

Equality and Diversity Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21st May 2009

- Present:**
- Professor Aneez Esmail** – Chair and Associate Vice-President for Equality and Diversity
 - Professor Alan Gilbert** – President and Vice-Chancellor
 - Albert McMenemy** – Registrar and Secretary
 - Dr Adel Nasser** – Chair of BME staff network
 - Diana Hampson** – Director of Estates
 - Dr Hamied Haroon** – Chair, Disabled staff network
 - Patrick Johnson** – Head of Equality and Diversity
 - Patricia Ross** – UCU Equal Opportunities Rep
 - Elaine Shillcock** – Head of Disability Support Office
 - Jennie Kilip** – Student Union Women's Officer
 - Ellie Reyland** – Student Union Welfare Officer
 - Dr Pat Sponder** – Head of Student Support and Services
 - Veronique Rizzuto** – Equality and Diversity Assistant
 - Lorraine Onabanjo** – Unison
- Apologies:**
- Karen Heaton** – Director of Human Resources
 - Steve Grant** – Head of Workforce Planning and Skills, Manchester City South Partnership

1. Minutes

Dr Adel Nasser, Chair of the BME staff network pointed out that the amendments made in section 5 of the minutes of the previous meeting have not been recorded. It should read:

Received: Dr Adel Nasser, chair of the BME staff network invited the President and Vice Chancellor to attend a future BME staff network meeting to hear direct from staff the issues they face at the University. Adel also discussed the serious lack of BME in the Administration at grades 7, 8 and 9.

Noted: The President expressed his disappointment and said he was ashamed at the University's continuing failure to make progress on Race and other issues. He also expressed that he had confidence in the current actions and processes taking place, but that this is long term and will take time. On this basis the President felt that it would be unhelpful to attend a BME staff network meeting at this present time.

Diana Hampson confirmed that the mapping of the toilet facilities at the University is completed and a large number of gender neutral toilets have been identified in University buildings. All new buildings have or will have gender neutral toilets.

Patrick Johnson confirmed that the location of the prayer rooms have been identified and publicised on the Equality and Diversity website.

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2. Equality Data – the current picture

Received: An oral update from Patrick Johnson

Reported:

(a) Dr Hamied Haroon stated that the main picture on the University's web Home page, entitled "The Manchester experience", always shows students who are visibly White and middle-class/wealthy.

(b) Patrick Johnson reported that we have now robust equality data for the University. The next stage is to look at how we compare with the Higher Education institutions.

(c) Patrick Johnson highlighted that there is a low female academic pool to recruit into senior positions.

(d) Dr Pat Sponder said that we should look at UK home students and international students separately on the BME category.

(e) There was particular concern about first degree attainment of BME students and male students. Professor Aneez Esmail and Patrick Johnson agreed that more work was required to understand the problem and a plan of action would be developed to investigate this further. Progress will be reported at the next meeting.

3. Equality Impact Assessments

Received: an oral update from Patrick Johnson

Reported:

The Equality and Diversity team outlined and facilitated a pilot project throughout 2008. The project aimed to support areas through the assessment process developing guidance and future recommendations for an effective University wide Equality Impact Assessment process. All high priority areas within Professional Support Services were given the opportunity to take part in the pilot.

Five key areas within Professional Support Services have been guided through the impact assessment process: Directorate of Humans Resources, Student Recruitment, Admissions and International Development, Student support Services, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Office and Procurement.

There were six key recommendations which were discussed:

Recommendation 5 was seen as very difficult to achieve. This would be modified with a view to prioritising key policies that affect staff and students.

4. New service for disabled staff

Received: an oral update from Elaine Shillcock

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Reported:

(a) The University Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan identified the need for a service to support disabled staff that mirrored the existing provision for students. As a consequence of this, two posts were funded by HR, and Louise Thompson (Disability Adviser for staff) and Imtiyaz Timol (Admin Support and IT Trainer) were appointed. These posts are located in the DSO.

(b) The DSO has met with all HR teams to agree processes and procedures and very strong links are developing. The Disability Service for staff was launched officially in April 2009, and a series of seminars were delivered, aimed at line managers, with separate drop-in sessions for disabled staff.

(c) The DSO has also met with the local Job Centre Plus who administered the Access to Work Scheme and again, a good working relationship has been developed. Access to Work will pay 100% costs for new employees who have been employed less than 6 weeks. After this, the University has to fund the first £300 and then 20% of costs between £300 and £10,000. Access to Work pays all support worker costs and travel costs.

(d) Three training sessions for HR staff and invited line managers on how to recognise and develop strategies to support staff with mental health difficulties have been organised in June with a national charity called The Mood Swings Network. This has been identified as one of the areas that line managers and HR find most difficult to manage.

(e) The Disability Support Service has been well received so far with lots of positive comments from staff and line managers.

5. Positive Action – Professional Support Services

Received: An oral update from Albert McMenemy and Patrick Johnson

Reported:

Albert McMenemy said that following from the operational performance review it was noted that more work needed to be done at increasing the diversity of senior managers in the Professional Support Services. Albert asked Patrick Johnson to set up a positive action group to address the concerns of the OPR.

A number of recommendations were developed and were presented at HR SMT. Albert McMenemy stated that the 8 recommendations were an important start and he particularly mentioned the development of guidance for completing the University application form.

The recommendations are:

- a) To develop a diversity focused top ten reasons why someone should apply to Manchester, to put on our job opportunities web page;
- b) To interview BME staff to better understand why they are not taking advantage of career development opportunities;
- c) All staff involved in recruiting to have training/information in Positive Action;
- d) From the 15th June to have a positive action statement on all job adverts;

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- e) To develop guidance for completing the University application form to ensure potential employees know exactly what information we require them to provide;
- f) To produce case studies of under-represented groups that have taken part in Manchester Gold and/or leadership development training, in order to publicise the benefits of these programmes in terms of career development;
- g) To produce one 'action after interview' form that everyone has to complete. This is currently not consistent across the University. The form is important as it is used to facilitate equality and diversity monitoring. This will allow directorates/faculties to investigate if there is a drop off with certain groups at the short-listing stage;
- h) To investigate taking Positive Action as part of the work shadowing/secondments project being developed.

6. Redeployment Register

Received: An oral update from Professor Aneez Esmail

Reported:

The Equality and Diversity statistics for the Redeployment Register has been completed from a full staff list created on 20th February 2009. There are still issues with fixed term staff contracts. Some developments have been put in place and Professor Aneez Esmail acknowledged that more needed to be done. This will continue to be monitored.

7. Stakeholder updates

Received: An oral update from Dr Hamied Haroon, Dr Adel Nasser and Jennie Kilip

Reported:

(a) The official launch/publicity of the Disability Support Service for Staff in late April 2009, started in January 2009, has enabled many more people to find out about the Service and also to find out about and join the Disabled Staff Network. The number of DSN members has more than doubled since the Service started.

(b) Louise Thompson and Imtiyaz Timol along with Elaine Shillcock and Brian Coleman in the DSO, have been outstanding in starting up the new Service.

(c) The funding that was originally allocated to this service is fast running out. More funds must be committed to enable the service to provide adequate support for disabled staff.

(d) There seems to be a lack of restrooms around the University. There is still a lack of consideration for mental health conditions, especially when this involves long-term sick leave. There are some people who actually use the Disabled Staff Network as a source of support and would like it to be there for them when they are off sick.

(e) The Disabled Staff Network has arranged a social event in late June.

Adel Nasser reported that people are reluctant to join BME network. Adel is working with Professor Aneez Esmail to look at ways to revive the BME network.

Jennie Kilip reported how pleased she was with the findings of the gender neutral toilets led by the Directorate of Estates.

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The Student Union are currently running Trans training for existing and new hall mentors. Cath Moss mentioned that from the new academic year all hall mentors will receive general equality and diversity trainings.

8. Single Equality Scheme

Reported: An oral update from Cath Moss

(a) The Equality and Diversity Team have commenced work on the University's Single Equality Scheme (SES). THE Scheme will be published in December 2009 and will outline the key objectives required to address disadvantage, remove barriers, eliminate discrimination, and actively promote equality throughout the University. The Scheme will bring together the existing disability, gender and race equality schemes.

(b) The involvement and consultation stage is underway. A series of six focus groups with a total of 41 staff were carried out in April-May 2009. The key themes were recruitment selection, induction, access to training and development, management training, training and awareness, flexible working and network groups.

(c) It was agreed that senior managers would be kept informed and consulted at each stage of the scheme's development.

9. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.