

Equalities

Diversity Champions Framework

Glasgow City Council

Contact for Enquiries

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Glasgow City Council introduced a network of diversity champions to raise awareness of equality and diversity and encourage its staff to disclose their diversity status.

Background

Tackling inequality and advancing equality of opportunity are key themes of Glasgow City Council's (GCC) strategic plan. In it, the council pledges to raise employees' awareness of equality and diversity and the inclusivity of the organisation by getting people involved in delivering the strategic plan and in other corporate initiatives.

However, the council's research showed a lack of awareness of equality and diversity. In the 2015 staff survey, only 43% of staff who responded stated that the employment practices of GCC promote fairness and equality in the workplace. In addition, there are high rates of non-disclosure of disability and ethnicity, with 82.7% of staff not disclosing their disability status and 26.2% not disclosing their ethnicity.

In order to increase awareness of equality and diversity and encourage employees to update their personal information, the council developed a framework to implement a network of diversity champions from across the organisation. Its specific aims were:

- To demonstrate the council's commitment to equality and diversity and increase its profile as a diverse and inclusive employer
- To promote consideration of equality and diversity, and reference to it, in service delivery and corporate initiatives, strategies and action plans
- To support frameworks that allow employees to contribute to the achievement of the council's strategic plan and corporate/service equality and diversity activities.
- To maximise the voice of employees in relation to equality and diversity, and to increase consideration of equality and diversity in the workplace.

Key Activities

The framework was launched in January 2016 and a network of diversity champions from all levels of the organisation was established across all services to:

- Raise awareness of and get people involved in equality and diversity activities
- Support and update the HR Equality and Diversity Group and employee forums with equality and diversity activities and initiatives
- Share good practice and success stories with diversity champions across services.

The champions use local arrangements such as newsletters and employee forums to update staff on equality and diversity. They also encourage staff to update their personal information.

A new equality and diversity e-learning course was launched in August 2016.

The Executive Member for Equalities was keen to adopt a 'role model' approach and the council looked to the Stonewall Role Models Programme for this. Quarterly meetings are held with the champions to discuss activities and review progress.

A GCC 'Lean In Group' has been developed in response to a request from one of the diversity champions. This provides a forum to discuss gender issues and women in the workplace and to share insights and experiences. These meetings feature a mix of TED Talks and guest speakers. A shared reading group is also being developed from this.

Benefits and Impacts

The impact on staff survey results will not be known until 2018 (the survey is carried out every three years). However, since January 2016 almost 600 employees have updated their equality and diversity information. There has been a small decrease in both BME non-disclosed (down 0.8% to 25.4%) and disabled non-disclosed (down 1.8% to 80.9%).¹

The Lean In Group has held five meetings to date and has 150 members. Feedback at this stage is anecdotal but group members will be asked to provide formal feedback at the end of the year.

Learning

Be clear about the role of the champion and the role of HR from the outset to ensure a joined-up approach.

Identifying the 'right' champions is key. At GCC this was done

1. Figures correct at 31 March 2016

at service level. However, give some thought to the process of identifying them: one champion was volunteered by his service and, whilst he was happy to provide support, was unable to give the role the time it needs because of his operational role and duties.

Additional Information

A report for senior management on the activities and achievements of the framework will be produced annually.

Champions and HR Equality and Diversity Reps regularly discuss how the framework is working in practice to ensure that they have the right people to deliver the council's key messages.