


Equality and Diversity Newsletter



June 2008

Editors Introduction

Welcome to the Learning World Equality and Diversity Newsletter. The newsletter aims to communicate with all our teams on important topics and make sure that everyone is kept up to date with new legislation, our policies and practices, and to recognise that everyone is 'different'.



'Learning World is an equal opportunities training provider and welcomes applications from females and minority groups working in the industry'

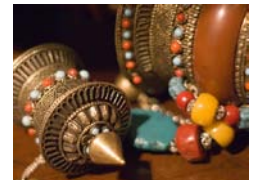
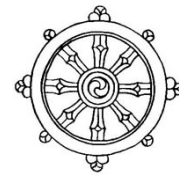
Equality of Opportunity is your responsibility too...

We will develop a system in which all can benefit and no one is excluded. We will comply with statutory requirements for equal opportunities and make all our policies and practices fully inclusive, eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and embracing diversity.



Faith and Religion

This section gives some basic information about faith and religion, and explains why they play a significant part in equality and diversity. Faith and religion are often surrounded with mystique, and lack of information and knowledge can often create a culture of fear and reluctance to consider them.



Buddhism

Buddhism is a religion that is 2,500 years old. There are 360 million Buddhists worldwide. In the UK, there are around 151,000. There are 134 Buddhist groups with about 55 centres.

Key Beliefs

Buddhism is a spiritual tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development and the attainment of a deep insight into the true nature of life...

Buddhism has many features in common with other religions, but has its own distinctive features and should be viewed in its own terms to be understood properly. Buddhists regard the Lord Buddha as theirs; he discovered the path to enlightenment which is the goal of all Buddhists. Buddha is believed to have found the mid way between luxuries and asceticism (self-denial and austerity). Buddhism does not demand uncritical faith or belief, but that people should test its teachings against personal experience.

The aim is to develop skilful or wholesome thoughts and deeds, wisdom and compassion, and to travel the spiritual road to wholesome thinking and action. When this happens, craving will cease and the individual achieves freedom from the force (karma) that causes rebirth. Rebirth happens as craving, and desire fuels the individual to be reborn again and again. Continued over . . .

Buddhism adopts the faith symbol of an eight-spoked wheel, the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment. The Eightfold Path is as follows:

- Right understanding
- Right livelihood
- Right aspiration (motivation)
- Right effort
- Right speech
- Right mindfulness
- Right action and
- Right concentration

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Buddhism – Key Beliefs

Buddhists also take refuge in the practice of three principles known as the three jewels:

- The Buddha – historical Buddha and the spiritual idea of enlightenment
- The Dharma – teachings and practices which lead to human enlightenment
- The Sangha – the spiritual community of the people who are practicing the dharma.

Reincarnation, and karma (the belief that actions in this life will affect quality of the next life), are key beliefs of Buddhism. Buddhists, therefore, accept all responsibilities for their actions. There is no god to be worshipped, but the act of worship is a way of acknowledging the human ideal.

Prayer/worship

Buddhists in Thailand and Sri Lanka meet in temples called viharas, which are usually the main residence of the monastic sangha or community. In the UK they might meet in a meditation hall. Buddhists can perform puja (offering) or undertake meditation or worship at home or at a vihara. Buddhists meet as often as they can. The room has only a carpet and cushions, and is otherwise bare of furniture. There will be a statue of Buddha, candles and an incense burner. It is preferable to have peace and quiet for meditation and chanting. Private family meditations are common, sometimes daily.



Greetings and etiquette

In Buddhist countries the normal greeting is to place hands together in a prayerful manner and bow. In Western countries, western practices such as shaking hands can be adopted. There are no religious dress requirements for lay Buddhists, but dress that enables people to be discreet, modest and unobtrusive is usual.

Fasting

On days of fasting, Buddhists do not eat before 12 noon. These are often full-moon days in the West, fasting is practiced mostly by monks and nuns, and local Buddhists are unlikely to fast regularly.

Diet

Buddhists tend to be vegetarians. This is due to the emphasis on avoiding the intentional killing of a living being. There are, however, different practices on the eating of meat. For example, Tibetan Buddhists eat meat, Chinese Zen are strictly vegetarian. Meat is never served in monasteries.



The Multifaith Festival Year – June / July

WORLD **June 5**

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY – A day on which to explore the challenge of how to maintain a balance between economic growth and our duty to care for the world in which we live.



BUDDHIST **July 18**

DHAMMACHAKRA DAY – Celebrated by Theravadin and Western Buddhists as the anniversary of the Buddha's first sermon, known as the 'Turning of the Wheel of Law'. The Buddha preached the need to follow a 'Middle Way' between self-indulgence and severe self-denial.



TRADITIONA **June 20**

SUMMER SOLSTICE – Midsummer; the longest day of the year when the sun's light is at its strongest. This is the time of plenty, often celebrated by the lighting of bonfires.



www.efestivals.co.uk/festivals/stonehenge/
(ctrl & click for more info)

BUDDHIST **June 18**

RAINS RETREAT – Part of the Theravadin Buddhist calendar, this is a penitence, self-examination and forgiveness.



Single Equality Scheme

Our strategy incorporates an overarching scheme for the Race Equality Duty, Disability Equality Duty and the Gender Equality Duty and will be implemented in an inclusive way which takes account of religion and / or belief, sexual orientation and age.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000: Race Equality Duty

The race equality duty is to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.



Equality Act 2006: Gender Equality Duty

The gender equality duty is to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005: Disability Equality Duty

The disability equality duty is to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others.
- Eliminate unlawful disability discrimination.
- Eliminate disability-related harassment.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- Take steps to take account of peoples' disabilities, even where that involved treating disabled people more favourably than others.



Definition of Disability

'A physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

Some examples of direct discrimination:

An employer rejects a disabled applicant with a severe facial disfigurement on the grounds that other employees would be uncomfortable working with them.

A person who uses a wheelchair applies for a job. They can do the job just as well as anyone else but the employer wrongly assumes that the wheelchair will cause an obstruction in the office and gives the job to someone else.

Feedback – This is our first newsletter and I would welcome any comments and suggestions on what you would like to see in future issues. Please email your feedback to:

dbaldwin@constructionlearningworld.com

How can you support Equal Opportunities?

(Complete the sentences below by using the words at the bottom of the page)

√

Always ensure that you are treating everyone fairly!

_____ Treat others with respect and kindness, as you yourself would like to be treated. Never take part in bullying or discrimination against others.

√

Watch for unfair treatment!

Always speak up if you are _____ with the way that someone has spoken to you or if they have done something that you believe to be wrong. Sometimes they may not be _____ of their own offensive behaviour! If you feel that you cannot deal with this inform your _____.

√

Encourage Teamwork!

Teamwork is very _____. By working honestly and openly you will be able to build a team and gain peoples' trust.

√

Learn about Equal Opportunities!

Attend meetings and find out about equality and _____. Learn as much as you can to ensure that you are giving people opportunities. Read up on the relevant Acts and ensure that you know _____ rights.

important

Always

diversity

unhappy

aware

your

Line manager

If you would like any further details of any equal opportunities issues please visit www.equalityhumanrights.com.
Information is available in a wide choice of languages