

Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
published monthly in Facilities by Lexis Nexis between 2008 and 2016

Diversity

The widest scope definition of the Facilities management footprint employs a significant percentage of the UK workforce including armies of cleaning, catering, security and maintenance people. The average FM team is therefore likely to include a wide range of ages, nationalities, physical abilities and sexual orientation. This is what is meant by diversity.

Managing diversity means ensuring that all of these team members have the opportunity to maximise their potential and to enhance their contribution to the organisation. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and perceptions, which can make the way work is done more efficient and thus improve products and services. Managing diversity successfully can help organisations to foster creativity and innovation and to tap into hidden capacity for growth and improved competitiveness.

There are several key pieces of legislation protecting workers from discrimination on a wide number of grounds. These include The Equality Act, The Equal Pay Act, The Sex Discrimination Act, The Race Relations Act, The Disability Discrimination Act, The Work and Families Act and several other employment related regulations and legislation. Compliance with all of these to avoid discrimination can be challenging on its own, however many successful facilities organisations go much further and seek to actively promote diversity in both their strategic and human resources policies.

Recognising individual differences in the facilities team and managing them sensitively and effectively is the challenge FMs must face to create productive working environments in which everybody can contribute their best efforts to meet organisational goals, feel valued for what they do and be appropriately rewarded and recognised.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) define managing diversity as valuing everyone as an individual. It is important to recognise that a 'one-size-fits all' approach to managing people does not achieve fairness and equality of opportunity for everyone. People have different personal needs, values and beliefs. Good people management practice demands that people propositions are both consistently fair but also flexible and inclusive in ways that are designed to support business needs.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has published a useful booklet on "Delivering Equality and Diversity" which is available to download from their website www.acas.org.uk