

13th August 2009

Your ref: Letter dated 16/07/09

Our ref: R00144

Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 8th July 2009.

Your request to SEEDA is:

Please note that I am only interested in information which is relevant to the period from November 1 2008 to the present day. Please feel free to redact the names of any staff members which may appear in documentation. Please feel free to answer via the email address given.

1...Has the organisation issued any recent guidance to its staff on their use of language as part of their everyday work? This advice will include but will not be limited to lists of words and phrases which should be used or which should be avoided during face to face contact and or during telephone conversations and or in correspondence and emails. The advice will relate to how staff communicate with each other in person and or over the telephone and or in internal communications (including emails). It will also relate to how staff communicate with members of the public in person and or over the telephone and or in correspondence including emails.

2...Could the organisation please provide copies of this advice? Could it please state why this advice was issued? Could it state when this advice was issued?

3...Has the organisation drawn up or circulated a list of words and or phrases which staff should avoid when talking/communicating/ corresponding to each other and or members of the public. If so can you please provide a list of these words and phrases? Does the organisation recommend the use of any alternative words and phrases? If so can it please provide details? Could it please state why it has issued this advice?

4...Has the organisation circulated any material which aims to raise the awareness of staff to the fact that certain words and phrases could cause offence on the grounds of race and or faith and or gender and or sexuality. If so can you please provide details and copies of the advice? Please also provide details of similar advice given which relates to the issue of disability.

5...Has the organisation encouraged staff to attend workshops, lectures, seminars (or similar) on the correct use of language in different settings. These workshops will encompass many of the issues outlined above. Could the organisation state how many of these workshops have taken place? Could it provide the title of each of the workshop or lecture and state where they took place. Could the organisation state how much the session cost? Could the organisation state how many people attended each workshop? Could the organisation provide the name of any outside body which was involved in the session?

Information requested

SEEDA is committed to promoting equality and diversity across the full range of activities in which it is involved, the partnerships in which we work, and in the way we manage our staff.

SEEDA has not issued any *specific* guidance to staff relating to the use of language as part of their everyday work; nor has it circulated a list of words or phrases which staff should avoid. However, treating colleagues and external stakeholders with dignity and respect, and how we communicate and behave forms part of a raft of broader training initiatives and policies, including:

- Customer service: customer charter, customer service and handling complaints training – sets standards and behaviours and explores complaints scenarios that may include use of language;
- Induction – includes introduction to SEEDA’s code of Conduct, outlining how SEEDA expects its employees to behave to each other and to external stakeholders and partners
- Equality and diversity: gender equality scheme, race equality scheme, disability equality scheme and managing disability confidence training;
- Bullying and harassment: policy and training – training discusses scenarios that many include use of language; and
- Acceptable use policy: outlines acceptable use of SEEDA information and information systems

SEEDA also runs online Equality & Diversity assessment training, evaluating the results against its Code of Conduct and Equality and Diversity policy.

Disclosure Log

This information will also be made available on SEEDA’s Freedom of Information Disclosure Log on the SEEDA website (www.seeda.co.uk/About_SEEDA/Freedom_of_Information_disclosure_log/).

Personal details and other information that could identify requesters is redacted (removed) from the disclosure log version.

Conclusion

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request, or if you are unhappy with our response, you can appeal using our Complaints Procedure as follows:

A request for a review should be addressed to Robert Crawford, Chief Operating Officer, and sent by email to: robertcrawford@seeda.co.uk or by post to SEEDA, Cross Lanes, Guildford, GU1 1YA. You will be notified of the outcome within 20 working days.

If you are still dissatisfied after pursuing our Complaints Procedure, then under Section 50 of the Act, you are entitled to appeal to the Information Commissioner (Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, telephone: 01625 545700, fax: 01625 524510).

Please contact me if you have any other queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "P Lovejoy".

Paul Lovejoy
Executive Director, Strategy and Communications

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