

Equal Opportunities

Distance Learning Workbook

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1. Introduction and background

A key evaluation criterion in any public sector tendering process is information relating to equal opportunities, and your company's approach to issues relating to diversity and discrimination.

This workbook has been written to ensure that you understand the typical equal opportunity standards that you will be expected to meet and what this means for your business.

Whilst each workbook covers a particular topic they are interlinked. For example, information relating to equal opportunities and diversity can assist you in demonstrating your ability to deliver through the recruitment of excellent staff.

In a tender situation, the purchasing organisation can only assess your approach to equal opportunities based on your written submission and equal opportunities Policy.

Definition

Equal Opportunities

By 'equal opportunities' we mean how fairly people are treated and gain access to jobs, opportunities, goods and services.

Throughout the main part of the workbook there are opportunities to reflect on what you have read and what this may mean to your business. It is important that you complete as many of the activities as you can as they have been designed to help you move towards successfully competing for public sector contracts.

The material and activities should be thought provoking and challenging. If you have a procurement mentor, they can help you to plan how best to address the issues that the text and activities have identified.

One of the challenges is getting to grips with some of the jargon. This is explained throughout, and in a 'jargon buster' at the end.

We recommend that you spend a total of at least half a day (3.5 hours) working on this workbook.

2. Aims and objectives of workbook

The key aims of this workbook are:

- To raise the general awareness of the importance of equal opportunities to your business.
- To review the equal opportunity requirements required by public sector purchasers.
- To understand how these requirements are reflected in the questions or clauses contained in typical pre-qualification questionnaires and Invitations to Tender (ITT), and how you could address these.
- To ensure these issues are understood and reflected when you are bidding for work.
- To demonstrate that the incorporation of diversity and equal opportunity issues into core business operations and approaches can strengthen the company's bottom line and make you more competitive during the tendering process.

Both private and public sector organisations are under increasing pressure to improve their bottom line. For the private sector this relates to turnover and profit, and for the public sector it refers to the efficient delivery of services and products to the community they serve.

Definitions

Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

The initial questionnaire seeking information about a company such as financial status, legal compliance, customer base, policies and procedures, etc.

Invitation to Tender (ITT)

Although they can be merged together, successful completion of a PQQ will lead to an Invitation to Tender. An ITT will contain the contract specification, terms of contract and other related documents to be completed and submitted to a defined timetable.

By the end of the workbook you will be able to:

- Outline your key equal opportunity requirements.
- Develop an equal opportunities Policy.
- Identify your gaps and develop an action plan for overcoming these.

In working with you to develop an equal opportunities policy that reflects your industry and company culture, it is hoped that you will not see the equal opportunity requirements in the tendering process as an additional bureaucratic burden placed on you as a small business, but as a useful exercise that helps your company to:

- Identify and capitalise on opportunities to improve products and services.

- ❑ Attract, retain and motivate staff.
- ❑ Improve the quality of your decision-making process through the inclusion of diverse voices in decision-making roles.
- ❑ Reap the benefits of being seen as an organisation that takes its social responsibilities seriously in relation to social inclusion and diversity.

3. Your legal obligations

As a business, you have a legal requirement to comply with the following Acts:

- Civil Partnership Act 2004.
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
- Equal Pay Act 2002.
- Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003.
- Employment Equality (religion or belief) Regulations 2003.
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- Race Relations Act 1976.
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

This legislation makes it illegal to discriminate in employment matters against anyone on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or gender. It is also generally illegal to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of disability. It is likely that legislation around age discrimination will come into force in the future.

Awareness around issues relating to discrimination needs to be demonstrated in your equal opportunities policy. Similarly you need to demonstrate that you are both aware of and compliant with the legal requirements as outlined in the above Acts.

Do not worry. You do not need an in-depth understanding of all these Acts. You only need to reflect in your policy that your company does not practice any form of discrimination in your everyday activities.

Definition:

Direct and Indirect Discrimination

There has been much debate around direct and indirect discrimination:

Direct discrimination refers to the less favourable treatment of people due to, for example, their race, gender or religion.

For example, a female candidate with the best qualifications and experience does not get the job, but a male candidate with fewer qualifications and less experience does.

Indirect discrimination refers to discrimination that is inherent in the requirements of a job and/or the conditions and practices imposed on the jobs that have an adverse impact on one group or another.

For example, a bus driver needs to have good eyesight, but the requirements of eyesight discriminate against those who have a slight disability.

Aspects relating to indirect discrimination are not common. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that if you are practising any form of indirect discrimination that legal experts determine the legality of this 'discrimination'.

Activity 1

Which of the above pieces of legislation are you not familiar with?

If you are unclear about any of them, it is recommended that you take the time to investigate the relevant piece of legislation further.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission website (www.equalityhumanrights.com) contains a wealth of useful information.

As employers, local authorities have all the same legal obligations around equal opportunities as other businesses. They also, however, have additional legal obligations. The Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and Local Government Act.

- By giving consideration to equal opportunities in contracts.
- By providing fair & accessible services.
- By using money spent on goods and services to promote and protect equalities in employment.

It is, therefore, a legal requirement for local authorities to ensure that no unlawful discrimination takes place in the provision of their goods and services. This includes any form of discrimination in their supply chain through the employment practices of their contractors and sub-contractors.

It is because of these obligations that local authorities make demands on you, as potential suppliers, around equal opportunities.

4. The importance of equal opportunities

Equal opportunities legislation has been put in place by successive governments in order to address inequities within our communities.

Despite years of legislation, significant inequalities still remain. For example:

- ❑ Unemployment in ethnic minority communities is, on average, twice the rate in white communities and members of ethnic minority groups find it twice as hard as white people to secure jobs.
- ❑ Black and Asian people are 16% more likely than white people to be highly qualified, but highly qualified Black and Asian people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as white people.
- ❑ There are thousands of cases of discrimination every year, and many are not reported
Statistics from: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>
- ❑ Women, despite the passing of the sex discrimination laws almost 30 years ago, hold fewer than 10% of the most senior jobs in public life.
- ❑ 9% of the country's top business leaders and national newspaper editors are women. But women account for 45% of the workforce and 30% of managers. *Statistics from:* <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>
- ❑ The public sector is a leader in the area of equal opportunities and they expect their suppliers to follow similar practices.

5. The business case for diversity

Having an equal opportunities policy is not only about having the necessary policy to meet the public sector tendering requirements. Developing diversity within your firm also makes good business sense. This is demonstrated by the following:

- ❑ It is illegal to discriminate. If your business ends up in court or in front of an industrial tribunal, it could be very costly.
- ❑ Encouraging diversity helps ensure that you hire the very best people as you are searching amongst a wider pool of skills and knowledge.
- ❑ The marketplace is extremely diverse. If this diversity is reflected in your workplace it can:
 1. Form part of your decision-making.
 2. Ensure the development of excellent products/services.
 3. Promote loyalty and staff motivation, and reduce staff turnover.
 4. Create a positive corporate image.
- ❑ Public sector purchasers expect suppliers to demonstrate how issues relating to equal opportunities are reflected in their work practices.

Relevant figures

- ❑ London Borough of Enfield: 23% of the area is made up of ethnic minority groups.
- ❑ London Borough of Haringey: Over half of the population is made up of minority ethnic groups.
- ❑ London Borough of Newham: 61% of the area is made up of ethnic minority groups.

Activity 2

Think about your workplace. Does it reflect your marketplace?

If so, how do you think this has come about?

If not, why is this case?

Note down your thoughts and keep them as you work through this workbook.

6. Ensuring diversity

Creating an equal opportunities policy may seem a burden, but doing so, and embedding it within your organisation is key to ensuring diversity.

Without a documented equal opportunities policy you are, however, also extremely unlikely to win a contract from a public sector purchaser.

Activity 3

Does your firm have an equal opportunities policy?

If yes, read through it now, and keep it with you as you work through this workbook. Identify any elements that could be further developed.

If not, use this workbook to develop a policy.

Does it comply with all the Acts mentioned in section 3? (This will be checked when you submit your PQQ.)

7. Equal opportunities policy

7.1 What is an equal opportunities policy?

An equal opportunities policy is a written statement of aims and attitudes that recognises the organisation's legal requirements, and demonstrates how you intend to fulfil those aims and obligations.

The policy should recognise your responsibilities as an employer and towards your customers in terms of any services that you are delivering to the marketplace. It also needs to address issues relating to both direct and indirect discrimination.

(See definition on page 7)

Remember: An equal opportunities policy needs to be viewed as a 'living document'. It must relate to your current business and needs to be adapted to reflect business growth and changes. It also needs to be amended and updated in accordance with legislative changes.

7.2 What your policy should cover

Statement of your aims & Objectives.

This statement acts as a window into your organisation. It should highlight your company's overall approach to equal opportunities by providing a meaningful commitment to equal opportunities and demonstrating your willingness to meet the key aims and objectives of your Policy.

Sections on:

Recruitment: guidance around job advertisements, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal.

Monitoring of job applicants, successful applicants, trainees, grievances, promotion, dismissal, etc.

Policies: around victimisation, discrimination and harassment. Ensure that these are linked to your disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Identification of the **person responsible** for the equal opportunities policy and its implementation.

Details of **policy reviews and implementation** of changes.

Details on **how the policy is communicated** to all staff.

Details on **staff** consultation.

A **commitment** to providing professional and appropriate services to all people.

Activity 4

If you already have an equal opportunities policy, does it include all of the above sections? If not, it is important that you amend your policy to include the above information.

7.3 Example equal opportunities policies

There are a range of examples and 'templates' available.

Whilst these may provide a useful foundation for building your own policy, you are unlikely to find one that meets all of your business' requirements.

Merely using a standardised template will also mean that you are extremely unlikely to pass all of the equal opportunities selection criteria set down in a public sector tendering process. This is because a skilled assessor is likely to recognise your policy as a template that is not fully applicable to your business and services/products being delivered.

It is, therefore, important for your equal opportunities policy to be relevant to your company and industry. For this you need to have a good understanding of the relevant equal opportunity issues that are prevalent in your industry, and ensure that these are adequately reflected in your policy document.

With those provisos in place, two sample equal opportunities policies are provided below:

Example 1:

(Name of company)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Statement of Intent

In the provision of services and the employment of staff, **(name of company)** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for everyone. Throughout its activities, (name of company) will treat all people equally, whether they are:

- Seeking or using our services.
- Applying for a job or already employed by us.
- Contracting to supply us with goods and services.

(name of company) is committed to eliminating discrimination and to achieve this **(name of company)** will not discriminate directly or indirectly through applying conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justified. It will not discriminate on the grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender, HIV status, marital status, nationality or national origins, race, religious beliefs, responsibility for dependants, sexuality or unrelated criminal conviction.

It is the responsibility of every employee of **(name of company)** to uphold and implement this policy and the direct responsibility of management to manage and plan our activities so as to realise this policy.

Signed

Dated

Designation

Police courtesy of Equality Direct www.equalitydirect.org.uk

Example 2

Our policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all in employment, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status and social class. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees, whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our Commitment

- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- Breaches of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions and employee representatives (insert details if appropriate).
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.
- Implementation (include brief details of what will happen, how the policy will be monitored and reviewed over time. An Equality Direct advisor can help you consider these).

The Law

This policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:

- Equal Pay Act 2002.
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- Race Relations Act 1976.
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

7.1 Implementing an equal opportunities policy

Your equal opportunities policy must represent a meaningful commitment, not just a piece of paper.

Once the Policy has been developed and communicated, follow it up with

1. Training staff on equal opportunities issues.
2. Taking practical measures to stop any direct or indirect discrimination, whether deliberate or unwitting. For example, jokes based on sexual or racial stereotypes can be intimidating and/or offensive, even unintentionally.
3. Providing a channel for complaints.
4. Revising and updating the Policy regularly.

You may find that you are having problems implementing your policy. If so, objectively identify why and address these problem areas. You may wish to feed and/or reflect what you have learnt back into your Policy.

Activity 5

Consider:

- Any situations of discrimination that you have encountered in a workplace, or in wider life.**
- Difficulties that you have had in implementing an equal opportunities policy, in the past.**
- Groups or individuals who might make implementation of an equal opportunities policy difficult for you in the future.**
- How could you feed what you observed or learnt from these into your equal opportunities policy?**

8. Equal opportunities and public sector tendering

As discussed earlier, equal opportunities are one of the key evaluation criteria during public sector tendering processes.

Local Authorities are particularly stringent in their assessment of bidders, due to their legal responsibilities outlined in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Confederation of British Industry published a report entitled: "Public Procurement & Race Equality: Briefing for Suppliers." In this report they offer a number of recommendations to suppliers. You may wish to consider the following:

- ❑ "Services need to be designed to be accessible and responsive to the specific needs of different racial and gender groups".
- ❑ "Bidders should gather as much information as possible about the context for meeting race equality objectives within the contract. This should include the authority's race equality scheme/policy, facts about the population to be served in the contract, current levels of use by different race groups and an insight into the key challenges in improving performance".

Presenting this information in your PQQs and tender documents, and linking it to the core specification and methodology of delivery might help you gain a competitive advantage over your rivals.

8.1 Equal opportunities in a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

Below are examples of equal opportunities questions that have been asked in recent public sector PQQs:

<p>E.13 Is it the policy of the your organisation and/or its named supply chain members (sub-contractors) as employers to comply with their statutory obligations under the Civil Partnership Act 2004, Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Equal Pay Act 2002, Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (religion or belief) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975.</p>	<p>YES / NO <i>(please delete)</i></p>
<p>E 14 Does your organisation and/or its named supply chain members (sub-contractors) require its staff to receive training on equal opportunities?</p>	<p>YES / NO <i>(please delete)</i></p>
<p>E.15 In the last 3 years has any finding of unlawful discrimination in the employment field been made against your organisation and/or its named supply chain members (sub-contractors) by the Employment Tribunal, the Employment Appeal Tribunal, or any court or in comparable proceedings in any other jurisdiction?</p>	<p>YES / NO <i>(please delete)</i></p>
<p>E.16 If the answer to the previous question is yes, what steps have been taken by your organisation and/or its named supply chain members (sub-contractors) as a result of that finding?</p>	

Comment

Is important that you answer question E4 above truthfully. If your company has been found guilty of any lawful discrimination or been subject to a formal investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, this does not mean that you will be automatically disqualified from the tendering process.

It is, however, important for you to clearly outline the steps that you have taken to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated. Points to consider in your answer include:

- The issues in dispute and any extenuating circumstances leading to the dispute.
- The key steps you have taken since the dispute to prevent a similar finding in the future.
- The key objectives of these actions.
- How you have communicated these steps and/or changes to the organisation.
- How you are monitoring the changes, and ensuring that they are being implemented and meeting the identified objectives.

- The key learning from the dispute.

8.2 Equal opportunities in tender documentation

A tender is very likely to include questions and clauses around equal opportunities, which will be assessed by an experienced evaluator. These questions and clauses are, however, often more difficult to identify and answer than they are in a PQQ, as they relate to the demonstration of equal opportunities in the overall service delivery. Bidders are, therefore, often expected to show how they have 'mainstreamed' issues relating to equal opportunities into their business processes and procedures. If you are providing a service directly to members of the public, greater importance and emphasis will be attached to these questions.

These questions and clauses cannot, therefore, be answered by only including an equal opportunities policy. It is recommended that you give consideration to issues relating to diversity and social inclusion in your whole bid document. It is important, however, to make sure that your answers to individual questions are clearly marked. This makes it easier for the evaluator to assess them.

8.2.1 Equal opportunities questions and clauses in Invitation to Tender

Issues relating to equal opportunities may appear in tender documentation in a variety of places, for example:

A low risk tender may ask for:

Example 1

Your organisation's Equal opportunities policy

Example 2

The Contractor shall make itself aware of the Council's commitment as regards equal opportunities, Health & Safety, Environmental Issues and Local Labour & Regeneration.

8.2.2 Equal opportunities questions and clauses in contract documentation

Here is a clause from a recent local authority contract document that was issued as part of a tender pack:

Equal Opportunities

The Provider will comply with the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986, the Equal Pay Acts 1970 & 1986, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003.

Activity 6

Consider how equal opportunities issues relate to the products and services that your business offers.

In delivering these, have you taken full consideration of equal opportunities issues?

Are they fully reflected in your equal opportunities policy and related procedures?

If you had to link issues relating to equal opportunities to the delivery of your services and/or products in a tender document, how would you do this?

8.3 Evaluation of equal opportunities submissions

The person evaluating submissions, on behalf of a local authority purchaser will be seeking information that demonstrates that:

- The bidder is fulfilling their legal obligations around equal opportunities and, therefore, that the local authority is acting in accordance with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.
- Equal opportunities is mainstreamed into the service that the bidder is seeking to provide.

Bidders who have been the subject of formal investigation on alleged unlawful discrimination by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission will not automatically be eliminated from the bidding process. If this has occurred it is important, however, for you to provide evidence of the steps that you have taken to avoid a similar investigation in the future. (See advice on page 16).

9. Equal opportunities monitoring

Equal opportunities policies by themselves do not bring about equality of opportunity. Organisations, therefore, need to have a way of checking that their policies are being implemented and are delivering the required objectives. Whilst it is not a legal requirement for organisations to keep records and to monitor the impact of an equal opportunities policy, it is good practice.

Also, businesses are likely to be required to undertake equal opportunities monitoring as part of the delivery of any contract for a local authority. This is again linked with the local authority's legal requirement to promote equality through the supply chain. It is recommended, therefore, that you identify some key areas to monitor. These might include:

- Employment within the organisation – make-up of the workforce, applicants for jobs, staff resigning, etc.
- Service delivery - which groups of people are using the service and what are satisfaction levels?

The most reliable and efficient way of monitoring the effectiveness of your policy is to carry out regular analysis of your workforce and job applicants by gender, ethnicity and disability. Guidance for choosing ethnic categories can be found on the Equalities and Human Rights Commission website at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

9.1 Monitoring policy

It is good practice for businesses to have a monitoring policy in place, which should include:

- Details of the processes used to collect, store and analyse data
- All records and data collected

9.2 Making use of the data collected

There is no use collecting and analysing information collected without using it to inform decision making, policy changes and market planning.

Businesses can use the information collected to:

- Consider ways of reaching under-represented groups and making services relevant to their needs. Identify how such groups could be good for business as they could represent new market opportunities and new sales.
- Highlight possible inequalities.
- Investigate the underlying causes.
- Remove any unfairness or disadvantages.

9.3 Equal opportunities monitoring forms

Example 1:

Name of Organisation: _____

Equal opportunities monitoring – Directors etc.

As an equal opportunities employer the Council is keen to encourage organisations that reflect the Borough's diverse population. In order that the Council can monitor the make-up of applicants, it would be of great assistance if you would indicate below the category appropriate to the ownership of your company.

This information will only be used for statistical purposes

How many directors/partners/"owners" do you have?

How many are in each ethnic group?

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese or other ethnic group
British <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	White and Black <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	Indian <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	Caribbean <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	Chinese <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
Irish <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	White and Black Caribbean <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	Pakistani <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	African <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	
Greek-Cypriot <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	White and Black African <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	Bangladeshi <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>		
Turkish-Cypriot <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	White and Asian <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	East African <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>		
Kurdish <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>		Asian <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>		
Turkish <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>				
Any other White Background please write in	Any other mixed Background please write in	Any other Asian Background please write in	Any other Black Background please write in	Any other ethnic group please write in

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How many in each group?

Male Female

How many consider that they have a disability?

Example 2:

Name of Organisation: _____

Equal opportunities monitoring – Employees

As an equal opportunities employer the Council is keen to encourage organisations that reflect the Borough's diverse population. In order that the Council can monitor the make-up of applicants, it would be of great assistance if you would indicate below the category appropriate to the employees within your company (if more than 50 employees).

This information will only be used for statistical purposes.

How many employees are in each ethnic group (excluding directors/partners/"owners" detailed on previous page)?

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese or other ethnic group
British <input type="text"/>	White and Black <input type="text"/>	Indian <input type="text"/>	Caribbean <input type="text"/>	Chinese <input type="text"/>
Irish <input type="text"/>	White and Black <input type="text"/>	Pakistani <input type="text"/>	African <input type="text"/>	
Greek-Cypriot <input type="text"/>	White and African <input type="text"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="text"/>		
Turkish-Cypriot <input type="text"/>	Asian <input type="text"/>	East African <input type="text"/>		
Kurdish <input type="text"/>		Asian <input type="text"/>		
Turkish <input type="text"/>				

**Any other
White
Background
please write in**

**Any other
mixed
Background
please write in**

**Any other
Asian
Background
please write in**

**Any other
Black
Background
please write in**

**Any other
ethnic group
please write
in**

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How many employees are in each group?

Male

Female

How many employees consider that they have a disability?

10. Action Plan

10.1 Immediate

Having completed the workbook it is important that you identify any key actions that you need to implement as you prepare your business to compete in the public sector marketplace.

Identify up to 3 actions you need to implement as a result of completing this workbook. Don't forget to consider whose support you need and what resources are available to help you.

1. What action is required?

How will you know it has been successfully implemented?

2. What action is required?

How will you know it has been successfully implemented?

3. What action is required?

How will you know it has been successfully implemented?

10.2 Within 12 months

It would be unrealistic to expect a small business to formalise all its issues relating to equal opportunities overnight. As the business evolves equal opportunities will be a key consideration and systems, policies and procedures will need to be established.

Identify up to 3 priorities that should be addressed over the next 12 months. Again identify whose support you need and what resources are available to support your efforts.

1. What needs to be done?

How will you know it has been addressed?

2. What needs to be done?

How will you know it has been addressed?

3. What needs to be done?

How will you know it has been addressed?

11. Conclusion

For the purpose of PQQs and tenders it is recommended that the key aspects of your equal opportunities policy and approaches to diversity be reflected throughout your bid documents, and not only be submitted as a necessary requirement to meet the evaluation criteria.

This can be achieved by:

- Reflecting your company's approach and commitment to equal opportunities in your introduction and linking it to your ability to deliver and inclusive an quality service and/or product.
- Attaching equal opportunity and diversity issues to your methodology of delivery.
- Highlighting your ability to meet the requirements for an accessible and responsive service and/or product delivery, due to your workforce reflecting the diversity of the customer base.
- Demonstrating an understanding and willingness to meet the aims and objectives of the awarding authority's policies relating to equal opportunities.

12. Further support

Equality and Human Rights Commission

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

Age Positive

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/age-positive/>

Business Link

www.businesslink.gov.uk

Supply London

<http://www.supplylondon.com/>

13. Jargon busters

Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

The initial questionnaire seeking information about a company such as financial status, legal compliance, customer base, policies and procedures, etc.

Invitation to Tender (ITT)

Although they can be merged together, successful completion of a PQQ will lead to an Invitation to Tender. An ITT will contain the contract specification, terms of contract and other related documents to be completed and submitted to a defined timetable.

Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities refer to how fairly people are treated and gain access to jobs, opportunities, goods and services.

Direct Discrimination

This refers to the less favourable treatment of people due to, for example, their race, gender or religion.

Indirect Discrimination

This refers to discrimination that is inherent in the requirements of a job and/or conditions and practices imposed on the job that have an adverse impact on one group or another.
Jargon Busters.

Unique Selling Point (USP)

USPs are the unique product and/or service benefits of your company that you actively promote in a consistent manner to your target market.