

North West Equal Opportunities Network (NWEON) Meeting 3rd November

Hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)

Attendees:

Moni Akinsanya, Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU); Lyn Ashmore, University of Huddersfield; Kathryn Fagan, University of Chester; Ken Grainger, University of Salford; Vicci Jarman, Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU); Patrick Johnson, University of Manchester; Teresa Lewin, Liverpool Hope University; Gary Loke, ECU; Sally Middleton, University of Liverpool; Darren Mooney, University of Liverpool; Kate Noble, LIPA; Shirley Silcock, University of Bolton; Katherine Wrigglesworth, MMU.

Apologies:

Wendy Kenyon (MMU), Mona Patel (MMU), Robert Kemp (University of Lancaster), Alison Hunt (University of Staffordshire), Clare Ridgley (University of Staffordshire), Catherine Nevin (LJMU).

1. Introductions

2. Notes from the previous meeting accepted as correct with the following amendments under 'Institutional Updates':

- a. Bolton, final bullet point to read 'looking into dignity and respect'
- b. LIPA first bullet point to read SES and final bullet point to read 'Equality screening of audition notes involving teaching staff'.
- c. Chester, first bullet point to read 'Diversity Festival in Feb'

3. Equality Challenge Unit update - Gary Loke

- LGB leaflets circulated
- Guidance on student pregnancy and maternity available online by the end of the month
- Managing reasonable adjustments guidance will be available in the next few weeks
- Publication on equality survey is slightly delayed but will be available by the end of the year
- Work placement toolkits (1 for staff and 1 for students) available shortly
- A briefing is available regarding Anti-Discrimination law in Northern Ireland <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/anti-discrimination-law-in-northern-ireland/?searchterm=anti%20discrimination%20law%20in%20northern%20ireland>
- Revised bursary guidance available online
- Religion and Belief survey open until 9th December; previous difficulties with the link have now been resolved
- Disabled staff survey open until 12th December
- Upcoming ECU Conference in London, 17th and 18th November
- 2 briefings on EIAs have been published, one on redundancy and restructuring and the other on admissions
- 'Blackstone's Guide to Equality Act', co-edited by David Ruebain, ECU Chief Exec and several other EHRC solicitors is available to order online at www.oup.com/uk and proceeds go to charity
- ECU has appointed a new policy adviser with responsibility for Scotland: Freya Douglas

- Please note changes have been made to the Athena Swan Charter- forms redesigned, submissions now two a year (April or November) due to high volume of applicants and a Departmental bronze award is being introduced

3.1 Equality Act 2010 – Update

- Student bursary - revised briefing to a single page on the website, all protected characteristics lawful if proportionate
- Likely to be a requirement to EIA new policies for all strands although this is not clear for existing policy. To manage this, HEIs should consider proportionality and relevance when doing EIAs.
- Consultation on Specific Duties closes on 10th November; ECU's response is on their website. ECU will run events in 2011 on specific duty and other aspects of implementing the Equality Act.
- Codes of practise finalised and laid before Parliament are: Employment (12th Oct), Equal Pay (12th Oct), services; public functions (12th Oct). HE still in consultation, will probably have revisions
- Continue to use quantitative data when doing EIAs.
- ECU is running a project evaluating 21 Disability Equality Schemes in England which will help HEIs reflect about setting objectives as part of the Equality Act

4. Terms of Reference – Staff Networks

- Vicci Jarman explained how MMU's Equality Fora feed into their Diversity and Equal Opportunities Committee (DEOC) and one of their main functions is consultation. Examples of achievements include the Gender Staff Forum flyer, Disability Disclosure Guide and a BME Career Development Programme.
Action: MMU DEOC and MMU Equality Fora Terms of Reference are to be circulated by email to all members
- The University of Manchester has a network for international staff - this came about as a result of the SES
- LJMU celebrate the work done by the networks, such as articles in their newsletter
- Huddersfield have set up groups of research clusters who will be writing for publication, some publications will be focusing specifically or have elements of E&D
- The VC at the University of Salford has been proactive and organised a series of discussions with the networks about barriers to advancement. They are having an E&D week in November /December with various events and competitions. Staff Equality networks are involved in research projects and are running the LGBT Northern launch. Sports master classes will be taking place and local schools will be invited to send students, supporting tackling homophobia in schools
- It is being acknowledged that networks need to get together across institutions and work in partnership as a wider group. It has also been suggested that a Northwest Disability Network would be useful and it would enable budget sharing
- Bolton University have five staff advisory groups, gender and sexual orientation are grouped together and network action plans are being fed into the SES
- Liverpool Hope have a network covering all strands due to the size of the University, take up is small.

5. EIAs at MMU

- MMU have updated the EIA Screening Form and have devised an EIA Policy Development Checklist in order to ensure that equality issues are considered prior to a policy being published and or put into practice.
Action: Copies of these will be circulated to the group electronically

- MMU are in the process of publishing screenings, action plans and where relevant, the full EIA. These can be found online:
<http://www.mmu.ac.uk/humanresources/equalities/eiat/>

General EIA update:

- Expectations in relation to the Equality Act are that EIA's will continue across all strands and the principal remains, but the practice may change
- Bolton have a lot of new policies coming through and are making good progress with these through changing peoples mindset to the screening process
- It is the responsibility of the USS trustees to EIA the pension scheme

6. Date and Venue for next NWEON meeting

- The University of Chester are holding their annual Diversity Festival from 7th to 18th Feb 2011 and Kathryn Fagan would like to host the meeting again. Like the previous year, the meeting will be followed by the Sharing Best Practice Conference as part of the Festival. **Tuesday 8th February is a suitable date.** The meeting would be in the morning, followed by workshops in the afternoon.
- Workshops people would like to see are
 - Inclusive curriculum
 - Specific duties
 - Internationalisation (staff and students)
 - Managing the interface between sexual orientation and religion
 - Domestic Violence Policy in HE (Welsh ECU has a useful leaflet on Domestic violence if anybody needs guidance on this)

7. Institution updates

Salford University

- Received a HEFCE grant to do research into equality in managing workloads; starting with gender. This is project aims to make allocation of workloads more transparent and ensure accountability http://www.equality.salford.ac.uk/equality_act
- A full EIA has been done on Academic Misconduct
- Developing a way of working with police, fire service etc for an ethnicity focussed project, which is sponsored by the Leadership Foundation

Bolton

- Shirley Silcock has moved into a new role as E&D Officer for staff and students and has updated the staff diversity webpage and is working on one for students
- Diversity training for staff is being reviewed - hope to write their own scripts including case studies relating to the Equality Act and have these acted out and filmed (possibly by students)
- Student Equality training will be added to the employability module
- Organised an event for World Aids Day on 1st December. NHS Bolton and Bolton Council will be involved and the Mayor of Bolton is introducing the event

Huddersfield

- Teacher training taster courses for BME has had a high take up of students and proved to be very positive.
- A breakfast club has been set up for overseas students to discuss issues; they can then be fed back to various departments
- E&D research done on community cohesion, a number of papers have been written as a result of this research

L.Hope

- Management briefings starting

LIPA

- Disabled student allowance figures on HESA are inaccurate, managed to close the gap and figures are accurate going forward this year
- Introducing a training strategy

Chester

- Diversity Festival has been short listed for a Personnel Today Award in Workplace Diversity
- Equality Act briefings have been popular
- SES action plan is progressing well
- Diversity Festival in Feb 2011 – finalising the programme
- Starting work with employee engagement to get qualifications on diversity

Liverpool

- Welcome Darren Mooney, Diversity & Equality Officer
- Received funding for a University prayer room, currently consulting on designs but hopefully ready for the next academic year
- Entered Athena Swan Charter and achieved Bronze award
- Launching a new BME staff network
- 1 year review of Bullying and Harassment policy

MMU

- Re-recruiting Anti Bullying and Harassment Advisors – part of the Dignity at Work Campaign which includes positive signage and removal of graffiti/offensive material around MMU
- Special Leave Policy undergoing EIA process – currently being consulted upon
- WebCT mandatory online E&D training has been updated
- SES has been well received by all involved and Directorate; awaiting final approval from the Finance and HR committee next week. To be published end of Nov/early Dec. SES was launched at the E&D Event.
- Podcasts will soon be available on our website from the E&D Celebration Event held here on 20th October
- Work is being done on the Diversity Calendar, hopefully ready in December to circulate
- E&D Annual Report 09/10 draft complete, hope to have this in print by December
- Work on Athena Swan will be continuing on Wendy Kenyon's return

LJMU

- Updating website to reflect the Equality Act
- Roadshows underway to give updates on the Equality Act
- Event taking place on 22nd March 2011 "Making Rights Real in an Age of Austerity"
- 'Zero tolerance' campaign, leaflets and posters have been made containing advice and signposting
- Worked with SU and Afro Caribbean student network for Black History Month celebration, with support from the drama department, Aim Higher and HEFCE, who gave a talk at the event
- Equality and Diversity Guide is now available on the website, aimed at staff and students coming into Liverpool from different areas, the guide has details of places of worship, networks etc. To view the guide follow the below link:
http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/EOU/EOUDocs/Equality_and_Diversity.pdf

University of Manchester

- Focussing on E&D Department adding value.

- Finished HERA and will be looking towards doing an equal pay audit
- A group of staff are looking into the impact the default retirement age will have on Manchester
- VC very keen on taking the lead with regards to social responsibility; E&D filtering into this agenda - such as widening participation
- Working on diversity calendar
- Campaign for Dignity at Work

7.1 University of Salford - consultation on the Dignity at Work & Study Policy

- Experiencing difficulties around the mediation service (Total Conflict Management), Salford is paying an annual fee and the service is not being well used. Discussions took place as to why this could be. It has been suggested that the role description for B&H advisor is too restrictive. A steering group has been established, the North West Mediation Steering Group, to facilitate an arrangement whereby mediators can be shared between Universities in the group at no cost and to organise CPD for mediators throughout the North West, it was suggested that Salford may wish to consider utilising this group instead of paying TCM.

7.2 University of Bolton - Monitoring of Bullying and Harassment

Monitored by gender, ethnicity etc - Shirley would like examples of good practice of monitoring E&D in Bullying and Harassment cases.

Salford B&H Advisors Network have monthly meetings and have to put in a case report for every contact, this includes a feedback and equality monitoring form.

8. Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 8th February 2011, University of Chester

Details to follow in due course.