**Meeting of the Equalities Network**

**Thursday 11 June 2015**

**Action Notes**

**Attended**

EHRC – Mark Wright

Gateshead Council – Jane Bench

Hartlepool Borough Council – Angela Read

NEREO – Jill Rouse

Newcastle City Council – Rachel Archbold

Newcastle City Council – Edward Bewick

North Tyneside Council – Anne Foreman

Northumberland County Council/Northumbria Healthcare – Keith Thompson

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council – Satnam Singh

Sunderland City Council – Kirsty McNally

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| 1 |  | **Actions** |
| 1.1 **1** | **Welcome from Chair and Apologies for Absence**Darlington Borough Council – Deena WallaceHartlepool Borough Council – Catherine GrimwoodMiddlesbrough Council – Pip SchofieldNorth Tyneside Council – Julie Gullon | **No actions** |
| 2.2 **2** | **Minutes of Meeting held on 20 November 2014**Keith Thompson represents Northumberland County Council, not Northumbria CC. The notes to be amended to reflect this. | **Jill** |
| 3. **3** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes*** The group welcomed the Welfare Reform report. Keith Thompson has a contact with direct links to ANEC Welfare Reform Activity
* Provision of Disabled Access to Council Buildings – Satnam has an officer doing access audits
* Assessing the Impact of Budget Proposals – to be included as standard item on future agendas
* The Invisible Workforce – Mark provided copies of the summary report and gave a brief update. Cleaners are being targeted in the EHRC campaign to understand their employer rights. Mark will send materials for NEREO and NEPO to circulate
 | **Jill****Mark** |
| 4.**44** 4 **4**4 | **Procurement and equality legislation – approach to meeting public sector duty requirements/ identifying ways forward – development of an equality toolkit for SME businesses*** Rachel circulated a handout
* Times have changed since the Equalities and Procurement Conference in 2012
* We are commissioning and procuring more
* How can we apply the PSED general duty to services we commission?
* What is a proportionate approach?
* How can these messages be communicated most effectively?
* How can we show this adds value?
* Monitoring is also an issue – contracts not being monitored regularly
* Can we link it to the Social Value Act? And Living Wage?
* Kirsty explained what Sunderland has been doing. They re-considered their procurement process in parallel with the Social Value Act
* Stonewall are keen that local authorities support suppliers in their journey to becoming more focused on equalities issues
* It’s not about saying some organisations can’t get contracts, but that they will be expected to improve their practice in a proportionate way if they are awarded contracts. This will be monitored closely
* They have looked at low risk services and high risk ones
* There will be 3 levels contained within an extra module in the procurement documents
* Very basic questions in the ITT, but more specific in the service specification (e.g., training)
* Procurement are working much more closely with Kirsty to make this happen. She will be involved in supplier briefs

Kirsty invited comments:* Northumberland are rotating with social care ones, but recognise the need to look at the bigger stuff
* Mark observed that a start is E&D officers at least talking to procurement, and to other areas of the organisation
* Also, SMEs are beginning to understand the issues and will appreciate support. There is greater scope for engagement

Kirsty is looking at commissioning now* Ed (Newcastle Procurement Officer) commented that what Kirsty is doing sounds like a useful and practical approach. There are similarities with what Newcastle is trying to do. Procurement and Commissioning have merged at Newcastle
* Rachel advised that NEPO is reviewing their procedures soon and it would be good to be able to influence that. Can we approach them and offer to run a joint workshop. Newcastle could host. Invite suppliers as we did at the last event.

Two **actions** were agreed:* Sharing of information – have a working group, by August, first meeting
* Workshop session with NEPO. NEPO have someone who can do the administration for this (Sinead). If not, NEREO would do it
 | **Jill/Rachel****Jill/Rachel** |
| **5.** | **Public Procurement and Human Rights**Mark explained the duties and responsibilities of businesses in terms of human rights – 3 pillars. There are a set of guiding principles set by the UN. Duty to Protect includes public procurement**Action*** Mark to send the paper for circulation to the group

Stonewall Award – part of the requirements is to consider procurement.The group discussed Stonewall awards and the new standard.This can be shared at future meetings. | **Mark****All** |
| **6.** | **Assessing the Impact of Budget Proposals**Rachel asked if any budget proposals were going to have an impact, e.g., changes to cashier service at Newcastle.* Gateshead – home to school transport for SEN pupils being discussed
* Northumberland – also has transport issues. Free parking/cut concessionary bus fares
* Sunderland – consulting on cutting front-line services

Equality Impact Assessment forms – almost everyone is revising them. Please share ongoing work. | **All** |
| **7.** | **Any Other Business**Mark circulated two documents.Andrew Goldsby, Relationship Manager, Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) will be invited to the next meeting to raise awareness of EASS.Translation/Interpretation Services to be added to next agenda. | **Mark****Jill****Jill** |
| **8.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | To be confirmed | **Rachel/Jill** |