

Minutes NEREO Equalities Network

Tuesday 15 November 2022 - Teams meeting (virtual)

Attendees

Durham CC

Hartlepool Council
North Tyneside Council

Newcastle City Council
Northumberland CC
Together for Children Sunderland
County Durham FRS

Claire Holt
Mary Gallagher
Catherine Grimwood
Anne Foreman
Jess Madden
Louise Crosby
Suzanne Henderson
Angela Bremner
Joanne Sanderson

Apologies

Cleveland FRS
Northumberland CC

Ruth Anderson
Irene Fisher

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Attendee introductions.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Previous minutes agreed.

3. Matters arising from minutes

Actions still outstanding from previous meeting:

- Louise Deer to circulate staff network questions used for senior management interview panels.
- Mary to check circulated information to Rachel (Gateshead) in relation to timelines around consultation on library/leisure services.
- Jess to circulate EIA form when approved.

4. Regional update

Discussion took place in relation to updates and current work within each authority.

Together for Children Sunderland currently working on producing zero tolerance policy. Several other authorities have dignity at work policies in place. Dignity at work advisors also in place at DFRS. Most included their staff networks in the development of these policies, with support guides for managers and staff. North Tyneside have also offered 'bystander awareness' training as well as 'bring your whole self to work' training.

Action: Louise to send link and information in relation to Mersey Care campaign about incivility at work. [Civility and Respect at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust - RJC CoP \(restorativejustculture.org\)](https://www.restorativejustculture.org/)

Newcastle now has in place new Chief Executive. Current project on becoming Anti-Racist city, drafting motion to take to council to approve. This would be something similar to Oxford City Council who have in place an anti-racism charter. [Anti-Racism Charter | Anti-Racism Charter | Oxford City Council](#)

Also looking at benchmarking tools, and like most others considering the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Work is also taking place in relation to reviewing current equality objectives and discussion took place around different approaches taken.

6. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Not applicable.

7. Any Other Business

Hartlepool - has anyone got guidance on BSL for staff?

North Tyneside BSL procured through NEPO portal. They use Everyday Language Solutions for BSL. Information is available on the intranet and how to access BSL. Durham use Rare Rockets and similar to North Tyneside have a guidance document on the intranet for services to arrange their own interpreter. Discussion then took place in relation to Sign video, which is a live video interpretation on demand. Northumberland use this in customer access points but will be reviewing licenses to see whether this is something they can use across the council in other areas such as recruitment.

Action: can authorities please send Catherine copies of their BSL staff guidance documents.

North Tyneside – do authorities have corporate equality groups?

North Tyneside have a group set up which include Trade Unions, staff network reps, and senior managers. The group has set guidelines, terms of reference. Will be carrying out an audit in relation to how equality and diversity works within each service. Newcastle are in the process of setting up a group which will have a similar membership outlined by North Tyneside. Hartlepool have an officer group, which is departmental representatives, however, need to conduct a review of membership. Northumberland don't have a corporate equalities group but have plans to set one up. They have asked for volunteers as EDI Champions across the council.

How do authorities provide support in relation to the EIA process?

Northumberland are hoping that the corporate group will help with these. Durham FRS have 20 trained assessors across the service which also includes operational staff. This is included within their day- to- day role. Joanne coordinates the sending out of the EIAs, on a rota system. Newcastle have carried out EDI impact assessment training, identified gap in process and now have a dedicated person within each service to ensure reports have EIAs. They have set up a QA team, to carry out quality audits, which also includes climate change, as well as socio-economic factors. North Tyneside have trained 150 people in EIAs. Currently producing E-Learning module. They recommend that 2 people within a service area work on an EIA. Members of the corporate equality group provide sign off as well as Head of Service. They have developed a prioritised list to try and catch the 'business as usual' EIAs.

Is anyone involved with the Disability Employment Charter?

North Tyneside have received this request in order to encourage the government to back the Charter. Not known if other authorities have received this request as may have been received by different departments.

How do others build EIAs into their planning decisions?

Ensure that planners are aware of EIAs and have received training. Within reports ensure that highlighted within implication sections, and that planning solicitors identify EIAs within the process.

8. Date of Next Meeting – January 2023

Tuesday 31 January 2023, 1.30pm, MS Teams meeting.