



Merseytravel

Equality Scheme

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Equality Scheme

This scheme will come into force on 1 August 2014 and will continue until July 2016. It updates the previous Equality Scheme (2011-2014) and sets out how Merseytravel complies with the statutory responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010

1 Merseytravel

- 1.1. On 1 April 2014 Merseytravel became an Executive Body providing professional, strategic and operational transport advice to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The Combined Authority is the highest level of local political decision making, responsible for making strategic transport, economic housing and employment and skills decisions.
- 1.2. We work collaboratively with the districts of the Liverpool City Region, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Department for Transport and other key stakeholders, in ensuring that we are focussed on delivering the key priorities of the Combined Authority, providing transport infrastructure services that support economic growth.

2 Our objectives and values

- 2.1 In delivering high quality services and infrastructure, we have organisational cultures and values that support the delivery of our Corporate Plan. This includes good corporate governance and a constant focus on excellence in leadership, performance, accountability, learning and development. We recognise that to move forward effectively, a highly skilled and responsible workforce, that welcomes innovation and responds to change, is essential.
- 2.2 Our values are:
 - Putting customers first – We shape and deliver products and services that put our customers' needs first, based on robust evidence and feedback;
 - Acting with integrity and respect - We are honest, transparent and respectful in our dealings with our customers, our people and our partners;
 - Being responsible for our actions - We manage the social (including equalities), environmental and economic impacts of our operations; and
 - Being progressive - We foster a culture of constant improvement in the way we operate.

3. Public Sector Equality Duty

3.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) sets out the equality requirements placed on public bodies when carrying out their day-to-day work. There are 2 elements to the PSED. The first is the General Duty, as set out in the Equality Act Section 149(1):

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:-

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic¹ and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

3.2 In simple terms, "have due regard" means we need to consciously think about these 3 aims as part of our decision making process, and consideration of equality issues must therefore influence our decisions. This includes how we develop and evaluate policy, how we design deliver and evaluate services, and how we procure from others.

3.3 The second element is the Specific Duty. This is set out in a Statutory Instrument (2011 No. 2260) which accompanies the legislation, and says that we must publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the duty imposed by section 149(1) of the Act. In other words, we have to provide evidence of how consideration of equality issues has influenced our decisions.

4 Our Priorities

4.1 Delivering Policies Which Support Equality and Diversity

4.1.1 Equalities considerations are built into our policies, and our [Equality Policy](#) sets out the context of the PSED in our policy making.

4.1.2 We use equality impact assessments (EIA) as a systematic way of identifying the potential impact of our policies, services and functions on our customers and staff. It helps us to provide and deliver excellent services to our customers by making sure that they reflect the

¹ As defined in the appendix

needs of the community. It ensures that the services that we provide fulfil the requirements of the PSED, and that equality is placed at the centre of policy development and review, as well as service delivery.

4.2 Equality Data

4.2.1 Equality data is important to help us understand the effect of our policies on our staff and customers. When undertaking customer surveys, or working on a particular project, a clear indication of what equality monitoring data is required, and particularly what it will be used for, is included in the project specification. Before undertaking any new customer research, we review what equality information is already available to help us decide what equality data would complement the research outcomes and be included in the project.

4.3 On-going Engagement Activities

4.3.1 Meeting the needs of our customers is central to everything we do. This means that engagement with our customers is key to understanding their needs, be they existing or potential customers. We continually review our methods, to ensure that the views of the whole community and all protected groups inform policy and delivery within the organisation, and we embrace new technology and social media, where appropriate.

4.3.2 Consultation also forms part of our wider engagement, and decisions on when, how, and with whom we consult depend on the nature of the engagement. To help inform this process, we will be developing a Consultation Policy.

4.4 Delivering Equality through Procurement

4.4.1 A number of our services are delivered by external providers, and we have looked at how we can make sure they are supportive of our Equality commitment. In line with the recommendation of the 2013 review of the PSED² to remove the burden on small employers, our templates have recently been reviewed in order to simplify the process for all suppliers.

4.4.2 A Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) is used for use for procurements which are considered high risk, and all procurements greater than £100k in value. This asks for

² Government Equalities Office – Review of the Public Sector Equality Duty: Report of the Independent Steering Group; 6th September 2013

information on the supplier's approach to equality, along with health & safety and sustainability, although formal management systems (eg ISO International Standards) are not compulsory, as we recognise would disadvantage SMEs. We ask instead for examples of procedures and processes they have in place, which are scored taking into account the size of the supplier.

4.4.3 Whilst we still need to ensure that still fulfils the requirements of our Constitution in terms of economic and financial standing, technical and professional ability and insurance requirements, an effort has been made to make the process less onerous to all suppliers.

4.4.4 In addition, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 states that we must also consider:

- (a) how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area, and
- (b) how, in conducting the process of procurement, it might act with a view to securing that improvement.

4.4.5 In this respect, we include the following on our PQQ:
"Merseytravel has a commitment to develop the Liverpool City Region (LCR) economy. Please explain what benefit your organisation could bring to the LCR economy".

4.5 Fairness in Employment Activities

4.5.1 Our [Equality in Employment Policy](#) sets out how we aim to ensure that all employees and applicants for employment are treated equally and are not subjected to discrimination. Equality is built into all of our employment policies, procedures and practices, including recruitment and selection, promotion, training, sickness absence management, performance management, conditions of work, pay and benefits and general treatment in work.

4.5.2 We are committed to preventing unfair treatment and unlawful discrimination, and to ensuring equality in employment practices. We do this in a number of ways, including collecting equality information from applicants for employment and employees. This information is analysed and the results are used as a way of identifying potential inequalities and taking positive action, where appropriate, to redress the imbalance.

4.6 Equipping our Staff with Knowledge and Skills to Deliver our Equality Objectives

4.6.1 Our Equality & Diversity e-learning programme is mandatory for all staff, and was introduced to raise awareness of the Equality Act. This programme is updated as legislation changes and then re-issued to staff to reflect this as a refresher. Due to the significant numbers of operational staff we have in the organisation, we introduced e-learning as an alternative to classroom based sessions because:

- (a) E-learning is available anytime and can be used continuously for learning and reference;
- (b) It is flexible and can be accessed from anywhere at any time;
- (c) The ability to simultaneously reach an unlimited number of employees;
- (d) Uniformity/consistency of delivery of training;
- (e) Cost-effectiveness;
- (f) Ability to log or track learning activities.

4.6.2 In addition to e-learning, we provide ongoing support and guidance, particularly with our EIA process, through our Legal team (advice on equalities legislation) and our Policy team (to provide advice, raise awareness and build capacity within our organisation to meet the obligations of the PSED).

5. Measuring our Performance

5.1 PSED Specific Duties

5.1.1 With respect to the Specific Duty (see para 3.3), we're required to publish information on "our employees and other persons who are affected by our policies and practices". This information is updated "at intervals of not greater than 1 year", as stipulated in legislation. We currently publish, on [our website](#):

- (a) Merseyside population data
- (b) Service user data from completed surveys
- (c) Protected characteristics of our employees
- (d) Recruitment and selection data

5.1.2 We are also required to publish our Equality Objectives, which enable us to meet the PSED, at intervals not greater than 4 years.

5.2 Responsible Business Indicators

5.2.1 As a part of our performance management process, we collect quarterly data from each service area, including recording how the PSED has been considered when it is relevant to key decisions, policies and projects that our staff have been working on during the reporting period.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act protects against discrimination. To do this, it says that a number of our characteristics, or the attributes that define us, are “protected” by law. These are known as the “protected characteristics”. There are nine of them, and these are described below.

Age

An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. Where people fall in the same age group they share the protected characteristic of age.

Disability

This protected characteristic defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment.

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with. This personal process may include undergoing medical procedures or, it may simply include choosing to dress in a different way as part of the personal process of change.

Marriage and civil partnership

The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. This characteristic is not covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in an employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination covers 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

Race can refer to a person’s colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origin. A racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief

This is the protected characteristic of religion, religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of religion or belief. The religion must have a clear structure and belief system.

Sex

A person's sex refers to their gender.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation means the feelings a person has towards another person, irrespective of gender, which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to.

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Socio-economic Status

The Act originally included a provision that would have required all public bodies to assess whether they were addressing inequalities caused by class factors. It would encourage them to improve, for example, health and education outcomes in more deprived areas. This was abandoned before the PSED came onto force in April 2011. Merseytravel has made a commitment to honour this duty.