

PLYMOUTH AND SOUTH DEVON FREEZONE

Equality and Diversity Statement

We know that diversity brings new ideas, fresh perspectives and encourages innovation. Plymouth and South Devon Freezone recognise that difference is an asset which must be celebrated.

We will encourage all our partners to reflect that diversity in our community. As a public-private sector endeavour we are committed to meeting the needs of our different stakeholders. We are guided by our commercial instinct and the region's business and economic needs as much as we are by our public sector values of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. We know that not only is there a business case for equality and diversity, but that morally promoting equality, championing diversity and facilitating inclusion is the right thing to do.

Plymouth and South Devon Freezone provides unrivalled opportunity for our stakeholders and local community. However, we know that existing socioeconomic barriers stand in the way of people reaching their potential. Labour market data shows some groups (women, people with disabilities, and older workers) are already disadvantaged in the labour market in Plymouth, with lower rates of employment, fewer people in higher paid occupations and lower pay. The proportion of men working in the manufacturing sector as proportion of our workforce is currently higher than the proportion of women.

We understand the link between equality and opportunity and are committed to ensuring that the benefits of Plymouth and South Devon Freezone are felt across the region. Through our Employment and Skills Strategy, we will work with key employers to supply training, work experience and apprenticeships to ensure that residents in Plymouth's most deprived areas reap the benefits of Plymouth and South Devon Freezone.

Plymouth and South Devon Freezone will actively promote equality and is committed to challenging unfair discrimination facing those on the grounds of protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act (2010).

- Age
- Disability
- Religion or Belief
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation.

Underpinning our commitment to ensuring that as many people as possible benefit from Plymouth and South Devon Freezone is our active compliance with the Equality Act (2010). Our public sector partners have additional duties under the Equality Act known as the Public Sector Equality Duty which apply even when working in partnership. These are:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act (2010)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Plymouth and South Devon Freezone will establish an equality objective to encourage female participation within STEM and in doing so, help to reduce the gender pay gap.

Our specific commitments to promote equality and diversity include:

- Ensure that we give due regard to the impact of decisions we take paying particular attention to those with protected characteristics through the development of a full equalities impact assessment in our outline business case.
- Encourage diversity of the Plymouth and South Devon Freezone board and stakeholder group by striving to achieve fair and balanced representation of women on the board and encourage proportionate representation from other disadvantaged and underrepresented groups through our gateway policy. We will also use the Plymouth and South Devon Freezone gateway criteria to promote diversity and encourage businesses operating within the Freezone to sign-up to initiatives such as Disability Confident.
- Deliver equality and diversity training to all board members.
- Ensure that any engagement activity we do is accessible and provides opportunity for our stakeholders to have their voices heard.
- Development of an employment and skills plan, which will be strongly aligned to ensuring people from protected and disadvantaged groups are able to access all opportunities within the Freeport. Key areas for this to focus include:
 - Ensuring women, ethnic minority groups and other disadvantaged communities are able to benefit from all opportunities, including STEM.
 - A targeted skills/jobs brokerage programme within our broader skills strategy to link people from deprived communities with opportunities.
 - Development of apprenticeship and internship opportunities through the Marine Academy and during construction phases.

Plymouth and South Devon Freezone directors have responsibility for due diligence which includes responsibility for ensuring that Plymouth and South Devon Freezone operates per the requirements of the Equality Act (2010). Our directors are also responsible for ensuring that Plymouth and South Devon Freezone operates per the requirements set out in the National Assurance Framework. Our directors are expected to act with integrity and treat all stakeholders with respect and dignity.

Plymouth and South Devon Freezone has the governance structures and mechanisms in place to support our directors to do this and to monitor our progress around equality and diversity. To ensure they are supported in this role the Freeport development team will be charged with :-

Providing baseline community mapping data covering the protected characteristics and STEM data.

Providing reports covering Race, Disability and Gender pay gap reporting and unemployment - across disability, age, gender and race.

Plymouth and South Devon Freezone and its partners are also committed to acting in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act (2015) and are committed to eliminating practices and conditions which may foster modern slavery.