

Footnotes

- 1 Northern Ireland (NI) Labour Market Report Press Release: May 2006, <http://www.detini.gov.uk/>
- 2 **'unemployed'** - short-term unemployed are those who have been unemployed for under one year while the long-term unemployed are defined as those who have been unemployed for one year or more: Labour Force Survey Definitions, <http://www.detini.gov.uk> **'economically inactive'** - refers to people who are neither in employment nor unemployed. This group includes those looking after a home/family or retired. It may also be long-term sick/disabled: Social Exclusion in NI April 2005, <http://www.research.ofmdfni.gov.uk>
- 3 **'Community of interest'** - a term to describe a group of people who belong to a community with common interests e.g. carers, disabled people, older people: 'Mind your Language' Briefing Paper March 2004, Diversity Matters
- 4 'Consultation to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market': 2006, <http://ec.europa.eu>
- 5 "Expansion of programme to help people back into work": April 2006, <http://www.delni.gov.uk>
- 6 Business in the Community's First Employer's Forum: Feb 2005, <http://www.bitc.org.uk>
- 7 Consultation launched on Age Discrimination Legislation, Press Release: Sept 2005, www.nics.gov.uk
- 8 Halifax Age Diversity Case Study: <http://www.efaagediversity.org.uk>
- 9 Policylink Bulletin: June 2006, <http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/policylink>
- 10 'CIPD Soundbytes' NI branch Volume 2 Issue 4: Summer 2006
- 11 Facts about Carers: 2005, <http://www.carersuk.org>
- 12 'The business case': Carers NI <http://www.carersni.org>
- 13 "Who Cares Wins" The Social and Business Benefits Supporting Working Carers: <http://www.carersuk.org/>
- 14 Agenda For Change, Disability Action: 2004
- 15 & 16 Working with Diversity: <http://www.workingwithdiversity.org>
- 17 NI Labour Force Survey: Winter (Dec-Feb) 2004/2005, <http://www.detini.gov.uk>
- 18, 19 & 20 'Women in NI': Feb 2006, <http://www.detini.gov.uk>
- 21 Interview with Fergal McCormack: April 2005
- 22 NI Statistics & Research Agency: www.nisra.gov.uk
- 23 'Race, religion and employment': Jan 2006, <http://www.cipd.co.uk>
- 24 HM Treasury: <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk>
- 25 'Lesbian, gay and bisexual participation in UK universities': Association of University Teachers 2001
- 26 Diversity Champions Programme: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk>

The members of the Diversity Works partnership involved in this publication are:

- Northern Ireland Council of Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)
- Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NICCI)
- North West Forum of People with Disabilities
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) represented by the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre (BURC)
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)
- Disability Action (lead partner)
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)
- Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSO)
- Carers Northern Ireland
- British Council

The reference point organisations of Diversity Works involved in this publication are:

- Organisation of the Unemployed Northern Ireland (OUNI)
- Future Ways
- Business in the Community

Contact Details:

Diversity Works, Disability Action,
189 Airport Road West,
BELFAST BT3 9ED

Telephone: 028 90 297880

Fax: 028 90 297881

Textphone: 028 90 297882

Email: admin.dw@disabilityaction.org

Web: www.disabilityaction.org



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Inclusion and the Market

A factsheet providing information on different communities and ways to further include them in Northern Ireland's labour market.

Introduction

It is estimated that 31% of Northern Ireland's indigenous working population are outside the labour market¹ (27% of whom are economically inactive, and the remaining 4% are unemployed²). Certain communities of interest³ encounter difficulties accessing the labour market⁴ and whilst in it. According to government "the best route out of poverty and social exclusion is through work⁵". There is also an increasing culture of volunteerism, particularly among those people who have difficulty accessing full time employment. Volunteering gives the individual the opportunity to gain new skills in a real workplace environment as well as providing the obvious benefit to employers.

The business case for inclusion

Northern Ireland, like the rest of the UK and Europe faces and will continue to face many demographic challenges. It has been predicted that by 2010 less than 20% of the UK working population will be white, male, non disabled and under the age of 45⁶. Employers will increasingly be recruiting from a more diverse labour pool as the traditional employment groups are in decline.

Programmes to assist employers

The Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) operates a range of training programmes and initiatives. Employers can avail of these programmes, finding potential recruits and tackling organisational skills shortages. The majority of these programmes are generic, for example,

Jobskills and Training for Work. However, some of these programmes are targeted at specific communities of interest, for example, New Deal 50+ and the Disablement Advisory Service. There are also numerous employability programmes funded or part-funded by the European Union through the European Social Fund (ESF).

The communities of interest

Age

According to the 2001 Northern Ireland (NI) Census nearly 29% of the population was over the age of 50. By 2041 that figure is set to rise to 44%⁷. Falling birth rates in Northern Ireland together with the changing nature of workforce demographics, means an ageing indigenous workforce.

Business benefit The Halifax have realised benefits from employing people of different ages. Their efforts to recruit from a wider talent pool are helping to alleviate recruitment shortages. A number of initiatives have been used including; removing age from their application forms; using age diverse images on recruitment adverts; and putting equal opportunity statements on some job adverts welcoming both graduates and applications from older workers⁸.

Black and minority ethnic communities (BMECs)

In the 2001 NI Census less than 1% of the population were members of BMECs. (BMECs cover all minority ethnic communities including Irish Travellers.) Increasingly migrant and immigrant workers

are playing an important role in Northern Ireland's economy. Currently there are an estimated 30,000 plus migrant workers in Northern Ireland, approximately 1.8% of the population⁹. This figure is set to rise over the coming years with estimates suggesting that 5 -10% of the population will be non-nationals by 2030¹⁰.

Business benefit The Wilson Group, amongst other business concerns, operates four nursing care homes in Northern Ireland. According to Colin Jeffrey, Finance Manager for the Wilson Group, "Initially, because of the lack of available experienced and qualified staff, it was a necessity to employ overseas workers. However, because of the positive experience, we have continued to employ and integrate overseas workers into the over-all staff complement. The Wilson Group is aware that this diversity of staff will only increase. We are actively looking to be an employer of choice. We simply want to employ the best person for the job."

Carers

The 2001 NI Census found that 11% of the population provided unpaid care. Carers Northern Ireland defines carers as, 'people looking after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability'. Approximately one in eight workers in the UK is a carer¹¹. Many carers have to give up paid work because they have difficulty in combining their roles¹².

Business benefit BT has introduced flexible working for all employees including carers. There have been real business benefits as a result of this initiative including,

an increase in productivity of 21% (worth at least £5-6 million on the company bottom-line). Annual staff turnover is below 4% while the sector average is 17%¹³.

People with disabilities

In Northern Ireland one in five of the adult population has a disability¹⁴, 3% of whom are born with that disability¹⁵. Research shows that disabled people are up to twice as likely to be unemployed¹⁶ and more than twice as likely to have no qualifications¹⁷.

Business benefit Steve Taylor who runs a newsagency in Belfast, is a small business owner employing 12 staff. He participates in the Employment Support Scheme through which he currently employs one member of staff. He says: "Paul works on confectionery, crisps and drinks. He always knows what has sold out, what is out of date, what needs credit and how many boxes are in the storeroom. That knowledge may not be expressed in words/grammar we may be used to using, but we all know that he's right". Steve believes his business has benefited greatly through the Employment Support Scheme: "I benefit, my staff benefit, the customers benefit, the employee benefits and I believe we are contributing to society and our local community".

Gender

Women in Northern Ireland make up 45% of people currently in employment¹⁸. Occupational segregation continues to exist with 23% of women currently working in administrative / secretarial occupations compared to 6% of men¹⁹. There are also differences in working patterns with 35% of

women working part-time compared to 7% men²⁰.

Business benefit FPM Chartered Accountants was established in 1991 in Newry. FPM employs 43 people, 65% of whom are women. The company introduced a work/life balance scheme initially to accommodate childcare issues and has noticed real business benefits as a result²¹. Last year staff absenteeism at FPM was 1% compared to a Northern Ireland average of 7%²².

Religious belief & political opinion

Northern Ireland has traditionally been viewed as being populated by two religious communities. However the 2001 NI Census showed that 40% of the population was from a Catholic background, 46% from a Protestant background, 0.3% of people are believers in other religions or philosophies and a further 14% of people did not state a religion. Political opinion has never been asked about in the NI Census. However, whether accurate or not, political opinion is still regarded as being closely linked to religious belief / community belonging.

Business benefit The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development states:

"Employers must make sure that prejudice and stereotyping on the basis of people's ethnic origins and religious beliefs doesn't result in unfair decisions about jobs and training....Increasing evidence points to the importance of managing diversity to beat market competition in the delivery of value to a diverse customer base²³".

Sexual Orientation

The LGBT community includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and the 'trans' community (transsexual, transgendered and transvestites). Although there are no official census statistics related to sexual orientation it is estimated that the LGBT community makes up 5 – 7% of the UK population²⁴. Only 20% of gay men and 13% of lesbians feel comfortable to be open in the workplace about their sexuality²⁵.

Business benefit Stonewall is an organisation that works to achieve equality and justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people. Stonewall operates a Diversity Champions Programme. Larry Hirst, Country General Manager for IBM (UK) and Ireland says: "I greatly value IBM's participation in the Diversity Champions Programme. At IBM we employ the best people irrespective of religion, gender, sexual orientation, race, age or disability. Working with Stonewall enables us to share and learn best practice from others and to ensure that IBM is an inclusive and positive company in our dealings with employees and customers alike²⁶".

Conclusion

There is no doubt that change in our economic environment and population is both challenging and exciting. Employers are catering for an increasingly diverse customer/client base and will become increasingly dependent on a diverse workforce. Therefore, the effective management of a diverse workforce is an essential ingredient to a successful business.