

## Meeting of Equalities Network (Virtual)

Tuesday 6 October 2020

### Attendees:

Durham County Council - Claire Holt (Chair), Mary Gallagher  
Darlington Borough Council - Eleanor Walker  
Gateshead Council - Rachel Mason  
Sunderland City Council - Kirsty McNally  
Newcastle City Council - Louise Crosby  
Stockton Council - Liz Purdy  
Northumberland County Council - Irene Fisher  
North Tyneside Council - Anne Foreman, Jess Madden

### 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Cleveland FRS - Bev Parker  
Cleveland FRS - Ruth Anderson  
Cleveland FRS – Emma Hampton  
Darlington Borough Council – Helen Whiting  
Durham FRS- Sarah Litt

Update on group membership:

Liz Purdy is now attending the group on behalf of Stockton Council.

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 July 2020

Minutes were agreed.

### 3. Matters arising from the Minutes

- Develop link between this group and NHS/ICS group - initial invite was to be sent to Chris Rowlands, however after discussion it was felt Sarah Kilner be the best person to contact. KM happy to attend the NHS group alongside HW, and if anyone else felt it would be beneficial, we would rotate this.

**Action:** Invite to be sent to Sarah Kilner. KM to attend ICS group, CH to forward on necessary contact details.

- Regional Framework for Translation - this is now in place, although AF informed the group still waiting for BSL guidance which will be due shortly.
- Covid Recovery Survey

**Action:** RM to share the results/report of Gateshead's survey, post on Team site.

#### 4. EHRC – Draft Guidance Assessing Equality Impact

The new draft guidance was circulated as part of EHRC webinar session 'Ensuring your coronavirus response is inclusive'. As part of the EHRC session Jo Hooper from Devon County Council also gave examples of Covid-19 EIAs (the link to these EIAs is now on Team site). It was felt the new draft document gave no real new guidance, just reiterated previous guidance. Discussion took place in relation to current EIA processes and how effective these were within our authorities. Most authorities are reminding senior leaders of the importance of EIAs especially in relation to the fast paced Covid 19 environment. Within NT, a new corporate group has been created as part of the recovery work, part of the remit of this group will be to promote EIAs. IF (Northumberland) highlighted some useful examples of cases where EIAs had not been carried out and the disproportionate impact this had, but also the benefits of how EIAs can shape a positive response. KM then queried whether anyone had successfully tied health inequalities to their EIA process, this is something Sunderland are looking to do in partnership with Public Health. MG explained that, due to the different legal requirements, this not been currently done at Durham, but keen to see how Sunderland progress. EW stated that Darlington include the following within their EIA process, low income, carers and rural impact. Within Newcastle, LC stated that they include socio-economic and health and wellbeing within their EIA process.

**Actions:** CH to post the draft EHRC guidance in the Team site.  
KM to keep group updated with their developments of health an equalities EIA.  
All to share copy of their current EIA toolkits.

#### 5. Training

There are several online seminars and webinars at the moment, to highlight the following:

Pearn and Kandola – useful resources and webinar links- topics include (Inclusive workplaces, Racism in the workplace, race and wellbeing). (posted in Teams) <https://pearnkandola.com/webinars/>

Digital Leader week – a range of topics covered in daily seminars next week. See attached link (also posted in Teams) <https://week.digileaders.com/>

Equally Ours- Intersectionality and Equality Act- an equal chance to thrive – taking place on 14 October

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/an-equal-chance-to-thrive-equality-act-10th-anniversary-seminar-series-tickets-122526133965?utm\\_source=Equally+Ours+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=dbe7c4e241-Newsletter+September+2+2020&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_104ed5022f-dbe7c4e241-58977917](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/an-equal-chance-to-thrive-equality-act-10th-anniversary-seminar-series-tickets-122526133965?utm_source=Equally+Ours+Newsletter&utm_campaign=dbe7c4e241-Newsletter+September+2+2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_104ed5022f-dbe7c4e241-58977917)

EHRC- Equality Act and where next for progress on equality – 14<sup>th</sup> October

[https://dileaders.com/events/ten-years-of-the-equality-act-2010-where-next-for-equality-at-work/?utm\\_campaign=EHRC%20e-newsletter%20%7C%20September%202020&utm\\_source=emailCampaign&utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email](https://dileaders.com/events/ten-years-of-the-equality-act-2010-where-next-for-equality-at-work/?utm_campaign=EHRC%20e-newsletter%20%7C%20September%202020&utm_source=emailCampaign&utm_content=&utm_medium=email)

**Action:** All links to mention sessions to be posted in the Team site, also if anyone else knows of any useful training sessions to highlight on the Team site.

## 6. Development of Equalities Network Team site

Everyone should now hopefully have access to the site. Hopefully this can become a useful resource for us all, any questions can be posted in the chat. Also, the files section has developed, feel free to upload useful documents to share with others, so this becomes a bank of information. When saving documents, it would be useful to save it as your authority name.

**Action:** All to start and populate Team site, share useful information.

## 7. Update from around the Region

Within Durham current work includes; development of staff network, gender pay gap reporting and ongoing EIA work around resilience and financial planning.

Newcastle have developed a new E&D student forum, working in partnerships with the Universities to understand the issues faced by students. (Covid 19 and Hate Crime are the main issues highlighted).

Gateshead, working on EIAs in budget process and raising awareness through updated guidance to Directors.

Darlington providing weekly updates on impacts, also rolling out training to all staff and elected members

Sunderland currently updating their Equality scheme (looking at objectives and governance).

North Tyneside concentrating on Covid work, also involved in the establishment of the Mayors task force, involves police and partners, working on developing work programme. Also, NT are rolling out signed video contract across the organisation into reception areas and AccessAble have also conducted a review of 34 council buildings.

## 8. Equality Benchmarking

Document in Teams.

**Action:** To update.

## 9. ICS Update re Equalities

No update. KM to be the link between the groups, alongside HW.  
(See previous note in matters arising)

## 10. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

No issues

## 11. Any Other Business

- IF informed the group that there is current consultation on proposed government guidance in relation to planning and raising accessible standards for homes. The proposals will mean a long-term issue of a shortage of accessible homes.

**Action:** IF will send the link to the proposal and response.

- IF also informed the group of the Valuable 500 scheme – which is a disability inclusion campaign, <https://www.thevaluable500.com/>. It helps promote disability inclusion, through ensuring it is part of agendas and a commitment from organisations.

**Action:** IF to send further information.

- IF also informed the group of the Safe School Alliance and action taken against Oxford Council in relation to transgender toolkits in schools.

**Action:** IF to send further information.

- Pronouns – discussion took place as to whether employees within Councils used pronouns. All authorities stated there was no corporate policy and this was on an individual level.
- Brief discussion also took place about the demographics, monitoring and census data. The new census categories will help with standardisation.

**Action:** MG to forward link to new Census 2021 approved categories.

## 12. Date of Next Meeting

Date to be schedule for January 2021.