

A summary of the outcomes

This leaflet summarises the outcomes of Disability Equals Business, a partnership project that ran from April 2005 to December 2007 and covered the whole of Sussex, including the City of Brighton & Hove.

It was part of the European-wide EQUAL programme, falling under the EQUAL priority 'Employability', Theme A 'combating discrimination and promoting equality in the workplace'.

Tools and documents created

Web based toolkit, designed at the beginning of the project as a quick way for employers to assess their understanding of the legislation, and as a platform to encourage them to contact us.

A checklist for assessing employers' performance against certain disability equality criteria. This formed the basis for each employer's action plan. This checklist has been made available to partners and others for future use as a mainstreaming tool for continuing work with employers.

A set of procurement tools for use by public bodies, which we encouraged public bodies in Sussex to adopt.

A guide (including easy-read version), for disabled peoples' groups, on how to lobby government and other bodies.

21 information sheets on various disability topics

A Sussex Business Guide to Disability and a Directory of Employment Services. Printed copies of these distributed to many Sussex businesses. Also, online, via www.disabilityguide.info/

A 2007 calendar with positive images of disabled people working. 2,000 were distributed to employers, partners, local authorities, schools etc.

Engaging with Sussex-based employers

The project team contacted over 2000 employers across the whole of Sussex. This resulted in face-to-face meetings with over 600 of them, of which 300 worked with our consultants to create an action plan aimed at improving equal opportunities in their organisation.

A subsequent survey of those 300 employers indicated the following:

96% said the interview with the consultant was either useful or very useful.

90% said that the information the consultants provided about their legal responsibilities was either useful or very useful.

76% said their Action Plan was either useful or very useful.

Changes resulting from the consultant's visit:

51% said they had updated their recruitment processes

39% said they had changed the wording of job advertisements

30% said they had a new Equality and Diversity policy

44% said they had updated their existing Employment and Diversity policy

56% said they had carried out an access audit

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51% said they had carried out risk assessments in relation to disabled staff
38% said they had made reasonable adjustments to enable a disabled member of staff to remain at work.

New networks developed

Engage West Sussex – linking supported employment providers across West Sussex and linking with other networks with a view to sustainability.

West Sussex Equality Forum – for HR/Equalities staff in West Sussex public bodies and with links to other similar networks.

Brighton & Hove Leaders – an employers diversity network, linked to FE and HE providers.

Training events & materials

16 training events, which were attended by a total of 200 participants from Sussex employers.

The training materials were also copied onto CDs and given to all the projects' partners.

A workshop for Sussex public sector organisations about the Disability Equality Duty.

Cold-calling training for staff in partner supported employment organisations.

Development of a train the trainers course for people with mental health difficulties.

Development and delivery of an innovative 'participation' course for disabled people.

DDA awareness sessions delivered to over 100 small businesses via East Sussex Trading Standards Service's 'Fit For Purpose' seminars and 'Business Support Network' events.

Other actions/outcomes

Brighton & Hove 'Access' project, working with and building the capacity of disabled people to deliver a detailed access guide for the city.

Identified key themes from research and put into policy briefing for relevant Government departments and agencies.

Influenced delivery of 'Realising Potential' project of Jobcentre Plus, with findings and expertise gained from employer engagement.

Project's findings fed into Government consultation on review of discrimination law.

Held an event in Brussels, for MEPs, to disseminate the final report of the work with the project's trans-national partners.

A spin off from Disability Equals Business project was the creation of Paritas—a recruitment agency specialising in finding employment opportunities for people with mental health difficulties. Initially operating in West Sussex, the aim is to expand this into other areas in due course.

www.disabilityequalsbusiness.org.uk
www.paritas.org.uk