Minutes

Minutes of meeting
Date 6 July 2005
Subject Equality and Diversity Committee Meeting
Location Jolly Hotel St Ermin's London
Time 11:00 - 12:30
LSC office National Office
Publication intent Internal

Present Shirley Cramer, (SC) Jeremy Crook,(JC), David Barker (DB), Patrick Grattan (PG), Peter Lavender (PL), Hilary Wiseman (HW), Nicola Dandridge (ND), Judith Norrington (JN), Amir Kabal (AK), Alyson Malach (AM), Sally McEnhill(SMc), Caroline Slocock (CS).

In attendance Lisa Boardman for Nick O'Brien.

LSC staff Kit Roberts (KR), Alison Kakoura (AKa), Beverley Matthews (BM)

Apologies Apologies have been received from: Angela Mason, Yvonne Thompson, Sue Ashe

Item 1. Welcome and introductions
1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and congratulated members on a good turn out at the previous evening and morning sessions of first joint meeting of the three sub committees of the National Council.

1.2 Members were keen to feedback with comments on the previous evening’s speech by the Minister Phil Hope MP and on the agenda for change session held immediately before the start of the meeting.

1.3 The Chair agreed that there had been insufficient time for all members to be able to put all the questions they had to the Minister. She offered to forward any questions members still had directly to the Minister for his attention.

Action: SC and KR to arrange for any remaining questions to be forwarded to Phil Hope MP

1.4 The members went on to comment on the agenda for change initiative as explained to them during the morning’s presentation. It was felt generally that there was insufficient reference to equality and diversity in the presentation for the Committee members to feel confident that the LSC were embedding equality and diversity issues into the proposed prospectus. Members felt it was important to highlight the legal duty of the LSC to promote equality of opportunity in all its dealings, both internally, with stakeholders and providers as well as suppliers.
1.5 More specifically one member stressed the importance of defining the terminology of agenda for change and defining what is meant by terms such as ‘success’ and ‘engagement’, what exactly do they mean?

1.6 It was proposed that SC should send a letter on behalf of the Equality and Diversity Committee to the Chief Executive, outlining what would need to be included or improved in agenda for change for it to meet the requirements of the Equality and Diversity agenda. It was agreed that KR would draft the letter. Members noted that there was still time for the Committee to contribute into the agenda for change prospectus.

1.7 Members were asked to email SC and KR with suggestions for practical ideas for inclusion in such a letter.

**Action:** Members to email SC and KR with actions to embed E&D within agenda for change by 15 July

1.8 One member expressed her disappointment that equality and diversity was still not sufficiently mainstreamed within the LSC, as evidenced by the questions that were raised after the presentation. Members were reminded that they had only heard a very short presentation and could not assume that equality and diversity was not embedded within the details of the agenda.

1.9 On an unrelated point one member suggested that in future all the action points from the previous meeting should be flagged for attention at the beginning of the next meeting. The Chair was happy to do this as long as the actual minutes were not discussed in detail and reserved until the end of the meeting. Members agreed.

**Item 2. Research September 2005 – March 2006**

2.1 Members had been asked in the accompanying paper to come up with ways to spend the expected £50,000 allocation and to reach a consensus at the meeting today.

2.2 Members had a number of suggestion which were as follows:

   a. The commissioning of research in order to help the work of the committee, for example, Equality and Diversity Impact Measures.

   b. Very little research had been done into mental health issues and how they are considered within the Equality and Diversity agenda – there was a need for research into the statistics about mental health to inform the Committee. A significant number of committee members agreed with this.

   c. More progress was needed with work on Learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and sexual orientation issues.

   d. The committee did not have the information it needed to make strategic proposals which enabled it to use the money effectively – perhaps commissioning a consultant to do some research would be a good suggestion.

   e. The money could be used to make an impact assessment on agenda for change, which would also deliver on Equality and Diversity. Some members felt this should already have taken place.

2.3 Members were in general in agreement with the fact that whatever course of action was decided, it had to meet certain criteria:

   - It had to make a positive impact on the learner(s)
   - It had to be regarded as being mainstreamed
   - It should highlight the funding aspect of the agenda for change which states that “the funding follows the plan”
If research was decided to be the recipient of the funding the research should have good questions to ask and for that a good plan was needed as to what the priorities were.

The Chair asked for a few volunteers to help KR with the drawing up of a plan and ND, PL and JC offered to help.

**Action:** KR to liaise with ND, PL, JC to draw up a plan of action for utilising the available funding.

### Item 3. Learners with Learning difficulties and/or Disabilities Subgroup verbal update.

3.1 PL reported to the Committee on the 2nd meeting of the Learning Difficulty and/or Disability sub-committee, and the discussions that had taken place:
- The sub-committee had looked at the findings of the Disability Discrimination Act umbrella project, which had highlighted 10 key policy areas.
- There had also been a paper on regional Additional Learning Support Champions. The sub-committee was working on a paper on additional learning support issues which highlighted how important it was that people recognised the need for further support. The paper would be ready in August 2005.
- The review by Peter Little would be ready by October, and the Equality and Diversity Committee would receive copies as a matter of course. In addition the subgroup had requested that Peter should be appointed as a full member, to take forward the results and findings of the review.

**Decision:** Members of the Equality and Diversity Committee agreed that Peter Little should be appointed as a member of the Sub-committee to assist in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Review.
- SKILL had undertaken a series of consultations with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in order to seek imaginative ways to harness the views of such learners.
- David Barker had agreed to Chair the task group on Mental Health and would work at simplifying the structure. It was recognised that work would be needed with regard to implementation of the review.

3.2 PL then informed the Committee that he would be unavailable until October as he was taking a sabbatical term. Barbara Waters would lead in his absence and would be invited to attend the meeting in his place on 14 September.

**Action:** AK to invite BW to attend the next meeting of the Equality and Diversity committee on 14 September.

3.3 PL requested that members should keep Peter Little informed of any cuts in other provision that they become aware of.

3.4 The Chair invited questions and comments from the members:
- JN drew attention to the issues with level 1 entry learning.
- SMc raised the question of how valued regional staff were and asked about area partnerships. PL reported that they were patchy and not consistent around the regions.
- The Chair pointed out that the review has a wide remit and covered all ACL provision. JC confirmed that money was being spent on research and that this committee should act as a ‘critical friend’

3.5 JN suggested that members of this Committee would benefit from seeing the excellent papers from the subgroups and asked that these could be circulated to
members, as and when they became available. In addition, the Committee would value having an opportunity to see an early copy of the draft final report.

**Action:** A Kakoura to discuss with KR best ways to ensure timely circulation of papers

### Item 4. EDIMS Planning and Management

4.1 The Chair welcomed Beverley Matthews to the meeting and explained BM’s role as Planning and Performance Manager. Her job was to look at different projects and recognise where they fit into the National LSC Plan. She also looks at how EDIM measurement can be more effective and link into measures of success.

4.2 Beverley referred to her paper and advised members that she also worked closely with Measures of Success and Caroline Kempner, Director of Analysis and Management Information. She explained that whilst data required for an individual project was relatively easy to produce there were not enough resources to produce regular reports.

4.3 Her second point was that robust data on ethnicity and disabilities was difficult to obtain because of its nature and that staff development was required in order to help them get the required information from the learners.

4.4 KR referenced work undertaken in Merseyside in collating data on BME groups which could be used to devise a toolkit for best practice. Other examples of good practice were also reported.

4.5 JC contributed to the feedback by referencing the draft plan of action, which was drawn up at the meeting and was based on the need to have a more meaningful process. He offered to feedback to the Equality and Diversity Committee at each meeting on progress.

4.6 BM requested that in order to obtain useful data there was a need for members to identify exactly what the data was for and how it would be used. She confirmed that this would be a very important part of the work over the next few weeks.

4.7 CS congratulated BM on the paper and her work and noted the coherence between the groups in National Office.

### Item 5. Age report

5.1 PG reported that two responses had been received from committee members both making valid comments which would be incorporated into the Age document. He pointed out to members the huge overlap in gender, life stages and disabilities when dealing with issues of age.

5.2 ND advised that the task now was to produce a policy steer based on the report. For the moment she recommended that the 2 page summary should be circulated with a cover letter, to RDs and EDs and to HR.

**Action:** KR to liaise with Jon Gamble, Director of Adult Learning over circulation of the paper.

5.3 PG reported that the Management Information team had produced some interesting data and there was a solid objective to throw light on Post19 in cooperation with NIACE and the different types of activity. He said that the “full level II provision needs unravelling”

5.4 SC referenced her recent meeting with RD David Cragg and the important work being carried out in the West Midlands region. She advised members of the need to
keep abreast with the work being done and the need to keep all members informed of the work of the subgroups.

5.5 Members were advised that draft Government regulations regarding Age issues would be forthcoming the following week.

5.6 The results of the Staff Survey would be available in September 2005 and members requested that representatives from HR should be invited to attend the meeting

Action: A Kakoura to send invitation to Sally Stewart, the new Director of Human Resources (HR) for September meeting.

5.7

Item 6. Director Equality and Diversity Report

6.1 The Chair thanked KR for her report, which members noted. There were no comments other than the Chair’s expressed hope that more support for the Equality and Diversity Director would be finalised sooner rather than later.

Item 7. NEP Report Summary

7.1 The Committee noted the hard hitting recommendations in this summary document and were advised that KR would be having an internal meeting in the coming week to discuss ways to take the recommendations forward. KR said she would keep the members informed of the outcomes of the meeting.

7.2 KR emphasised the importance of taking this work forward and that in doing so it would be necessary for the Committee to be challenging and supportive of the LSC.

Item 8. Race Equality Scheme

8.1 Members referred to the launch at the previous session in the morning, of the RES2 and recognised that there was now a deeper level of understanding resulting in deeper engagement within the LSC in Equality issues. Members noted Mark Haysom’s promise to closely monitor the progress of the action plan as carried out by the EDs. Members recommended that there should be a regular item on the Committee’s future meeting agendas.


9.1 KR advised members that the views and comments of the Equality and Diversity Committee would be welcomed.

Action: Members to email comments on the draft handbook to Stuart Gardner by the end of July

Item 10. Minutes of last meeting

10.1 The minutes of the last meeting on 24 May were agreed as a true record of the discussions.

Matter arising

10.2 PG advised that the action point at (AK to check reference) was incorrect in that the action was for PL to tell David Hughes not vice versa.

10.3 HW was not convinced that Stonewall were convinced of the benefits of using the DVD from SHM ltd and said she would make further contact. KR reported that SHM would produce a similar multi-media flash piece for two other groups of learners, in addition to the one for GLBT. The LSC would launch this at the same time as the Learner Engagement CD-Rom.
Item 11. Any other business
11.1 There was no other business to report

Item 12. Date of next meeting
12.1 The Chair asked AK to circulate the dates for the meetings in 2006.

Action: AK to circulate 2006 meeting dates.