

Meeting of Equalities Network Tuesday 22 October 2019, County Hall, Durham

Attendees

Durham County Council – Claire Holt (Chair), Mary Gallagher
North Tyneside Council – Anne Foreman
Cleveland FRS – Ruth Anderson
Hartlepool Borough Council – Catherine Grimwood
Darlington Borough Council – Eleanor Walker, Helen Whiting
Gateshead Council – Jane Bench
Northumberland Council – Keith Thompson
Sunderland City Council- Kirsty McNally
NEPO - Laura Kyle
Newcastle City Council – Louise Crosby
Stockton Council – Satnam Singh

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Durham and Darlington FRS – Michelle Robson
Durham County Council – Joanne Kelley
Middlesbrough Council – Barbara Vallance
South Tyneside Council – Karen Robson

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 30th April

Agreed.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters arising.

4. NEPO - New Regional Framework for Translation and Interpretation

Laura Kyle, NEPO Procurement Officer gave a presentation on the proposed new framework. Laura outlined the current issues identified by a range of stakeholders in relation to foreign language interpreting and BSL interpreting, which included concerns about competency, suitability of suppliers, lack of BSL interpreters within the region, and not meeting requirements of the community. The presentation also identified proposed solutions for providing future services. The Pseudo DPS, will allow a flexible approach to an approved supplier list. Providers will be asked to provide a capped price.

Action: Laura to circulate presentation to the group, and within the next few months, the approval documents.

5. ICS Update re Equalities

Integrated Care Scheme - Helen updated the meeting on the purpose and outcomes of this group and identified that we have similar issues. There may be learning opportunities that we can share. They have established a base line charter and guidance document for NHS. Helen thought this might be a useful tool to circulate to the group. There will be a training session taking place in May – Helen to keep the group updated.

Action:

- Helen to be the link between the group, to have a standard item on the agenda
- Helen to circulate the charter and guidance to the group and any other relevant documents to be circulated to the group, (EDI checklist and managers toolkit).

6. Equality Benchmarking/Accolades

Kirsty questioned what awards/accolades other authorities are working towards to help focus on our staff and culture. A number of authorities mentioned that staff survey, and internal wellbeing board provide useful feedback to support work towards awards.

Discussion took place about a number of different awards such as Stonewall, Disability Confident, Time for Change, Better Health at Work, and how effective are these initiatives in making a difference.

Hartlepool recently used the public sector equality framework to carry out an assessment on their equality work. Satnam mentioned that perhaps we could set up a regional peer review system.

Action: Kirsty to circulate current list of benchmarking/accolades. All to look at this and add anything additional.

7. enei

Keith queried whether anyone had heard of the employer's network for equality and inclusion, and any thoughts. <https://www.enei.org.uk/>. They can help conduct an audit and formulate an action plan. The work of this organisation covers all protected characteristics, wider than just one protected characteristic.

8. LGA Event

Ruth provided an update on training she had attended 'Diversity and Inclusion a road map to success' – **presentations attached.**

Action: To look at how we can share resources. Investigate with NEREO (think there was a facility for this set up many years ago with a log in and password), or perhaps through Sharepoint.

9. Equality Monitoring

North Tyneside currently reviewing their monitoring questions in surveys. Particularly interested in questions related to gender identity, and to ensure questions are comparable with other sources. Hartlepool received feedback through their staff survey.

Action: Anne to circulate what they have pulled together. Kirsty has done some work on this so will be able to provide feedback, to circulate to the group.

10. Guides/Procedures for Customer Service

Anne queried whether anyone had a handbook/guide for dealing with diversity in relation to customer service.

Action: If anyone has any useful information to forward onto Anne.

11. GDPR

Item not discussed.

12. Any other business

No other business.

13. Date of next meeting – March 2020 (Date TBC)