



## case study

## equal opportunities



Objective One is  
part-financed by  
the European Union



The Objective One Partnership  
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

### RURAL ENTERPRISE GATEWAY

Contact: Helen Thomson

Telephone: 0845 600 9966

Email: [helen.thomson@bldc.co.uk](mailto:helen.thomson@bldc.co.uk)

Website: [www.sw-gateway.com](http://www.sw-gateway.com)

#### *the project*

This project was developed by Business Link Devon and Cornwall to help the Rural Sector across the South West maximise the opportunities for rural businesses to access business support.

The Rural Enterprise Gateway includes a rural information service, providing signposting and high-level knowledge transfer. Groups of rural businesses are helped to collaborate with group development funding up to £1500 per year, and further access to £3000 per year towards their training costs to help achieve their goals.

The Programme has invested £250,821 from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) in the project which has a total cost of £501,642.

#### *measures of equal opportunities adopted*

This is a project addressing the needs of people who may be rurally isolated and who have difficulty accessing other forms of support. The project has a target that 45% of clients supported will be women. Each group is able to access flexible levels of support depending on the needs of that group.

Equal Opportunities is addressed within the project from the start with the application process requesting details of gender and ethnicity and also age, although providing the client is economically active they will be supported whatever age. Meetings are organised by the members to suit their own needs e.g. timed to fit in with childcare or business commitments, in locations which are accessible. Training meetings are held during the day and in the client's preferred format and location. For example ICT training has been delivered around a kitchen table. The project is able to fund locum cover for child or other dependant care as well as job cover. There is a small budget for "Doing Things Differently" which could include the whole group attendance. Additional funding can be drawn down for these events for childcare. Centrally organised events are always held in accessible venues and every effort is made to hold them at times that best suit the members, e.g. lunchtimes to facilitate school pick-up times or early evenings when childcare may be less problematical.



*Contour-ridged bulb fields on the Golden Mile - the Golden Mile Growers Group is a beneficiary of the Rural Enterprise Gateway*

#### *benefits of equal opportunities*

The aim of the project is to provide support for all rural businesses, many of whom are rurally isolated and some of which need particular help in the delivery of business support. Actively addressing equal opportunities at the centre of this project results in the evident range of businesses being assisted to adapt to change helping ensure their economic prosperity. Whole business needs can be addressed, for example one member of the business may require ICT training whilst another requires benchmarking data or business support.

#### *lessons learnt*

When asked why the project was so committed to equal opportunities project manager Rebecca Binns said: *"This is the way we can achieve our key objectives. It helps us to support all rural business, not just farming. The entrepreneurial side is often run or initiated by women and all our clients appreciate the flexibility and accessibility of the service."*

**For more information about how you can incorporate equal opportunities into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email [objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk).**