

Canterbury Christ Church University

Notes from the Equality & Diversity Delivery Group meeting held on 27th October 2009

1. Present

Amanda Browne, Kathy Chaney, Brenda Didmon, Jeanette Earl, Jae Fowler, Melissa Hackney, Derek Maslin, Moira Mitchell (Chair), Catriona Nicholson on behalf of Sue Kendall-Seatter, Lyn Saunders, Tsige Sherington, Dave Stroud, Penny Stevens, Julie Wiater (notes), Simon Wright.

2. Apologies

Sheila Bonnage, Rena Boothe, Hilary Bungay, Lynne Gill, Richard Henson, Tony Lavender, Liam Preston, Phil Poole, Margaret Scott.

As a number of people have indicated they cannot attend one or both of the next meetings, the Chair noted that the dates and times of the two outstanding meetings may be reconsidered.

3. Membership and Terms of Reference

The Chair informed the group that during the coming year the Chairman's Committee will consider the reporting structure for the Equality and Diversity Committee. Currently it reported through the Finance & General Purposes Committee to the Governing Body; however, the Chairman's Committee will consider a proposal that the Equality and Diversity Committee report directly to the Governing Body, particularly as the Equality and Diversity Committee Chair was not a member of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Other considerations were likely to include the size of the Committee, its composition and its responsibilities as set out in the Terms of Reference. Changes to these could impact on the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group. However the Committee will continue to focus on strategy whilst the Delivery Group will continue to focus on implementation.

4. Notes of last meeting

Read and agreed.

5. Matters Arising

None

6. Minutes of the Equality and Diversity Committee

The Equality and Diversity Committee usually meets approximately two weeks before the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group. If possible the unconfirmed minutes of the Committee meeting will be produced in time for the Group's meeting but in any case they will always be posted on the Equality and Diversity webpages.

The group read and discussed the minutes.

5. Sexual Orientation Position Paper

This paper was commissioned by the Equality and Diversity Committee and drafted by a working party of staff and students. The paper includes a section written by the Dean of Chapel on the Church of England and Human Sexuality. The paper has been approved by the Equality and Diversity Committee and will now go to the Governing Body for approval. Recommendations from the paper will form an action plan for next year.

Action: Sexual Orientation position Paper to be posted on Equality and Diversity web pages.

6. Pilot Ethnic Minority Mentoring Project

This project was introduced and a flyer to promote the scheme distributed. Currently 12 second and third year student mentors have been recruited and trained and the last places for first year student mentees are being advertised. As a pilot project it is only for Canterbury students but if it is successful and further funding can be obtained for next year then it could be extended to cover the whole University. The group discussed how to promote the project and reach students.

Action: Flyer to be sent to delivery group and posted on Equality and Diversity web pages.

7. Gender Equality Scheme Consultation

The main item of this meeting was for the Group to discuss the revision of the University's Gender Equality Scheme. The revised scheme is due for publication in April 2010 and a draft document will be presented to the Equality and Diversity Committee in January 2010.

The new Gender Equality Scheme (GES) will keep to the same structure as the previous scheme, namely the following five sections: Access, Organisational Development, Staff, Students, Wider Community. Eventually all three equality schemes (Race, Disability and Gender) will be incorporated into a Single Equality Scheme.

Equal Pay Audit

In preparation for a discussion about the GES, the group considered the Equal Pay Audit report attached to the Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2007/08. Equal Pay

Audits (EPA) will become mandatory under the new Equality Bill but the University has been conducting them since 2006. The University's EPA shows a less than 5% gender pay gap so the more important issue is the distribution against the grades. It was noted that as some groups in the data are very small the statistical representation is effected so it would be useful to have the actual numbers involved, how many staff are employed in each grade and also whether they are full or part time.

Looking at the academic pay scales it was evident that the higher the grade or level the smaller the percentage of women. Whilst these figures reflect the national trend, the issue of career progression needs to be considered from a female perspective. It also appeared to progress to higher grades staff have to be full time.

The group discussed whether staff at higher grades feel able to opt for part-time hours. Generally the opinion was that part-time work does not appear to be valued equally with full-time at the higher grades and part-time have fewer opportunities to progress. It was noted that job sharing is not mentioned in recruitment advertisements or job descriptions and is under promoted.

GES Action Plan

The group worked through the current GES and the points below were made about the following objectives of the scheme:

Organisational Development

B2. To promote gender equality through the procurement process.
This objective will be taken forward to the next GES.

Staff

C1. To ensure all staff are aware of the implications for their role of the Equality Act 2006.

There is currently no gender specific training in relation to line management

C2. To implement the Dignity at Work Policy

Following the staff survey Professor Jan Druker is conducting a piece of work in relation to bullying and harassment. The group welcomed this and it was recognised that there needs to be a facility for staff to report bullying to and receive support and guidance.

C3. To ensure equitable access to Flexible Working arrangements for men and women.

The data on flexible working is kept on individual files so it is problematic to get data on the overall uptake of flexible working. The University complies with all legal obligations to offer flexible working to those with caring responsibilities but doesn't promote it generally. The group discussed contracts under the new pay frame work and agreed it should recommend that flexible working be more broadly promoted.

C4. To ensure that our arrangements for pregnant women and women returning from maternity leave promote equality for women.

The group agreed that maternity leave should be changed to parental leave and that adoption leave should be added.

C5. Improve the gender balance in teams and job roles in the University where there is occupational segregation.

This was covered during discussions about the Equal Pay Audit above.

C6. Improve access to information on childcare provision across the campus network. The group discussed how the move to Augustine House may have affected staff with childcare arrangements.

C8. To ensure HR policies prevent discrimination against transgender people.

The group agreed a formal policy in this area was required.

C9. To address gaps in information relating to men and women as employees.

This was covered during discussions about the Equal Pay Audit above.

Students

D2. To ensure programme design and structure minimises the impact of caring responsibilities.

The group considered that Programme Directors need guidance on minimising the impact of caring responsibilities.

D3. Improve access to information on childcare provision across the campus network.

D7. To improve the experience of male and female students on placement.

The difficulties of students getting to placements and arranging childcare were discussed. The group believed that childcare needs are taken into consideration when placements are being organised.

D8. To identify any harassment perpetrated on the basis of gender and plan appropriate action.

As no gender harassment was identified from the web based survey this item will probably not be included in the new GES.

8. Any other business

None.