Our commitment to diversity and inclusion

Our ambition is to '*embrace modern society and reflect our communities in which we trade to help us stay relevant and ahead.*'

Diversity and inclusion

At Co-op we're committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity and preventing discrimination at work.

• we have a fair and transparent recruitment process
• we promote equality of opportunity for everyone
• we aim to create a workforce that's representative of our society
•We value all of our colleagues for their contribution
•We want to create a genuinely inclusive workforce

What do we mean by 'inclusion'?

Inclusion is a **sense of belonging**. People are respected and valued as individuals.

• in a workplace it is ensuring that people feel valued and they feel essential to the success of an organisation.
• when people feel valued they function at full capacity and feel part of the business. They can **'Be Yourself Always'**

What do we mean by 'diversity'?

Diversity is the **celebration of our differences**.

• we are all individuals regardless of sex, race, religion etc and all have our own unique viewpoint on the world.
• diversity is **valuing** these differences to help us understand each other better and appreciate other people's perspectives.
• diversity is fact, measurable and is either demographic (what you can see) or cognitive (how our brain works and how we think)

Why is diversity and inclusion important?

The UK is changing; we have five generations in the workplace and the UK will become more ethnically diverse and colleagues and customers have rising levels of expectations.

We need to embrace these changes by ensuring our business is reflective of our communities and we enable our business areas to reach and attract a diverse pool of candidates.

Did you know...

We are not currently representative of our communities and we have some catching up to do to remain relevant and sustain our commercial success.

Current data on protected characteristics showed that at Co-op:

• gender split at **grades A-C was 33% female vs 67% male**
• of colleagues that chose to self identify, **82% were white, 9% ethnic minorities** and 9% preferred not to say
• **84% colleagues identified as heterosexual, 4% LGBT** and 12% preferred not to say.

Driving diversity and inclusion through good recruitment practice

Interview Top Tips

- remember we all have bias – bias happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. Once you know what triggers yours, think about what you can do differently, to make it more conscious
- be aware of your bias and how it shows up (for a quick recap on what unconscious bias is see the following short video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGupqNaUTnQ

Have a diverse interview panel

- always interview with at least one other person, not only does this protect you should the decision be challenged, but also you will get a different perspective from another person
- take the time to think about how you structure your panel – try and include colleagues from different demographics – for example gender, ethnicity, and age. Also try and include colleagues that think differently to you, so that you get a balance of opinion
- where you actively need to recruit more women into your team or more BAME candidates, ensure that they are represented on the panel

Be consistent

- Don't deviate from the set questions and be conscious of asking too many probing questions – prepare the questions you want to ask ahead of the interview

Candidate experience

- Remember that the process is two way – candidates are making decisions about whether they want to join us. Ensure that they get the best experience, and remember to treat them with respect should they be unsuccessful – they could be customers

Unconscious bias

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that people form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from our tendency to organise our social worlds by categorisation.

When is unconscious bias likely to affect our decisions?

• when we're tired
• when we're stressed, under pressure, in a rush
• when we're nervous
• when we have low sugar in our blood stream
• when the information we have is not clear
• when we need to make a decision more quickly
• when we're anxious, angry, frustrated

What can we do to mitigate unconscious bias?

• recognise your own biases
• don't react based on your first impression
• create positive images
• increase your network
• promote an inclusive culture at work
• take time to make a decision and reflect only on what you've seen and heard

Inclusion and avoiding Discrimination – the legal bits

There are a number of legal implications that you need to be aware of when you're recruiting so that you're not discriminating against an individual. It's illegal to treat someone unfavourably on the grounds of their age, sex, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief or whether they have a disability, are pregnant or have just given birth.

For more information on inclusion and avoiding discrimination please see colleague site: https://colleagues.coop.co.uk/diversity-inclusion-and-wellbeing and to read more about diversity at the Co-op read colleague diversity blog: https://diversity.coop.co.uk/

There are 3 main types of discrimination that can happen during the recruitment process:

Direct Discrimination
• this is where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. e.g. you decide not to recruit someone because of their ethnicity or age

Discrimination by perception
• this is where someone is discriminated against because others think they have a protected characteristic. e.g. you decide not to recruit someone as your colleague thinks they're bisexual

Indirect Discrimination
• this is when there's a rule or policy that applies to everyone, but disadvantages a person with a protected characteristic