

Equality and Diversity Policy - 2018

Introduction

This policy sets out Coast to Capital's commitment to equality and diversity.

Equality is enabling opportunity, access, participation and contribution on a fair and equal footing and ensuring that different groups are not disadvantaged when accessing services, employment or participating in public life in the Coast to Capital region.

Diversity is about the individual, understanding that each of us is different and making sure we respect and celebrate the variety of backgrounds, perspectives, values, and beliefs.

Diversity and equality issues impact everyone in the Coast to Capital region. We are committed to removing barriers that might restrict people and we are proactively working towards positive change.

Our Commitment

Coast to Capital is committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity both as an employer and as a commissioner of services. In practice this means doing what we can to positively promote equality and diversity across the delivery of services and within our workforce.

Legislation also places a public duty on Coast to Capital with which we must comply.

The message of **The Equality Act 2010** and the related Public Sector Equality Duty is that everyone has the right to be treated fairly. It places legislation around nine protected characteristics:

- ✓ age,
- ✓ disability (including mental ill health),
- ✓ gender reassignment,
- ✓ marriage and civil partnership,
- ✓ pregnancy and maternity,
- ✓ race,
- ✓ religion or belief,
- ✓ sex,
- ✓ sexual orientation.

Coast to Capital will uphold its public duty to promote equality of opportunity. No member of the public, service user, employee, volunteer, agency worker, contractor or staff working with partner organisations will be unlawfully discriminated against and our services and procedures will be reflective and supportive of the diverse needs of our local communities.

Employee selection, retention and promotion

Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Board and Sub-Committees

Coast to Capital is committed to ensuring a diverse representation on our Board and Sub-Committees which reflects the local business community. Selection for the Board and any Sub-Committee will be in line with our Assurance Framework and Articles of Association. Board member vacancies are advertised widely across the whole region and Board members are appointed on the basis of their skills / knowledge and their ability. Sub-Committee member selection is based on the skills required for the relevant role.

Rights of disabled people

Coast to Capital will:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- be inclusive and ensure the accessibility of training/development programmes; and
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

In meeting our obligations under the **Equality Act 2010** we will have due regard to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics that are different from the needs of others who do not share that protected characteristic; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in any other activity in which their participation is disproportionately low.

We will also meet our obligations under the **Public Services Social Value Act 2012**, which requires people who commission, or buy, public services to consider securing added economic, social, environmental and well-being benefits for their local area. We will support service providers and

commissioners to implement the Act and put social value at the heart of what they do.

Our Approach

We recognise the significant number of partner, stakeholder, business and investor organisations that play a part in the economic growth of our area and supporting significant progress towards our objectives. Coast to Capital and its Board will engage with all stakeholders and be inclusive and transparent in all communications.

All our priorities and objectives are expected to achieve an equality impact, for example, by targeting priority groups, communities and areas. In addition to meeting our statutory duties, Coast to Capital will actively work with our equality groups to ensure that all our service provision is accessible to all constituencies in the area.

We will work with our partners, the Managing Authorities and the Local Growth team to ensure that all project development, commissioning and tendering procedures support the following principles:

- Advancing equality of opportunity between people in our target groups; and
- Ensuring the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization.

We will incorporate equality and anti-discrimination requirements in our tenders and will ensure any contractual arrangements include appropriate arrangements for identification of issues, baselines, monitoring and evaluation.

We will work with partners to ensure barriers to equality are being proactively tackled at delivery level.

Our Priorities

In delivering our equality and diversity policy we will:

- Integrate equality into everything we do and the work that everyone does on behalf of Coast to Capital;
- Adopt an evidence and needs based approach where we seek quantitative and qualitative evidence;
- Assess the impact on equality as we develop our strategies, policies and programmes, and consider what actions, if any, may be appropriate to improve any identified adverse impacts;
- Monitor where possible our social, environmental and economic impact and the impact on equality as we implement our strategies, policies and programmes;
- Be open and transparent and publish all information regarding our equality and diversity within data protection constraints;

- Work in partnership with the range of local, regional, and national organisations to create new and better actions;
- Make consultation and engagement with diverse stakeholders a cornerstone of developing new equality and diversity actions;
- Provide excellent customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who understand the needs of their communities; and
- Promote best practice.

Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for our policy rests with the Coast to Capital Board of Directors to ensure that there are systems in place to put this policy into practice on a day-to-day basis.

The Coast to Capital Chief Executive is the lead officer and is responsible and accountable for the implementation of this policy and accompanying policies both inside and outside the organisation and for ensuring we fulfil our role in addressing diversity issues by promotion of this policy and delivering equality of opportunity. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Chairman's Committee.

Management Plan

The Coast to Capital Senior Management Team considers this policy as a priority as part of its management plan for 2018/19, specifically in relation to the following activities, which are not exhaustive:

- Active Board recruitment of two current vacancies and an assessment of the success of this recruitment round
- Promotion of training and development of all staff
- Review of our policies including maternity, paternity and shared paternity
- Review of our team values
- Review of our equality and diversity statement in our annual reporting, including considerations around Annual Impact Assessments
- Promotion of the LEP in a way that reflects the diversity of the region

We will ensure the Coast to Capital Board and team members are aware of their responsibility to challenge any unfair discrimination for reasons covered by equalities legislation.

This Policy will be reviewed every year and any recommendations and changes to be agreed by the Board.

Jonathan Sharrock
Chief Executive
February 2018