

NCPE 14th Annual Conference
29th May – Aula Magna, University of Malta, Valletta Campus
Workshops discussions – Safeguarding equality at the workplace

Benefits of a diverse workplace

- Diversity maximises various approaches from different backgrounds, thus bringing together different contributions, experiences, ideas and perceptions;
- Employees have a good self-esteem and feel more appreciated. A happy workforce is 'contagious', influencing other colleagues, enhancing service provision to clients, and improving production;
- Resulting in a wider pool of prospective candidates to recruit a suitable employee for a post;
- Diversity is a source of personal growth to employees and provides an opportunity for different groups to succeed;
- There is a sense of belonging and employees speak positively of the company - brand ambassadors.

Challenges to safeguard diversity

- Misunderstandings can occur among employees because of diverse conditions of work;
- Not enough rooms for breastfeeding;
- Employers may not foster equality or diversity;
- Employers may still not believe in flexible working arrangements and request employees to be physically present at the office;
- Lack of training in the management of FFMs;
- Flexible working arrangements should not only be available to staff members with family responsibilities but also to all staff;
- Stereotypes and perceptions held by managers and other employees;
- Long summer holidays for school children may impact negatively working trends of parents particularly women;
- Difficulty in finding a balance between flexibility for employees and the needs of the workplace.

Measures for an inclusive workplace

- Ensuring that the criteria for recruitment and promotions are inclusive of diversity and that recruitment boards are diverse;
- More awareness on the benefits of diversity;
- Policies that safeguard zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination, including effective procedures and complaint systems;
- Gender sensitive education;
- Offering opportunities for different needs, such as sport activities and studies, not only caring duties;
- Finding appropriate time slots for work activities – not always after work;
- Empowering more men to make use of flexible working arrangements and family friendly measures;
- Gender neutral toilets;
- A clear policy with transparent procedures aiming at accommodating the needs of different groups when possible;
- Religion: providing a room for prayers;
- Ensure accessibility to carry out different duties;
- Mentoring programmes for all employees;
- Being pro-active to change the stereotypical mentality and giving attention to the needs of vulnerable groups;
- Providing training for all employees.

The stakeholders and the NCPE can:

- Give more training to different stakeholders, including employers and employees;
- Strengthen awareness raising and challenging discriminatory perceptions through media campaigns and social media;
- Provide assistance to entities to draft policies;
- Educate school children to challenge stereotypes from an early age;
- Monitor all materials used in schools to challenge stereotypes;
- Monitor adverts to safeguard equality;
- Promote role models in areas where gender stereotypes are still prominent such as in sports;
- Facilitate mentoring projects;
- Research where there are knowledge gaps.