LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the second meeting of the Equality and Diversity Committee
held on 24 November, at LSC Offices, Grosvenor Gardens, London
SW1W 0DH

Present:  Shirley Cramer (Chair)  Dyslexia Institute
          David Barker  REED in Partnership
          Jeremy Crook  BTEC
          Nicola Dandridge  Thompsons Solicitors
          Patrick Grattan  Third Age Employment Network
          Amir Kabal  East Staffs. REC
          Peter Lavender  NIACE
          Alyson Malach  Manchester City Council
          Sally McEnhill  Merton College
          Yvonne Thompson  ASAP Communications
          Susan Pember  DFES
          Kit Roberts  Director of Equality and Diversity
          Alison Kakoura  LSC
          Suma Das (For Nick Johnson)  Commission for Racial Equality
          Ann Madden (for Caroline Slocock)  Equal Opportunities Commission

Apologies:  Nick O’Brien  Disability Rights Commission
            Judith Norrington  Association of Colleges
            Hilary Wiseman  HSBC Bank

In attendance  Caroline Kempner  Director Analysis and Management Information
              Dean Williams  Senior Policy Manager
              John Gamble  Director of Adult Learning

2004/11  Introduction and Welcome

11.1  The Chair welcomed all present to the first “real” meeting of the Equality and Diversity Committee. Apologies for absence were received from Judith Norrington, Hilary Wiseman and Nick O’Brien. Suma Das was welcomed for Nick Johnson and Ann Madden for Caroline Slocock.

11.2  The Chair announced that Jeremy Crook had accepted her invitation to be Vice Chair of the Committee, and Jeremy was congratulated by the members.

11.3  The Chair informed members that she had received a positive reply from the LSC Chairman regarding diverse representation on national and local Councils and discussions were underway regarding recruitment of new members.

11.4  She thanked members for their replies to emails allowing discussion on Committee business to take place outside the meeting times, thereby
reducing time spent on discussions at meetings.

11.5 She informed the Committee that they were invited to attend the Breakfast Launch of the LSC Annual Statement of Priorities taking place on 2 December from 8am to 10am, at the Institute of Directors, Pall Mall.

11.6 One member requested an opportunity for the Committee to discuss the role of the LSC in holding providers to account over Equality and Diversity legislation. It was agreed that the item could go forward to a future agenda for discussion.

2004/12 **Strategic Area Reviews – Presentation**  Dean Williams

12.1 Dean Williams, Senior Policy Manager for StAR process, gave a presentation to the Committee on how Equality and Diversity was being promoted through Strategic Area Reviews, followed by questions and comments from the members. The key points of the presentation are summarised here:

- **StAR process provides a vehicle for promoting Equality and Diversity** but this needs to be *actively* promoted
- **StARS are linked directly to the E&D Impact measures and the LSC E&D Strategy**
- **Most LSCs are “pushing” to target NEET groups**
- **Approach is local in nature with E&D Impacts measures (EDIMS) providing a base model**
- **Must combine quantitative data with qualitative local data to be meaningful.**
- **Strategic approach with partners essential to trigger behavioural changes needed, involves change of ways of working**

Several examples of good practice were given before the summary, which covered what the next steps were.

12.2 The Chair invited questions and comments from members on the presentation and any issues it had raised:

I. One of the main concerns voiced by the committee was that E&D should have more focus in the local 3 year plans. There was a need for LSC staff to have the skills and confidence to ask correct and pertinent questions about equality and diversity in their local areas

II. One member was concerned that age discrimination “ageism” did not have a high enough profile within the E&D considerations in the three year plans

12.3 Members were informed that the Chief Executive had held nine regional events in order to identify the key issues regarding the Agenda For Change and the inclusion of an effective E&D Policy. The DfES representative informed the committee that Andrew Foster who was
leading the Governments review of FE was also looking at FE in the voluntary and work based learning sectors and would be identifying what is required from the sectors with regard to E&D. The committee was also reassured that Regional Directors were working on this. The Chair emphasised that initiatives were being devised almost weekly and that, in an environment of constant change, it was necessary to stay one step ahead.

2004/13 Analysis and Management Information

13.1 Caroline Kempner, Director Analysis and Management Information, was invited to give a presentation on the key issues for the Committee for which analysis could be commissioned in support of its remit. The presentation looked at three main outcomes:
- an understanding of what data/information was currently available,
- the viewpoint of the provider, and
- areas where the Committee might wish to commission analysis.

13.2 The Committee was shown examples of data graphs, illustrating the range of contrasting data available, attainment pre-16 and participation and success rates post -6. Data from a variety of groups had been compared using different criteria.

13.3 The presentation looked at the use of the data from the providers’ viewpoint and the importance of accessing data for comparison and benchmarking. Some providers were better than others at obtaining data. In FE colleges, 9% of learners ethnicity was not known and 18% with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was not known.

13.4 Members were asked to consider what summary management information or indicators on Equality and Diversity they would like to see, and what key issues would benefit from in-depth analysis of data on learners held by the LSC.

13.5 Following the presentation the Committee raised the following questions and points:
- There was a need for good analysis of data and information, to feedback into the system at local level
- Staff had to be qualified and confident enough to tackle issues of equality and diversity
- Information was also required about providers as well as learners
- Actual percentage figures on the data would give a clearer picture
- How well do large institutions do, compared to smaller providers?
- Background information to the data is important, eg. From how many institutions was the data gathered, over what length of time and over what period and so on.

In response, The Director for Analysis and Information Management, confirmed that the data relating to 2003/04 was comprehensive for all groups; colleges, adult learners, workbased learning and schools.
However the data had been gathered at different times. The discussion went on to highlight the need for data to be considered in tandem with the local demographic features and prevalent socio-economic dynamics as well as the existing ethnicity of learners attending the institutions. The example of an inner city college which provided predominantly for black learners whereas the local Sixth Form college was attended predominantly by white learners was cited as a problem brought about by social choices rather than the institution’s capacity to provide. Effecting a change in these local dynamics was a dilemma, which the Committee needed to bear in mind.

13.6 One member stated that the Committee needed to look at where it could influence delivery of provision within the Equality and Diversity legislation and where it could assist in increasing compliance within institutions. Once in receipt of the data the Committee needed to consider what the next step was.

13.7 Another member asked about data on employers, by sector, gender and participation rates and where it was. He stated that the LSC was good at collecting data from external sources but was less confident that the LSC had a good enough system to feedback and publish the results. The StARs were dependant on the EDIMs which were still developing. Concern was also expressed that data held centrally would not give a clear picture of what was happening locally.

13.8 There was a need to translate the data into targets or measures, which actually improve equality and diversity rather than merely reflect them.

13.9 Some members also expressed concern that there was an unequal distribution of effort into equality between ethnic groups and gender, and not enough work being done relating to class, location, age and disability/learning needs. What mattered most was equality of opportunity.

13.10 The representative from the Department reminded the Committee of work which was done in the 1990s on basic skills and questioned whether the LSC was using that data to inform management decisions relating to Equality and Diversity. The LSC needed to use the Grant Letter as a lever to enable the E&D Committee to focus on short, medium and long term strategies.

13.11 The member from The Third Age Employment Network requested that his organisation’s Newsletter be distributed amongst the members.

   **Action:** Clerk to arrange

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**2004/14 Equality and Diversity Impact Measures**
14.1 The Director for Equality and Diversity introduced the paper on Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) She emphasised that the second part of the report, attached as Annex A, was still in draft form and therefore not for circulation. The Committee noted that EDIMs were an innovative tool for the LSC and discussed how the Committee/LSC could make that tool more effective. The following comments were made:

- EDIMs were not currently working with providers. Some evaluation of work already done was needed
- a national steer was required to develop the framework for the EDIMs, which should include elements of local flexibility.
- none of the EDIMs related to Age issues
- framework should include outcomes and a programme of work that is measurable
- target setting should be sharper and monitored as EDIMs were the objectives by which the E&D Committee’s success will be measured
- the Investors in People (iIIP) status does not appear to pick up on ethnicity.

The Chair suggested that an invitation should be sent to Ruth Spellman, the Chief Executive of IIP UK, to speak to the Committee on the extent to which equality and diversity feature in IIP award. **Action:** Kit Roberts to arrange invitation to Ruth Spellman to attend Committee meeting

14.2 The Committee discussed the need to have levers for the future. The Director of Data and Information Management advised the Committee that there would be opportunity to discuss levers in tandem with the New Business Cycle and the Performance Scorecard. It was agreed that two Committee members should be appointed to the EDIM review group, which would meet after the 10/11 January E&D Committee meeting. The Chair accepted nominations from Jeremy Crook, David Barker and Sally McEnhill.

14.3 One member noted the absence of a determined statement in the National E&D Strategy published on 18 November. He felt that it did not make clear enough what the Committee’s priorities were. He went on to suggest that the new Common Inspection Framework could look at the effect that EDIMs were having on learners.

14.4 The Chair advised the Committee that more work need to be done around communicating the themes of the EDIMs for the short, medium and long term. She thanked the Director For Data and Information Management, and the Senior Policy Advisor for their presentations and who then left the meeting.

2004/15 **Revised Terms of Reference**

15.1 The Committee were invited to comment on the final draft of the Terms
of Reference. It was noted that that there was no mention in the ToR regarding the Committee’s power to appoint “sub committees” or of the Committee’s “Ways of Working” and that these needed to be added to the Terms before finalising.

**Action:** Add the Committee’s power to appoint subgroups to the terms of reference and also include statements on the committee’s ways of working

*Kit Roberts*

15.2 The member representing The Commission for Racial Equality raised the issue of the language used by members and officials when discussing E&D matters. She was concerned that people were not using acceptable terminology to describe racial groups. She offered to send advice to members for dissemination to all involved in discussing and minuting discussions. Some members argued that there was a danger of preventing people from discussing issues for fear of giving offence.

2004/16 **LLDD Sub Working Group terms of reference**

16.1 Peter Lavender gave feedback to the Committee on his meeting with Peter Little OBE, Chair of the Review Group. It was agreed at that meeting that the outcomes of the work on the review group would inform the future work of the “Working Committee” on Learning and Disability. The Committee were advised as to the current major issues facing the review group; problems with entry to employment; the rising costs of residential courses; mental health and the social exclusion report, to name but a few. Also noted was the fact that there were a number of issues remaining on the agenda from the Forum on Learning Difficulty and Disability meetings held earlier this year. Peter reported that the membership had not yet been finalised. The first meeting was to be expected to take place in Spring 2005.

16.2 Members comments on the draft ToR included:

- the membership of the group should include at least one major employer (such as a retailer)
- the terms should mirror those of the main Equality and Diversity Committee and should not be separate
- the different responsibilities and transitions of each group should be made quite clear in the light of what the LSC responsibilities are regarding learning and skills.

2004/17 **Equality and Diversity Annual Report**

17.1 The Committee received draft copies of the Annual E&D report for comments. The Chair thanked the Director for E&D for her effort in getting them to the Committee in time for this meeting. Comments received included:

- The Committee should draw up a communications strategy in order to inform relevant groups of the work undertaken. It was
agreed that Kit Roberts would ask a member of the communications Team to attend future meetings

- There needed to be a section on “what we intended to do whether we did it and what we intend to do in the future”
- The photographs used were well chosen in that they challenged the stereotyping of current gender and racial roles

**Action:** Kit Roberts to invite member of Communications team to each meeting.

17.2 The Chair asked that any further comments should be emailed to the Director for E&D before the end of the month.

**Action:** Members to send comments on Annual Report to Kit Roberts by 30 November

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**2004/18 Commission for Women into Work**

18.1 The Chair reported on the work of the newly formed Commission for Women into Work and the request for views and evidence of the issues surrounding the pay gap between men and women. She reported that the Chairman of the LSC, Chris Banks was very keen to involve as wide a range of people on the national committees as possible to contribute to the recommendations to the government.

18.2 Several comments and questions were made by Committee members:

- The Committee needed to send qualitative data not just 16 responses
- The EOC representative said she would share relevant information and data from their own research with Committee members

**Action:** Ann Madden (EOC)

- One member queried the intended audience of the “call for evidence”, and said that there needed to be a whole country view of existing evidence in both public and private sectors.
- Another question raised was what the brief was which prompted the call for evidence and why it was being requested.
- The deadline of end January 2005 was noted by the Committee as fairly tight

It was also pointed out that there were very few resources at National LSC with the expertise to deal with such an important matter and subsequently a lack of funding to match the request.

18.3 The Committee agreed that they were willing to contribute but requested some initial guidance from the Director for Equality and Diversity of the Key priority areas where members can help.

**Action:** Members were asked to send in any thoughts they had on the exercise to Shirley Cramer and/or Kit Roberts

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**2004/19 Agreement of Priorities**
19.1 This item was deferred to later in the meeting.

20.1 **Working Together**

The Director of Adult Learning was invited to make a presentation to the Committee on working with the Voluntary and Community Sector. He referred members to the strategy document "Working Together" which was published in May 2004 and which set out the LSCs plans to improve relations with the VCS.

20.2 He set out the aims of the Strategy, the rationale behind it and the main areas of engagement, key issues arising and an initial evaluation of the success of the strategy. He closed by asking members for their endorsement of the activities undertaken to date and asked for comments regarding other issues for the future.

20.3 The Director also recommended that more detailed information was available on the LSC website and that there would be a series of workshops beginning in January 2005 to highlight the VCS sector. More details about this could also be found on the website.

20.4 Following the presentation the Chair welcomed comments from the members:

- The main concern expressed by members was where the funding for this kind of provision would come from. They were informed that no extra money was available, therefore it would come from existing funds and will be equitably available to local LSCs. He confirmed that the LSC had undertaken a fundamental review of funding recognises that some of the provision would lead to qualifications.
- Members felt it was important to get the strategy right from the beginning
- Many CVS organisations could enrich current provision of learning but did not because of the bureaucracy encountered and the burden of having to bid for the work. There would need to be a full/core cost recovery.

20.5 **Due to time restraints the following items were deferred to the next meeting**

- Report from Director of Equality and Diversity
- Minutes of Previous meeting and Action Log

2004/21 **2005 Meeting dates**

21.6 A short discussion followed on the way forward for the Committee and in particular the format of the meetings. It was agreed that members should take turns in presenting topics of interest to the Committee including:
- Impact of funding of the Skills strategy on E&D
- Changing demographics
- Impact of age on employability of post 16
- Data on age issues to inform work by NIACE

Patrick Grattan agreed to present to the Committee a paper on age issues and would liaise with the Director of Equality and Diversity before the next meeting.  
**Action:** Liaise with Kit Roberts over presentation to the committee  

21.7

It was also agreed that Kit Roberts would meet with the Chair to discuss details for the January overnight meeting and budget allowances.  
**Action:** Kit Roberts to liaise with Shirley Cramer

The meeting closed at 15:30