LSC EQUAL PROJECT – EQUALITY & DIVERSITY PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION

HOME PAGE:

NEWSFLASH: FEASIBILITY RESEARCH STUDY ON DEVELOPING AN ASSOCIATION AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FINDINGS NOW AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD!!!!!

GET INVOLVED/LET US HAVE YOUR THOUGHTS:
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS CONTACT: NATASHA GROOCOCK
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LSC EQUAL PROJECT

Background
1 The LSC is leading a project to professionalise equality and diversity practice across all sectors, including public, private, voluntary and education, with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) EQUAL initiative from October 2005 to December 2007.

Purpose of the project
The project aims to:
  • develop and consult on a set of nationally agreed competences and standards for equality and diversity practitioners
  • compile a directory of existing equality and diversity training courses, resources and products
  • examine the fit between nationally agreed competences for equality and diversity and the current range of E&D products and services
  • research the feasibility, benefits and potential role of a professional association for people working wholly or partly towards equality and diversity.
The project will have clear business benefits for organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors:

- They will be able to demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity, and promote good practice
- Existing staff whose work is partly or fully focussed on equality and diversity will be more empowered, have better access to training and development, and opportunities for sharing good practice
- They will have access to a recognised pool of talent
- They will have access to a nationally agreed set of standards for their staff whose work relates to equality and diversity, informing their own competency frameworks and expectations of their staff.

The project has an established Advisory Group whom provide advice and key expertise throughout the project. Organisations that sit on the group include:


**THE EQUAL PROGRAMME**

EQUAL (a European Commission programme) provides funding for research and development projects which test out new ways of addressing inequalities in the labour market. Projects must be innovative, developing or test out new ideas, products or approaches. The programme is ESF (European Social Fund) funded and projects need to comply with ESF rules and meet key EQUAL principles.

**PRINCIPLES OF EQUAL**

In line with EQUAL objectives this project would seek to find a new way of delivering a policy priority with a **thematic approach**. Delivering a new more open and embracing culture amongst UK organisations will be a primary motive of the association.

The association would have as one of its principal aims the **mainstreaming** of E&D practice within UK based organisations. The self sustaining E&D Association would be the main legacy as funding ceases in December 2007.

The project is entirely about overcoming discrimination and promoting diversity through **innovation** and good practice. Encouraging UK based organisations to recognise and celebrate diversity and to recognise the tangible benefits that a diverse workforce can bring.
**Equal opportunity and Empowerment** are at the heart of the development of an E&D Association. On one level E&D professionals will have enhanced status and opportunity to progress with identified ladders for personal development and organisations will be able to benchmark their performance against an industry standard. Organisations who join the association will be overtly demonstrating their positive approach to equality of opportunity and their commitment to the empowerment of all social, cultural and racial groups.

We will look to take lessons learned by our *Transnational* neighbours and will look for opportunities to spread good practice.

[Equal handbook](#) gives further guidance on principles, rules and regulations of EQUAL.

**THE TEAM**

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**FAQ’s**

**PUBLICATIONS**

Shapiro consulting carried out a background study at the start of the project to lay down the groundwork for the project.

The LSC warmly welcomes this feasibility study, which can be found by following the link ……. It has empowered over 200 practitioners by enabling them to express their views about the current state of equality and diversity practice and their ideas about how it could be improved. Some key findings include that:

- Overall, nearly eighty percent of equality and diversity practitioners are in favour of the development of an association
- Regardless of their career stage or background, practitioners believe that they would benefit from such an association so long as their needs are met
- A large minority (twenty-three percent) believe that they currently lack the training required to carry out their roles effectively
- Few practitioners are aware of suitable training courses, and those who are highly experienced are frustrated by the lack of advanced courses
- Practitioners would like an association to provide a range of information-sharing and professional development-type services and functions
- Practitioners vary in their opinions on whether the association should be open to all practitioners, whether there should be some vetting, or whether there should be a mixed structure
- Practitioners felt that the most important competencies for working in equality and diversity were social and interactive skills, and the least important was commercial knowledge.
The study is a highly innovative piece of work which presents, for the first time:

- the demographic composition of equality and diversity practitioners in the UK
- the job roles, areas of work and diversity issues that equality and diversity practitioners are engaged in
- levels of qualifications and training of practitioners.

In June 07 we produced a leaflet about the project which we will use to hand out at events etc, this can be found by following the link …….

**NEXT STEPS**

For this development to succeed, the LSC will need to work in partnership with a range of other organisations (the Equal Opportunities Commission, Disability Rights Commission and Commission for Racial Equality, government departments, local government associations, employer organisations, trade unions and others) which are similarly committed to developing this initiative within the available period.

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In partnership with our stakeholders, we will build on the feasibility study to:

- develop a business plan for the creation of the ‘Association for Equality and Diversity’
- develop the business plan and the launch of the Association along sustainable lines
- examine the ‘fit’ between the nationally agreed competences for equality and diversity and the range of E&D products and services which are currently available
- explore the role of the professional association in accrediting qualification requirements
- examine the potential role of the professional association in endorsing external E&D products and services to provide a ‘kite marking’ or quality assurance guarantee.

**TRANSNATIONAL WORKING**

Employment Week in Brussels June 2007 – This was a key opportunity for us to demonstrate the work the LSC are doing and promote our findings to date. The LSC was part of the High Road Unionlearn stand at the event where leaflets and key information about the project was disseminated. Colleagues also presented a showcase presentation at the event which aided as a promotional tool.

Attended Vienna Conference – EQUAL Project Skills for Life - in March 07, in order to learn from their project, share good practice and demonstrate the work the LSC were doing on this project.

We are currently looking at other opportunities to share good practice. If the work of our project is of interest to you please contact:

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