take to improve their equalities practice in this area.

The Think Business, Think Equality online tool is available at:

www.thinkbusinessthinkequality.org.uk

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure that the explanations given here are accurate, only the courts or tribunals can give authoritative interpretations of the law.



WHAT IS WORKPLACE CULTURE?

Workplace culture is a combination of the processes, attitudes, values and behaviours that exist within a workplace and impact upon the business and its staff. The culture might be determined by expectations of management, or might have evolved over many years among staff, and is often accepted without question.

While there may never be any intention to exclude particular groups or individuals, certain cultural norms at work can result in some people being disadvantaged. This can include, for example, companies where there is an expectation to work very long hours, where women would struggle to balance the demands of their job with childcare, and them being seen as less committed to the business.



RECRUITMENT

Why it's important to get it right

Recruitment mistakes can be costly, and recruiting the wrong people can lead to higher staff turnover, reduced productivity and lower staff morale. Unfair recruitment practices can also lead to financial penalties. Discrimination during recruitment and selection can result in an employment tribunal claim, which not only costs time and money, but can also present a serious risk to reputation.

How to get it right

- Have a clear, written recruitment process which includes job description and person specification, advertising, shortlisting, and interviewing.
- Ensure that all staff who will be involved in the recruitment process are trained and that this training includes the importance of non-discriminatory and fair treatment.
- Make sure that your recruitment process is not excluding good quality candidates from under-represented groups.
- Keep records of all decisions made during the recruitment process, including all notes from shortlisting and interview processes.

When it's hard to fill a vacancy

Many businesses find it hard to find skilled and talented people to fill their vacancies. If you're in this position, it might be helpful to consider ways of encouraging different groups of people to apply.



Women and men who aspire to work in occupations which are mostly done by the opposite sex often feel discouraged from doing so. Businesses which adapt their recruitment processes and encourage applications from the widest possible pool are more likely to attract and retain the staff they need.

Methods of encouraging applications from the widest possible pool:

- Ensuring job adverts are worded to encourage applications from both men and women. Any pictures in adverts should represent both sexes.
- Offering pre-interview training sessions for potential employees to learn about the business and the skills required for the vacant post.
- Offering work experience opportunities which avoid gender stereotyping. For example, engineering and construction placements for girls as well as boys.
- Providing induction training for women returning from maternity leave whose career breaks may mean recent work experience is limited.

Recruitment and selection policies

All businesses, regardless of size, should have a recruitment and selection policy. An effective recruitment and selection policy is one which sets out how the business will ensure that the most suitable person for any job is selected. Your recruitment and selection policy should include a statement that the business aims to ensure that:

- The most suitable person for any job will be selected on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities to undertake the work, and
- No member of staff or job applicant will be unfairly treated on any grounds, including gender.



Example

Statements typically used in effective recruitment and selection policies:

- Vacancies will reach as wide a pool of potential applicants as possible.
- All job descriptions will be clear and concise, and objective person specifications will be in place for every job.
- Staff involved in recruitment and selection will be familiar with the company's recruitment and selection policy, and be trained in non-discriminatory recruitment practice.

The recruitment and selection policy should be reviewed and monitored to ensure it remains consistent with the law and best practice.

Job descriptions

A written job description, or job summary, which details job purpose, tasks and responsibilities should be in place for every job. The following template for a simple job description can be adapted for use within your business.

Note: The duties and responsibilities of the post holder may be varied at any time, in accordance with the business requirements of the company.



Job description (template)

Job title	Name by which the job is usually known (ensure it is gender neutral).
Department	Location/department where the post holder will be working.
Responsible to	Job title of the line manager of the post.
Responsible for	List job titles of any staff supervised by the post holder and/or resources for which the job holder is responsible.
Job purpose	Include brief description of the job holder's role.
Job scope	Number of people to be supervised, degree of precision required, value of materials and equipment post holder responsible for, and so on.
Main tasks	List and number the main job tasks in order of importance. Use active verbs like 'writing', 'repairing', 'machining', 'calculating'. Avoid vague terms such as 'dealing with' and 'in charge of'.
Additional tasks	List any tasks post holder may be required to do from time to time.
Main duties and responsibilities	List the post holder's responsibilities, including any delegated authority they have.
Prepared by	Record the name and job title of the person who prepared the job description, for future reference.
Date	Record the date the job description was prepared, for future reference.



Job descriptions can be used for a variety of purposes, including:

- **As a recruitment tool** - They can be used as a basis for job advertisements, and should be sent to applicants with application forms.
- **As a basis for employment contracts** - Specific reference to job descriptions can be made in contracts of employment.
- **As a defence against a discrimination claim** - They can help demonstrate selection decisions were carried out objectively.



PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

A person specification is a valuable tool used to profile the ideal person to do a particular job. The emphasis should not be on what the job involves but on the personal attributes required.

A person specification should specify the criteria to be used in shortlisting and in selecting candidates to fill a vacancy. When developing a person specification, be careful to ensure that no assumptions are made about 'male' or 'female' qualities.

Person specifications should be kept simple and very tightly referenced to the job. It can include information under a number of headings, such as skills, knowledge and experience. It is essential that experience specified relates closely to the actual requirements of the job and that you can, if challenged, justify why certain criteria are necessary. The law states that when recruiting, you must not do something that would impact more negatively on someone who has a protected characteristic than on someone who does not share that characteristic.

The protected characteristics in law are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race



- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Unless you can demonstrate that your actions or requirements are objectively justified (that is, that your actions are a proportionate way of achieving a legitimate aim), any requirements that have a disproportionately negative impact on one group over another could be viewed as indirect discrimination.

Example

Having a requirement that ‘candidates must be over 6 feet tall’, may be considered indirect sex discrimination, since considerably fewer women than men would be able to fit that criteria. An employer would have to demonstrate that this requirement could not be met by, for example, providing equipment that would allow shorter people to reach heights, or the requirement might not be justified.

Similarly, having a requirement for candidates to have ‘x number of years’ experience’, or ‘recent experience’ could potentially discriminate against women, who are more likely to take career breaks to care for children or relatives.



Businesses should consider whether appropriate experience could be gained in a non-working environment, such as through voluntary work or at home. Requirements for recent experience would also need to be justified. Businesses should also consider whether industry practices have changed drastically in recent years, or whether new staff could be easily trained on advances in certain technology.

Exceptions

The Equality Act 2010 does, in limited circumstances, allow advertisements aimed specifically at one gender. One reason for this is in cases where there is a genuine occupational requirement for an employee to be a particular gender. This might, for example, apply to caring roles, where personal care is delivered to clients of one gender or another.

The Equality and Human Rights website provides further guidance on whether a genuine occupational requirement may apply.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/employment/equality-work/dismissal-redundancy-and-retirement/situations-where-equality-law-different

Similarly, qualifications specified must be necessary to do the job, unless candidates are being recruited on the basis of future potential (for example, graduates). All of the criteria included in a person specification must be applied equally to all applicants.

The following person specification template can be adapted for use within your business.



Person specification (template)

Post Title: Insert job title

Attributes	Essential	Desirable	How Identified
Qualifications, for example	Good all-round education	Relevant qualification in Health, Education, and IT	Application form References
Experience, for example	Minimum of 3 years' customer care experience	Work experience in financial environment	Application form References Interview
Training, for example	Health and safety, lifting and handling, operating equipment		Application form References Interview
Special Knowledge/ Skills, for example	Good verbal and written communication skills, computer literate	MS Office skills, full driving licence	Application form References Interview
Attitudes and Dispositions, for example	Polite and friendly manner, commitment to anti-discriminatory work practice		Application form References Interview



Application forms

When advertising a vacancy, think about the best method of gathering information from applicants to help you shortlist, and appoint, the most suitable candidate.

CVs may seem a useful option. They allow applicants to tailor their application to their own preferences, but they can make shortlisting difficult. Varying degrees of information may be supplied by applicants while important details may be omitted. CVs can also include information which is not relevant to the job, or include details which may allow negative and discriminatory opinions about an applicant to be formed. For example, information about hobbies, or details of marital status, number and ages of children and so on.

Job application forms, on the other hand, allow applications to be scored or ranked for shortlisting across a common set of criteria, and help ensure applicants provide consistently structured information which can be expanded on at interview. Application forms can also provide evidence of why a candidate has or has not been selected for interview, if a claim of unfair selection is taken to tribunal.

Job application forms should not include questions which may amount to unlawful discrimination, and which are unlikely to be relevant to an applicant's ability to do a job.

Some of the questions which may lead to unlawful discrimination include those related to:

- Gender (including family, ages of children, intentions to have children).
- Marital status or relationships (including whether Mr, Mrs, Ms).
- First names (identify candidates by initials only).



Include a section on unpaid work experience. This allows applicants to demonstrate relevant skills or experience gained in unpaid work, for example, charities, parent teacher associations, and so on.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced detailed guidance to assist employers during recruitment.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/employing-people/recruitment

Advertising vacancies

When advertising your job vacancy, avoid using gender specific terms (such as ‘handyman’ or ‘waitress’), which may imply that only a man or a woman is suitable for the job. This can amount to direct sex discrimination, which is unlawful. Adverts should use gender neutral terms that can be applied equally to women or men.

When using illustrations in a job advertisement, always ensure these do not appear to favour or suggest a particular type of person should apply for the post (for example, white, male, young). Having gender neutral images in adverts will broaden the appeal of the advert.

The Equality Act 2010 does, however, allow advertisements aimed specifically at one gender, in very limited circumstances. One reason for this is in cases where there is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for an employee to be either a man or a woman. This could apply to caring roles, where personal care is delivered to clients of one gender or another.



Shortlisting

When the job has been advertised and applications received, a shortlist of candidates to invite for interview should be drawn up. Taking a fair, systematic and consistent approach helps ensure that selectors do not discriminate unfairly on grounds of personal bias, whether consciously or subconsciously, when shortlisting interview candidates. Applicants should be informed whether they have been selected for interview as quickly as possible.

Shortlisting interview candidates

Set criteria for selecting candidates

- Criteria should be based closely on the person specification drawn up for the job.

Have a scoring system to assist decision making

- Examine each application and award points to each applicant, depending on how the individual criteria agreed for the job are met by each applicant.

Involve two or more people in the shortlisting process

- Where possible, at least two people should collaborate in deciding the shortlist of interview candidates.
- Each should draw up their own list of potential candidates, then meet and agree a final list, based on scores from their individual lists.
- Scores are totalled, and applicants with the highest scores are invited to interview.



Positive action in recruitment

If you've identified that certain groups of people are under-represented in a particular role within your business, you can take positive action measures to try to address this. In recruitment, this can be done before, or at, the application stage. This can include encouraging people from those groups to apply or helping people with particular protected characteristics to perform to the best of their ability (for example, by giving them training or support not available to other applicants).

Example

A design company is looking to take on a new software developer. All of its current software developers are men, so the company directors decide that they should try to target women for the position. The company contacts Women in Technology, an organisation which promotes career opportunities to women working in information technology, to advertise the vacant position. The advertisement reaches a much wider pool, and there are a higher number of female applicants.

Positive action can also be used in a tie break situation, where two applicants are equally well qualified but one shares a protected characteristic¹ and the other does not. In the example above, the design company could select a female candidate over the male

¹ Protected characteristics are set out in the Equality Act 2010, and include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are the grounds on which discrimination is unlawful.



candidate, providing she was equally well qualified, in furtherance of the employer's efforts to have a more representative workforce.

This is not the same as 'positive discrimination', which is unlawful. If, after advertising for the post, a man applied and was better qualified than a female applicant, the employer would have to offer the job to the male candidate, even though they were targeting women in an effort to redress the gender imbalance in their workforce. To offer a post to a less well qualified person because they share a protected characteristic is discriminatory.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has prepared a useful guide, explaining discrimination and positive action measures.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/employing-people/recruitment

Interviews

Job interviews serve two main purposes:

- To find out if the candidate is suitable for the job, and
- To give the candidate information about the job and the company.

A structured interview provides a fair and consistent way to assess suitability for a post, as it is based on the interviewers asking the same questions of each candidate and assessing the quality of responses provided by each interviewee.

Deciding which questions to include in the interview should be relatively straightforward, as



the knowledge and skills, or competencies, required for the job should already be decided upon, having formed the basis of any job advertisement and shortlisting process. For each question, the interviewers should decide on a score to be allocated to it, with the maximum score available being that which they would award to the ideal candidate.

Some employers may decide that certain competencies are more important to the job than others, and award a higher possible score to one question than they do another.

Every candidate should have the same opportunity to present themselves effectively, to demonstrate their suitability and to ask questions of the interviewers.

Interviewing job applicants
Where possible, at least two people conduct interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none">One to one interviews can increase the potential for discrimination to occur. It is also difficult to concentrate on questions, take notes, and relax the candidate at the same time.Panel interviews, conducted by two or more people who have met and set criteria and interview questions beforehand, lessen the opportunity for discrimination.
Keep records of interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Each interviewer should note every candidate's answers to the interview questions, and notes should be kept for future reference.



All interview candidates are asked the same questions

- All candidates should be asked the same set of questions which are decided by the interviewers beforehand.
- Where candidates are asked different questions, inconsistency and unfairness can result.
- If an unsuccessful candidate takes a complaint to an employment tribunal, this type of questioning can be difficult to defend.

Interview panels should be gender balanced

- Where possible, both men and women should be on interview panels.

Questions are relevant to the vacant job

- Ensure only questions related to the job in question are asked.
- Never ask questions about childcare arrangements and marital status. Even if such questions are asked of both men and women, this may amount to indirect sex discrimination.

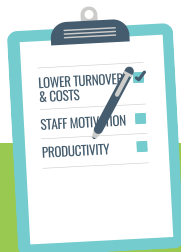
During structured interviews, scores are allocated for each answer given by candidates, according to the rating system previously agreed. The successful candidate is the person who has achieved the highest overall score.

You should ensure information relating to candidates' answers and copies of any scoring



sheets are kept for providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates. If a complaint of unfair selection is made, such evidence may be invaluable.

Everyone involved in recruitment processes must have received appropriate training in recruitment and selection, which should include equalities aspects of recruitment and selection, and the relevant legislation.



PAY ARRANGEMENTS

Even in a very small business, a structured pay system is more likely to provide equal pay, and be easier to monitor and control, than a system which relies on managerial discretion. Any element of discretion in deciding pay can be highly vulnerable to gender bias. Stereotypical views and attitudes to the value of different types of work and staff may influence decisions, whether consciously or not.

Employers and managers are often unaware of the impact their decisions may have on pay equality, and any consequent effect on staff morale. All staff who are involved in making decisions on pay and reward should receive equality training, and should understand the law on providing equal pay between men and women.

To find out more about paying your people fairly, take the
PAY AND REWARD test at www.thinkbusinessthinkequality.org.uk



KEEPING RECORDS

Many companies keep records on a range of employment practices. This might be electronic files or paper records. Record keeping is essential to ensure your recruitment and selection procedures are able to withstand scrutiny. Keep all documents connected with recruitment and selection processes, such as shortlisting records, interviewers' notes, or any other record of decision making. Documents should be signed and dated by the person who created them.

It is good practice to collect gender-disaggregated data. This is when information is collected and broken down by gender, to aid comparison between men and women. This can be helpful in determining where women and men might be affected differently by workplace policies and practices. Data, broken down by gender, should be kept on the following:

- Job applicants
- Applicants shortlisted
- Successful applicants
- Pay and reward
- Requests for flexible working
- Sickness and absence
- Return to work after maternity leave
- Staff taking paternity leave
- Grievances
- Disciplinary
- Staff leaving the company



FLEXIBLE WORKING

Some companies offer flexible working to their staff. There are many different types of flexible working which can relate to hours, place of work or work tasks. Some staff have flexible working contracts from the beginning of their employment, while other may require a flexible working pattern for a short period, to accommodate a change in personal circumstances.

Examples of flexible working arrangements	
Part-time working	Staff work less than the normal or standard full-time hours. The majority of part-time workers are women.
Job sharing	Two people share the work normally done by one member of staff.
Flexi-time	Certain mandatory 'core' hours must be worked, but staff have some flexibility on starting or finishing times.
Compressed hours	Contracted hours are worked over fewer days, for example, a four day week or nine day fortnight.
Annualised hours	Staff members' annual hours are calculated and split into set shifts and unallocated shifts. This type of working suits organisations dependent on seasonal working, for example, gardeners.



Staggered hours	Working patterns where staff have different starting, finishing and break times.
Term-time working	Staff work fewer hours or take time off during school holidays.
Working from home	Can be on a regular or ad-hoc basis. Appropriate technology (access to email, internet, telephone and so on) supports communication with the business/clients.
TOIL (time off in lieu)	Staff are able to take time off in lieu of overtime for additional hours worked.
Shift working	Common where staff are required across a 24-hour cycle.

Businesses that mention flexible working in job adverts encourage applications from a wider pool of talent, which means that they are more likely to attract and retain the staff they need.

Benefits such as flexible working can be a factor in retaining loyal and reliable staff in any company, regardless of size. Introducing flexible working has little or no cost, and can benefit your business by making it accessible by customers for more hours every day.

To find out how your business can benefit from your people working flexibly take the **FLEXIBLE WORKING** test at www.thinkbusinessthinkequality.org.uk



TRAINING

The most successful organisations make the best use of their most valuable resource - people. Managing people in a way that enables and encourages them to reach their potential benefits both individual and business performance.

Attracting and retaining skilled workers is a key challenge for business. By developing effective training opportunities for staff, smaller businesses may find it easier to retain skilled staff, while benefiting from increased staff efficiency, productivity and improved morale.

Part-time, low-paid women are the group of workers least likely to be offered training in the workplace, but they are also the most likely to working below their skill level. It makes good business sense to ensure that all staff have the same opportunity to develop their skills. Training or development does not necessarily involve sending staff to an off-site event or course.

To find out more about alternatives to formal training, and what to consider when developing training, take the **WOMEN'S JOBS, MEN'S JOBS** test at www.thinkbusinessthinkequality.org.uk

Equality training

All staff should receive equality training so that they understand their rights and responsibilities, and how equality law affects them and their colleagues. Training can be undertaken as part of an induction, a team meeting, or as a separate session. Equality training



is also a good way to show your commitment to preventing discrimination and promoting fairness and equality within your business. Examples of what equality training may include are:

- Dealing with bullying, harassment and victimisation,
- Discrimination,
- Promoting a positive workplace culture,
- Unconscious bias,
- Promoting diversity,
- Equality law,
- Company equality policy.



CREATING A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE

Policies

Many businesses have no contracts, handbooks or basic policies in place. When a problem occurs, they may find themselves in a worrying situation, trying to work out what to do for the best. Employment tribunals will automatically mark down any employer which has not demonstrated a willingness to provide a fair working environment. It is good practice to have the following policies in place:

- Equality;
- Equal pay for men and women;
- Dignity and respect at work (including bullying, harassment and victimisation); and
- Flexible working.

An equality policy should include statements on the value your business places on fairness and equality, and how these will be put into practice.

Some examples of equality policy statements:

- What behaviour you expect of your staff.
- What kind of behaviour is unacceptable.
- What staff can expect of you as an employer.



More information on equality policies can be found in the Equality and Human Rights publication, 'Employers' guide to equality policies, equality training and monitoring'.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/good-equality-practice-employers-equality-policies-equality-training-and-monitoring

Health and Safety

Women who need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for their jobs often report being issued with ill-fitting equipment that has been designed for men.

Employers have a legal duty to ensure that female employees are provided with equipment that is fit for purpose, taking into account their different body shape and size from their male counterparts.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require that the following facilities are provided as a minimum:

- Where possible, separate toilet facilities for men and women, or, failing that, rooms with lockable doors;
- A supply of toilet paper and, for female employees, a means of disposing of sanitary products; and
- Separate use of changing facilities should be available to men and women in working environments where employees are required to change into and wear specialist clothing (overalls, a uniform, thermal clothing, and so on.)



Effective communication with staff

Workplace situations often escalate to an employment tribunal because of a lack of, or ineffective, communication.

Staff should be given information about their rights and encouraged to speak to line managers as soon as they have a problem. Regular, short meetings with appropriate managers should be encouraged when a problem is identified. Encouraging a culture of openness will ensure that staff are confident that issues will be taken seriously.

Involving staff when changes are made to the business can help to foster a culture of openness. How you involve staff will depend on the type, size and structure of your business. This might be done through staff meetings and surveys, or through a trade union rep.

One-to-one meetings with line managers can also be a forum for discussion. Where line managers discuss an individual staff member's progress, ensure they take a consistent approach. Discrimination and unfair treatment often have at their root a failure to deal with situations consistently. All managers with a supervisory role should receive equality training.

Presenteeism

There is overwhelming evidence that a long hours culture, or presenteeism, can be harmful to both staff and productivity. Many women perceive that promoted posts will require a significant increase in hours spent at the office, which can be challenging for staff with caring responsibilities and acts as a disincentive. Developing flexible working practices can help your people work smarter rather than longer.



Networking events

Many women find it challenging to access informal work networks, particularly those that are based on after work socialising. Networking events that organised stereotypically male activities such as golf or football can exclude women.

By supporting female staff to participate in women-only networks you can help to build cross-company relationships, emphasise that your business values difference, and help drive cultural change.

Case study

Women in Renewable Energy Scotland (WiRES) is a professional, peer-support network for women working in the renewable energy sector. It provides a forum for women working in a range of roles and industries across the sector, and organises networking events, site visits, and professional development sessions for members. WiRES also runs a mentoring programme.

Staff on maternity leave

Employers are entitled to make reasonable contact with staff during maternity leave. This might be to discuss arrangements for their return to work, or to provide an update on significant changes to the workplace. Women on maternity leave can, by agreement, work for up to 10 days without bringing their leave to an end or affecting their maternity pay. These are called 'Keeping in Touch' days. KiT days are designed to let women keep in touch with



their employer, and the days can be used for any work-related activity including training or attendance at meetings or conferences. Working for part of a day counts as one day's work and businesses must be aware that any such work only takes place with the agreement of both parties.

There may be limited opportunities for promotion within your business, but opportunities for development can motivate staff to improve performance in existing jobs. Encouraging staff to keep up to date with advances in technology or new developments within an industry will benefit the organisation as well as the individuals concerned.

Paternity leave

Research shows that fewer than 10 per cent of men take more than two weeks' paternity leave after the birth or adoption of a child. When looking at male managers, this falls to just 2 per cent. Creating a culture which is supportive of men sharing caring responsibilities will be beneficial for both male and female staff.

In addition to two weeks' Ordinary Paternity Leave, partners of women who have had a baby can also take Additional Paternity Leave. Mothers can now transfer up to 26 weeks of their leave to their partner once the baby is 20 weeks old and the mother has returned to work.

In 2015, new reforms on parental leave will be introduced which will make it easier for women to share caring responsibilities with their partners. The changes will mean that once a mother has taken two weeks' maternity leave, the remaining 50 weeks can be shared flexibly with her partner. The plans allow them to take the leave in turns, in blocks or together, but for no more than 12 months in total and with no more than nine months at statutory pay.



More information on maternity and paternity leave can be found on Acas' website, at:

www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1362

Retaining staff

Having recruited talented, skilled, and loyal people to work in your business, you will want to them to stay. It makes sound business sense to retain good workers for as long as possible, as it takes time, money and effort to recruit and train good staff.

Find out why people want to leave and what steps might encourage them to stay. Exit interviews enable you to find out why employees want to leave, and can highlight issues which you may need to address. Action to improve staff retention in your business might include:

- Providing an accurate impression of the job at the recruitment stage.
- Training line managers in effective supervision, including equality training.
- Providing opportunities for staff to develop skills and progress, where possible.
- Offering sideways moves if promoted posts are not feasible. This can vary experience and make work more interesting.
- Offering flexible working where possible.
- Avoiding a culture of presenteeism where people feel under pressure to work longer hours than are necessary.
- Ensuring staff are not discriminated against.



WORKPLACE CULTURE CHECKLIST

Recruitment

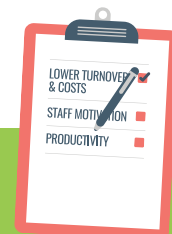
All job vacancies are advertised.	
A variety of advertising methods are used to recruit new staff.	
Job advertisements use gender neutral terms.	
Application forms are used as part of the recruitment process.	
Only information that is relevant to the job is collected on the application form.	
Staff on maternity leave are informed of job vacancies.	

Interviews

At least two people conduct interviews.	
Records of interviews are kept.	
Where possible, there is a gender balance on interview panels.	
All interview candidates are asked the same questions.	
All interview questions are relevant to the job.	

Starting pay

There is a policy on starting pay that is consistently applied across the business.	
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Record keeping	
Staff records are kept on all aspects of recruitment, training, promotion, disciplinaries, pay, and absence, and are broken down by gender.	
Flexible working	
All staff are able to access flexible working arrangements.	
Training	
Equalities training is delivered to all staff.	
Creating a fair, safe and inclusive workplace culture	
There are health and safety and equalities policies in place.	
Suitably-fitting PPE is available, where appropriate, for all staff.	
Female staff have access to on site facilities such as separate toilets and changing rooms.	
Staff are regularly consulted about changes made within the workplace.	
Staff are not expected to routinely work late.	
The business tries to accommodate staff with caring responsibilities.	
Staff are supported to take their full two weeks' paternity leave entitlement.	



GLOSSARY

Direct discrimination

Less favourable treatment of a woman than a man (or vice versa) because of their sex.

Diversity

The recognition and valuing of difference, in its broadest sense. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of employers and employees.

Equality

Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration – recognising the diversity of different groups.

Gender

Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that society considers appropriate for men and women. For example, historically, gender role stereotyping would suggest that women should look after children at home while men go to work in the formal labour market.

Genuine occupational requirement

An employer can, in certain limited circumstances, stipulate that a job can only be open to a person of a particular gender. This might be used in jobs where personal care is delivered, in order to preserve dignity.

Indirect discrimination

Occurs when an employer applies a provision, criterion or practice equally to both women and men that puts one sex at an unfair disadvantage.



Positive action

Refers to a range of lawful actions that seek to overcome or minimise disadvantages (e.g. in employment opportunities) that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs.

Positive discrimination

Treating someone with a protected characteristic more favourably to counteract the effects of past discrimination. It is generally not lawful although the duty to make reasonable adjustments is an exception where treating a disabled person more favourably may be required by law.

Protected characteristics

These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Unconscious bias

The associations that are held which, despite being outside conscious awareness, can have a significant influence on our attitudes and behaviour. This means that we automatically respond to others - for example, people from different genders or different ethnic groups - in positive or negative ways. These associations are difficult to override, regardless of whether they are recognised to be wrong, because they are deeply ingrained into thinking and emotions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Close the Gap

www.closesthegap.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Acas

www.acas.org.uk



Close the Gap works in Scotland on women's labour market participation. We work with policymakers, employers and unions to influence and enable action that will address the causes of women's inequality at work.

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