

## EQUALITY STRATEGY

As an employer, Berrico Ltd takes the view that consideration must be given not only to who is recruited, but also that our workplaces are sufficiently safe and anti-discriminatory in character and culture, so that all staff will feel safe and valued and will wish to remain.

The "equality target groups" of Berrico Ltd are Black and Ethnic Minorities, women, people with disabilities, and gay men and lesbians. At present, over 34% of our workforce is drawn from these groups. However, we are under no illusions as to the amount of progress still to be attained.

It is also acknowledged that an Equality Strategy has a fundamental role with regard to the credibility of the Company with both local groups and communities and employees from these communities within our workforce.

### Recruitment, Retention, Training and Promotion of Staff

Although an anti-discriminatory perspective is required in any organisation concerned with equity, there are other reasons why an organisation, in its own interests, should ensure that Black and Ethnic Minorities, women, gay men and lesbians, and people with disabilities are recruited, trained and promoted fairly.

Firstly, the ability of the organisation to understand and engage with the world it serves would be severely limited if that world were only perceived from one perspective. The likelihood of a real grip on the issues is radically enhanced by bringing the insights of people from equality target groups within the organisation.

Secondly, customers' needs as individuals will be best understood and met when the organisation has a diverse workforce. An equality strategy therefore has to deal with the issue of recruitment.

Retention, training and promotion are equally important. In creating a "safe" working environment for women, gay men and lesbians, people with disabilities, and Black and Ethnic Minorities the Company can express the value it places on the contribution of all staff to the life of the Company. This, coupled with good personnel practise in the distribution of training, is a prerequisite for the career development, and promotion prospects, of the overwhelming majority of people in the Company who are within the equality target groups.

### Primary Objectives

The primary objectives for recruitment, retention, training and promotion should therefore be to:

- train managers in the skills required to challenge oppressive and discriminatory practises or behaviour in the workplace;
- create "safe" and supportive workplaces in which all staff can feel equally valued;
- use a wide variety of techniques to ensure that a diverse workforce, with appropriate competencies, is recruited at all levels of the Company;
- provide supervision, including realistic assessment of career prospects and training needs, for all staff;
- monitor and ensure an appropriate distribution of training opportunities.

### Quality of Service

It is not enough to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. Customers from equality target groups should be encouraged to expect high quality services, as should all customers. It must also be the case that for customers from equality target groups, their perception of quality of service will be inseparable from the Company's success in addressing equality issues. Service quality evaluation has to take this on board.

The objectives for quality must therefore be to:

- monitor the quality of provision of service and involve customers in quality evaluation and assurance;
- ensure that measures of quality include "perception of equality".

### Conclusion

This Equality Strategy will carry Berrico Ltd through future years. We must build on past successes and ensure progress in a more systematic, reliable way. Tough objectives have been set, and the expectation is that they will be met and that everyone has a role to play.