

Dorset Local Enterprise
Partnership CIC

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy

November 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In order to deliver significant growth and productivity gains, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) aim to remove all barriers to achieving economic performance, resulting in tangible economic benefits to our businesses, residents, visitors, workforce and diverse communities. Our diverse communities will benefit from strong economic growth and no community will be excluded from full participation in economic life and progress.
- 1.2. The competitive advantage arising from local diversity will be harnessed to drive growth. We aim to integrate equity into all that we do, and the work that others do on behalf of the Dorset LEP.

2. What is Diversity, Equity & Inclusion?

- 2.1. **Diversity** is the presence of differences within a given setting. In the workplace, that can mean differences in, for example, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic class, neuro or physical ability.
- 2.2. **Equity** is the process of ensuring that policies and practices are impartial, fair, and provide equal possible outcomes for every individual, with particular attention to protected characteristics.
- 2.3. **Inclusion** is the practice of ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging in the workplace. This means that every employee feels comfortable and supported by the organization when it comes to being their authentic selves.

3. Dorset LEP's commitment

- 3.1. Dorset LEP is dedicated to supporting a fully inclusive culture. We recognise that we have a role in promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination and seek to do this in the way we conduct ourselves and our business.
- 3.2. This policy reinforces our commitment to providing equity and fairness to all those who wish to work with or for us and will not act less favourably or tolerate unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of the following characteristics:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity (including paternity)
 - Race (colour, ethnic, or national background)
 - Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- 3.3. Dorset LEP and Dorset Council, undertaking its role as the Accountable Body to Dorset LEP, shall comply with their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.4. Dorset LEP Board is committed to ensuring equity of opportunity in the delivery and accessibility of its services. In particular, Dorset LEP will look to ensure diverse representation at Board and sub-group level which is reflective of the local business community (including geographies, sectors and protected characteristics). Dorset LEP is committed to providing a safe environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment both in employment and service delivery.
- 3.5. Dorset LEP is committed to improving the gender balance and representation of those with protected characteristics on its board. We aim to achieve equal

representation on the Dorset LEP Board, ensuring the Dorset LEP board is representative of the businesses and communities they serve.

3.6. Dorset LEP shall have due regard in the exercise of their roles and responsibilities to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization, and any other conduct prohibited under legislation;
- advance equity of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4. What we will do

4.1. Dorset LEP will engage with all stakeholders and be inclusive and transparent in all communications. Our priorities and objectives mostly deliver an equality impact, for example, by targeting key sectors, priority groups, and local communities. In addition, we will work with our partners to ensure that all project development, commissioning and tendering procedures support the following principles:

- Advancing equity of opportunity;
- Showing our commitment to support those with a protected characteristic into enterprise and employment;
- Ensuring the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.