Date 14 September 2005
Subject Equality and Diversity Committee Meeting
Location LSC Offices London
Time 10:30
LSC office National Office
Publication intent Internal

Present Shirley Cramer (Chair), SC Jeremy Crook, JC, David Barker, DB, Nicola Dandridge, ND Patrick Grattan, PG, Amir Kabal, AK Sally McEnhill, SMc, Judith Norrington, JN, Hilary Wiseman, HW

In attendance Dr Marc Verlot, MV Anne Madden AM (for Caroline Slocock)

LSC staff Kit Roberts, KR Caroline Neville, CN Beverley Burgess, BB

Apologies Apologies were received from: Alyson Malach, Peter Lavender, Angela Mason, Lisa Boardman (on behalf of Nick O’Brien) and Sue Ashe.

Item 1. Welcome and introductions
1.1 The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and apologies were noted.
1.2 The Chair talked briefly about the achievements of the Committee over the past year and how the context in which the Committee was working had now changed. The Equality and Diversity Committee now had a much higher profile than this time last year and its work had become a priority area for the LSC. She thanked all members for their hard work in pushing forward the agenda and also for the work done in the sub-groups.

Item 2. Agenda item 6 - Allocation of Equality and Diversity Budget
2.1 This item was brought forward to accommodate the early departure of one of the members. AK referred to the Committee paper EDC 15/2005, paragraph 3ii. He thanked the members for allocating the task of Chairing a review of the LSC relationship with Muslim Communities to him.
2.2 Members were invited to suggest how the work and research should be taken forward:
• SMc raised the question of how the review group would identify who Muslims were. She highlighted the fact that people often confused race with religion and that the review group should be very clear about the differences. People tended to make assumptions about people’s religion based on their race, which was wrong.

• PG said that it would be worthwhile to identify whether being Muslim affected educational performance and if it did, to what extent, and what were the defining characteristics of being a Muslim. He also pointed out that the study should also look at how patterns of employment reflected learning and training in Muslim communities.

• It was important to explain in practical terms how Colleges were going to collate the statistics if individuals chose not to give the information freely. Members all agreed that it was a very complex issue which needed in depth discussion at the sub-group level.

• The majority of members felt that the suggested £20,000 budget for this remit was not enough and that this was potentially a massive project. It was felt that a greater amount of £50,000 would help to define the picture to make way for more in depth work, but that the money should not come from the equality and diversity budget. Members agreed to commit £20,000 to the work of this review.

• JC offered to join AK on the review group, and agreement to find a further member at a later date.

• Members agreed that the Review group would report back to the Committee at the November meeting and that any reports on Muslim Communities that members came across which would be helpful to the Review Group should be emailed to KR or AK.

**Action:** Members to send reports to Amir Kabal or Kit Roberts if available.

**Item 3. Action points from previous meeting**

3.1 The Chair referred to the action log for matters arising from the previous meeting.

**HR invitation to November meeting**

3.2 The Chair reported that Sally Stewart, the newly appointed head of HR in the LSC, had confirmed her intention to attend the November meeting of the Committee. In preparation for which, and to make best use of the committee’s time, she had requested that members send any questions they had regarding Equality and Diversity within *agenda for change* to KR.

**Action:** Members to send any questions for Sally Stewart to KR by end of October

**Equality and Diversity Website**

3.3 This item was referred to later on the agenda for a more detailed report.
3.4 KR reported that the promised DVD produced by SHM would be available from October and would be circulated to members once copies had been received.

Item 4. Skills Strategy – Regional perspective

4.1 Jacqui Henderson, Regional Director for London was invited to speak to the Committee on the Equality and Diversity work underway in the London Region.

4.2 Jacqui gave an overview of the diversity of the population in the London area and spoke of the current challenges for the LSC and the work that still needs to be done. She gave the members a number of key headline facts:

- Population of 7.4m
- Highest number of 25 – 35 year olds in the country
- 12% of the population is aged 65+
- The greatest anticipated growth of young people by 2011, 8.5%
- 35% of the population was born outside the UK
- 300 languages spoken in schools
- 300,000 speakers of ESOL
- communities contain the wealthiest and the poorest people in the UK
- 20% of the population have a disability of which only 11% are in work
- 38% of the children living in London live in poverty

4.3 She emphasised that despite success working on a number of Equality and Diversity issues, there was still a lot of work to do and the London LSCs had only just scratched the surface. She identified two main issues running through the challenges – the high number of people requiring ESOL provision and the difficulty in having enough of the right data in order to target the funding. She went on to describe some of the ways in which the London region was meeting the challenges of such a diverse region.

4.4 Members were invited to comment on the work of the London Central LSC with regard to Equality and Diversity.

4.5 SMc expressed her growing concern that the Government seemed to be concentrating too much on 16-19 provision leaving shortfalls elsewhere and that it was not was not fully aware of the real situation. The Committee was assured that the Department was indeed aware of the facts, but that policies were moving forward at a quick pace.

4.6 AK recognised the issues with ESOL, but stated that similar situations existed elsewhere in England and that good practice should be shared.

4.7 JN pointed out that the recent success rates for Skills for Life had included GCSE passes in English by young people and should not therefore be taken into account for Adult Basic Skills targets.

4.8 PG remarked that there were many differences between inner and Outer London areas and that LSDA was responsible for leading on Equality and...
Diversity directives. He suggested that their representatives should be invited to the E&D Committee meetings.

4.9 The Chair concluded by thanking Jacqui for her presentation and wished her well in her imminent retirement.

**Item 5. LLDD Strategic Review**

5.1 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Beverley Burgess, LSC Policy Manager for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, who had written the review paper providing an update on the LSC's review of its funding and planning of provision for learners with LDD.

5.2 Beverley Burgess (BB) outlined the key points of the paper and explained how the review had come about. She confirmed that there had been consultations with Andrew Foster and Bill Rammel and that the remit of the group was to make recommendations to the National Council on how the LSC needs to plan and fund provision for learners with LDD.

5.3 Caroline Neville (CN) confirmed that the work had taken the best part of a year and had been steered by an expert group of people both internal and external to the LSC.

5.4 All members agreed that it was a very clear and well written paper, one member commenting it had been the best paper he had read on this Committee. Members were strongly supportive of the main messages in the report and went on to make individual comments as follows:

5.5 With regard to collaborative funding packages for learners with other key partner agencies such as NHS, it was imperative to move this agenda forwards. There was a need to identify what exactly the LSC needed to fund and define what is “care” and what is “education”.

5.6 One member highlighted issues with what was referred to as “recycling” of learners; some colleges have become home from home for some learners in that they do not have the same criteria for progression applied to them as for other learners. It was important for learners with LDD to have the same employability expectations as other learners ie. They were not jumping sideways from course to course instead of making the progress to employment albeit in some cases more slowly than other learners.

5.7 The point was raised that in terms of quality, the issue was the difference in people’s perception of quality which was variable.

5.8 The issue of the expertise of the staff delivering the provision and their training and development was raised. The task of training the workforce should not be underestimated.

5.9 The importance of getting the level 1 provision right was raised as an issue.

5.10 Members welcomed the development of Regional and local aspects of provision for learners with LDD and felt it would lead to more responsibility being taken at local/regional levels and more engagement with other agencies.

5.11 One of the barriers to making progress with issues relating to Learners with LDD has been a lack of reliable Management Information Data – the
development of regional capacity would make it easier for other agencies to get involved in collaborative funding and provision at local levels.

5.12 It was pointed out that the Children’s Act 2004 states that provision should come about through “collaborative working and funding”

5.13 Members were assured that on a National Level the point about joint planning and shared responsibility was being strongly made to Government, and that although there would not be a quick fix of issues, the recommendations arising from the Review would be put forward in a spirit of openness and desire to get it right.

Item 6. Chairman’s Update

6.1 The Chair welcomed the Chairman of the LSC Chris Banks and invited him to speak to the Committee about recent progress in a number of areas of interest to the Equality and Diversity Committee. CB reported that he had sent a letter to the Minister, Bill Rammell, commending the progress made by the Committee so far. He highlighted two main areas of work.

6.2 Women into Work – CB reported that a final report was due out in January, which would reinforce the closing pay gap between men and women in work. He would ensure that the recommendations in the report reflected the Equality and Diversity Committee’s support.

6.3 Review of local Council composition - the review chaired by Jeremy Crook on the make up of local Councils in reflecting the diversity of the local community they serve, and how the Equality and Diversity Committee is well placed to make recommendations

6.4 CB Highlighted two outstanding pieces of work, The Race Equality Scheme and the Learners with Learning Difficulties and /or Disabilities Review, both of which indicate the openness of the Executive and its willingness to share information.

6.5 Members expressed concerns about the Government’s funding priorities, which seemed to be hitting the most disadvantaged people and fully endorsed the need to encourage employers to fund more training, and so improve their profitability.

6.6 There was general concern from members that the Government was not hearing the messages from the front line about the unintended outcomes of its funding policies. CB explained how the Equality and Diversity Committee was in a good position to advise Ministers

6.7 PG felt that the Women into Work Commission report had not gone far enough to differentiate between women of different ages but had considered them all as one group.

6.8 Members suggested that stronger links should be made to the ALC and YPLC Committees and that the Chairs of the Committees should be invited to attend the others’ meetings.

6.9 The member from the Equal Opportunities Commission commented that the EOC would welcome much more involvement in the LSC in an advisory capacity and hoped to be able to contribute more to discussions. She added
that whilst CB was on the Commission as an individual, his opinion was also sought in his capacity as Chairman of the LSC.

6.10 CB said he would take the members’ comments back to the WiWC and thanked the Committee for the invitation to listen to their thoughts.

**Item 7. Allocation of budget**

7.1 Members returned to the Paper EDC 15/2005 and discussed the proposals in the paper. It was agreed that the sum of £10,000 should be used to secure the secondment of a local office employee to take forward the work on Data in relation to EDIMS. It was also agreed that a further sum of £10,000 should be allocated to this work if required.

**Item 8. Age Report**

8.1 PG gave a brief update of the work of the Age subgroup. He reported that the Age Survey was complete, was an excellent document and agreed to circulate to other members after the meeting.

**Action:** Patrick Grattan to send Age Survey to A Kakoura for circulation to members.

8.2 He commented once more on the considerable overlap of equality issues discussed in the report and the importance of ensuring that all “sides” talk to each other. The difficulty in dealing with taking work forward was that as soon as the data came out the strategy changed. He reported that there was tension regarding the Adult Education funding issues.

**Item 9. Team Website**

9.1 A Kakoura advised the Committee that an application to the IS services team for a dedicated website had been sent and permissions would be granted very shortly. As the service was new, there would be no budget implications for the Equality and Diversity Committee or support team for the setting up of the site. Kit Roberts and Alison Kakoura would be respectively the Site Owner and Site Administrator.

9.2 It was expected that any questions would be dealt with as and when the site was up and running.

**Item 10. Report of the Director of Equality and Diversity**

10.1 Members noted the information in the report and make requests for further papers they would like to see in the following Committee meetings.

10.2 AM, attending from the EOC, asked for an update on the EOC general formal Investigation into gender segregation as the recommendations would need to be taken forward in the New Year. She felt that the Equality and Diversity Committee should have had more input into the discussions.

10.3 Members suggested other items which they would like to see on future agendas:

- Issues about Adult apprenticeships
- More substantive report on how the LSC is dealing with recommendations
- Gender and Ethnicity report

10.4 The Director for Learning explained that there was a lot of work going on in the LSC around Equality and Diversity issues which needed to be reported back to this Committee.

10.5 AM offered to send the “Evaluation of Modern Apprenticeships” report to Committee members for information

**Action: A Madden to forward the Apprenticeships report for circulation.**

**Item 11. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**

11.1 Members were thanked for their comments on the Faith Handbook.

11.2 A short discussion took place on the need for the Equality and Diversity subgroups to have a more integrated approach to interacting with the Committee. There was much work in hand which the Equality and Diversity Committee was unaware of.

**Item 12. Any Other Business**

12.1 PG brought to members’ attention the *National Employer Skills Survey* which contained massive amounts of data on what the public sector spends, and in particular what kind development training is funded.

12.2 J Crook highlighted the work carried out by the Commission for Racial Equality, and invited the member present, Dr Marc Verlot, to give a brief outline of the work he is involved in. Dr Verlot offered to send a synopsis of the current projects for posting on the website.

**Action: A Kakoura to contact MV once website is operational.**

12.3 It was pointed out that the new team website would be an effective method of circulating information to members to inform them of work going on in the subgroups.

**Item 13. Date of next Meeting**

13.1 The date of the next meeting of the Equality and Diversity committee will be Tuesday 29 November 2005 and will take place at Grosvenor Gardens, London.