

Canterbury Christ Church University

Notes of the Equality and Diversity Group Meeting

Held 18th May 2010

Present: Tony Lavender (chair), Moira Mitchell, Sheila Bonnage, Amanda Brown, Hilary Bungay, Kathy Chaney, Jae Fowler, Melissa Cleary, Sarah Johns, Derek Maslin, Phil Poole, Lynda Saunders, Margaret Scott, Penny Stevens, David Stroud

1. **Apologies** : Robert Melville, Samia Abdiche, Brenda Didmon
2. **The notes of the meeting held on 16th February were agreed as a correct record**, other than amending the name 'Judy Challys' to 'Judy Challis'.
3. **Matters Arising** :

3.1 Dignity at Work Volunteers

The amendments to the Role Description agreed at the previous meeting have been implemented. The material has been circulated to the Unions and will be discussed at the next Joint Negotiating Group at the beginning of June. In response to queries from and discussion within the group it was confirmed that: a) a timetable for recruitment and implementation cannot be put in place prior to the JNG meeting, but recruitment in October, implementation in January seems likely; b) an initially small target of volunteers may be appropriate (6 or so); c) a small sub-committee of the EDDG will monitor selection and any need to attract volunteers to particular campuses; d) MM confirmed that trainers of volunteers would be external to the University and a schedule of training events would be elaborated; e) there is already a body of trained staff mentors on the staff who may be interested in this extended role.

4. Equality and Diversity Committee Update

4.1 Equality and Diversity Committee

TL reported that the Equality and Diversity Committee now reports directly to the Governing Body and is Chaired by a Governor, reflecting the importance the Governing Body gives to issues concerning Equality and Diversity. MM is to conduct an Impact Assessment of membership of the EDC and EDDG in relation to diverse representation, which will be further discussed at the Chairman's Committee. David Stroud clarified that the Chaplaincy represented staff and students of all faiths and none and should not be seen as representing Christians only.

4.2 Equality and Diversity Delivery Group

From September 2010 TL will Chair the Delivery Group, which will continue to be responsible for initial development and implementation of Equality Schemes and to be accountable to the EDC. MM felt that in relation to the **Terms of Reference** for the EDDG, Terms 1 and 2 could be merged. More extensive consideration of the specifics of the Terms of Reference as they stand gave way to a wider discussion of the role of the delivery group and its membership. MS queried the extent to which delivery fell to the Equality and Diversity Manager rather than the group as a whole. Discussion then revolved round whether the group is a quality assurance mechanism or should be actively monitoring legislation and promulgating equality mechanisms. It was agreed that the group has the dual roles of a) quality assurance and b) duties of monitoring and active delivery within their constituent University area, which can be roughly divided into Faculties, Campuses and major provision areas. TL queried what the role expectations actually mean. Communication conduits may be easier in specific service Departments than in Faculties. MM and TL to work on revised Terms of Reference.

A discussion on **representative membership** for the Delivery Group agreed that we should avoid tokenistic representation. One way forward could be to establish small sub-groups to monitor and champion specific equality strands. A call to staff to express an interest in a particular strand will be considered. TL and MM will give further consideration to Role Descriptors for representatives from Campuses, Faculties and particular service delivery areas.

5. Equality Act 2010 Update

MM presented the meeting with a helpful summary of the Act, passed in April 2010 and discussion took place on some aspects of this paper. For reasons we are unsure of a new stress on socio-economic equality duties for the public sector does not at the moment extend to Higher Education. The scope of 'positive action' has been extended from disability to other strands, but there is no detail concerning this as yet. Gender Pay gaps are to be closely monitored. Employment tribunals will be able to make institutional requirements for change rather than recommendations as in the past. There are nine 'protected characteristics' and a new provision for protection by association (for those where such association has an impact on their lives). MM has been asked to provide a 'Gap' analysis of where we are in relation to the new legislation. It is anticipated that in some areas we go beyond mere compliance. It was agreed that a small working party assist MM in this task, comprising MM, Sarah Johns, Melissa Hackney and Lyn Saunders. MS felt that one of our weak areas was in relation to procurement of furniture, etc which was sometimes not suitable for our diverse community.

6. Single Equality Scheme

A Single Equality Scheme would be in the spirit of the legislation. Its advantage would be coherence whereas retaining different strategies for different equality strands ensures that different needs and priorities are met. Monitoring is still not required for religion, sexual orientation or age. MM has consulted with other Universities and, not least pending the

elaboration of a new University Strategic Plan in 2010-2011, the current intention is to continue with the separate Disability, Gender and Ethnicity strands, schemes and action plans. MM suggested that a strategy grid may have to be elaborated combining the Single and the Different approach. Pregnancy and Maternity is a 'protected characteristic' which applies over the separate strands and where a Single approach may be beneficial. Sarah Johns from Human Resources wondered whether Key Performance Indicators covering several strands/'protected characteristics' could be elaborated. Jae Fowler agreed that this would provide integration as well as distinct treatment. She emphasised the importance of MM or TL being fully involved in the elaboration of the processes towards the new University Strategic plan to ensure that Equality and Diversity was suitably embedded within it.

7. Student Attainment

The meeting briefly considered student attainment data related to various diversity strands. Although the meeting brain-stormed reasons for any differentials, it was agreed that further research was needed in relation to this issue, both in terms of published papers and in relation to 'Focus Groups' with individuals from the groups under consideration. MM reported how successful the Ethnic Minority Mentoring Scheme had proved. The Group will explore other initiatives following research into the issues.

Phil Poole drew attention to the Staff Conference from 23rd – 25th June and specifically 23rd June when the topic is 'The Inclusive Curriculum'.

8. Any other Business

Penny Stevens announced that this was her last attendance at the Group as she was retiring. TL thanked her very much for her work on the Group and the whole Group wished Penny well for the future.