Minutes of meeting
E&D Committee
Date
11 January 2005
Subject
Equality and Diversity Meeting
Location
Hesperia Hotel, Victoria London
Time
13:00
LSC office
National Office (London)
Publication intent
Internal

Present

Apologies
Apologies were received from: Nicola Dandridge, Judith Norrington, Angela Mason, Caroline Slocock, Nick O'Brien, Nick Johnson, Yvonne Thompson, Susan Pember, Alison Kakoura (Clerk).

Item 1. Welcome and introductions
1.1 Paul Turner agreed to take minuted notes of the meeting in the absence of the clerk.
1.2 The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all present and thanking them and absent committee members for giving up their time to attend the evening and morning seminars preceding this meeting. She spoke positively about the importance of the discussions that had taken place and recorded her thanks to SHM for their involvement in the programme.
1.3 The Chair stressed the importance of sub committees. After some discussion it was recommended that either the Chair or a representative of the ALC and YPLC Committees should be invited to attend future meetings of the Equality and Diversity Committee. The Chair advised the Committee that she had been invited to attend the YPLC Committee meeting in February. It was also agreed that Jeremy Crook would attend the meeting of the sub-committee on Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.
1.4 Peter Lavender agreed with the important work of sub-groups but raised the question of resources for the subsequent administration. Members discussed this issue and suggested that organisations represented around the table could provide the administration support if the LSC was able to resource this.
1.5 The Chair suggested that the Committee needed to look at resource options on a case by case basis but agreed the need to determine the protocol and process and to secure appropriate resourcing and funding.

Action: Shirley Cramer to discuss with Caroline Neville
1.6 Earlier discussion identified consideration of the National Strategy and members agreed to provide comments in a week’s time. It was agreed to discuss the way forward at the next meeting.

1.7 Members discussed the need to set up an email group to allow an exchange of views and communications in between meetings

Action: K Roberts to liaise with Communications to set up email group.

Action: A Kakoura to include item on National Strategy at next meeting

Item 2. Equality and Diversity Annual Report

2.1 The Chair recalled that this was the third such report and was continually evolving. Production of it had been outsourced but advised and steered by Kit Roberts and the LSC. She asked members for their views on the future format and priorities.

2.2 The DfES representative clarified the status of the report. It would be published and then copied to the Secretary of State who had traditionally responded. The Director of Learning reminded the members that this would be their last opportunity to comment.

2.3 Members comments included:

- the need for caution in what was said about the Equality and Diversity Committee in the report in respect of the public’s perception of the Committee’s role and public expectations,
- the report needed to build on the outcomes of facilitated discussions,
- future reports should not perpetuate the deficit model and should include analyses of demographic information,
- the specific impact of Equality and Diversity on each aspect of the report needed to be emphasised,
- the language needed to be clearer and sharper in some parts of the report, and
- the report was expected to say what was done last year what impact the activity had had and what the priorities for next year were. The case studies were good but more illustration of the outcomes was necessary,

2.4 The Director for Equality and Diversity confirmed that the intended audience of the report included providers, key stakeholders/partners, the Government, regional and local LLSCs. She explained that there was so much activity “going on” it was difficult to do credit to all of it within a single report.

2.5 It was suggested that a way forward might be to report each time on specific aspects of Equality and Diversity such as race, gender etc. The E&D Committee recognised that some of the preceeding discussions at the residential event could inform the E&D Committee part of the report.

Action: Members agreed to invite Maurice Biriotti to prepare a first draft for the Chair, based on earlier discussions.

2.6 Members agreed to send further comments to Kit Roberts before Monday 17 January

Action: All members to send further comments to Kit Roberts by 17 January 2005

Action: K Roberts to check the data and benchmark interpretation in appendix 2 page 47
Item 3. Women into Work Commission

3.1 The Chair advised the members that the LSC Chairman, Chris Banks, was on the Women into Work Commission. He had been invited to do a presentation in February/March on the Role/pattern of training as an influence on women and work.

3.2 The LSC Chairman had highlighted the importance of the E&D Committee in advising him and the LSC as a whole on how to deliver the points above.

3.3 The Chair asked whether the Committee members were happy to receive communications electronically for comment and input into a proposed briefing for the Chairman.

   Action: Alison Kakoura to circulate electronic copies of the presentation and briefings to the committee

3.4 The Director for Learning raised the need for the Committee to identify who in the LSC the appropriate lead person may be, for example Stephen Gardner or David Cragg, rather than the Director for Equality and Diversity.

Item 4. Age Diversity

4.1 The item was introduced by the member from Third Age Employment Network. He reminded members that he had raised the issues of Age discrimination at the previous meeting. He advised the Committee that a questionnaire had been sent to every local LLSC with regard to age profiles and the relative priority of the age issues on their agendas.

4.2 He suggested that a short term working group should be set up to address the Age issues and presented the Committee, with a handout of a draft remit for the working group. He requested that it should be circulated to members and potentially interested individuals within the LSC and an attempt made to identify/secure resources in the form of admin support from National Office.

4.3 The Chair stressed the need for the LSC to gear itself up to the importance of legislation regarding Age Discrimination. The question was raised of how much age related issues impacted on training, workforce patterns and HR strategies.

4.4 The Committee was advised that Age in itself was not an issue, but that age was a factor impacting on other equality and diversity issues such as age/gender, age/gender/race etc. It was necessary to recognise the dependencies of the two sides of the equation and to develop a real understanding of the implications of, for example: how to re-engage older learners, how to change the user profile of the economy, and the effect on meeting National targets etc.

4.5 Members were generally agreed that changing demographics was a crucial factor in the demand led post-16 sector.

4.6 One member questioned whether the remit of the proposed working group had the correct emphasis. She suggested that the bias should be on learning by older workers that has economic payback for the workforce, and not personal/lifelong learning, which the LSC might not wish to regard as a priority for its tight funds.

4.7 The Chair brought the discussion to a close and invited the Director of Learning to assist the member representing the Third Age Employment Network in identifying relevant staff in the LSC to advise and support the working group. The Director of Learning said she would advise the LSC Director of Skills and Adult Learning, Jon Gamble, to expect contact from Patrick Grattan.

   Action: Caroline Neville to inform David Way that Patrick Gratton would contact him directly about this area of work.
Item 5. Learning Difficulty and/or Disability

5.1 The member from NIACE presented a verbal report on activity around Learning Difficulty and/or Disability. He informed the members that he was currently finalising discussions with the LSC on the membership.

5.2 The first meeting of this group would be meeting in February or March and the agenda would focus on the priorities set out by the LSC, and ‘unfinished’ business carried over from the previous Forum on Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities. Feedback from the group would come to the E&D Committee meeting in March.

5.3 Members welcomed the reference to mental health in the DfES Remit letter and the Annual Statement of Priorities. It would be an important aspect of the sub-committee’s forward work plan. The group would feedback to both the Equality and Diversity Committee on specific Learning Difficulties and/or Disability matters. It would draw on emerging findings and recommendations of Peter Little’s review of funding and provision for Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.

5.4 The member from BTEG suggested that the group could link into the work his organisation was carrying out regarding disability, welfare and work.

Item 6. Terms of Reference

6.1 The Committee agreed to accept the final draft of the Terms of Reference.

Item 7. Director of Equality and Diversity report

7.1 This was a deferred item from the previous meeting on 24 November 2004 but contained further updates since that date.

7.2 Members present made the following comments and suggestions

- Members noted the NAO report and the emphasis on the need for good quality information and targets.
- The LSC Appointments Committee had asked for a review of the appointments of appropriate representation to the committee. The Committee was asked whether there was any good practice that could be referred to, drawing on the experiences in their organisations.
- The representative from HSBC commented that some of the sector’s senior women had wished to take up public appointments but did not know where to look for the advertised vacancies.
- Another member of the Committee confirmed that the CEHR Bill (Commission for Equality and Human Rights) had not been laid before parliament and was unlikely to be approved before the (anticipated) general election.
- It was confirmed that members of the Committee would receive a copy of the published report of the LSC RES. Kit Roberts confirmed that due to difficulties over timing, the outcome of the first year of the LSC RES was not published.
- Kit Roberts confirmed the Review of EDIMS had not commenced yet, due to time constraints. She hoped to commence her review in the next two months.

Item 8. Minutes of last meeting

8.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record and action points noted.
Item 9. Any other business

9.1 Kit Roberts informed the Committee that work was progressing on identifying and removing barriers to increasing the diversity of the local Learning and Skills Councils. She briefly referred to the proposed work, described below, which the Committee endorsed and asked to be kept informed of the progress.

Gender and Ethnic Balance on Learning and Skills Councils

9.2 At the 24 November Appointments Committee meeting, the subject of the composition of Local Learning and Skills Councils was discussed; specifically why it was that some LLSCs are able to achieve an appropriate balance whilst others are not. Achieving an appropriate balance for the National Council also continues to be an issue.

9.3 It was suggested that the DfES, in conjunction with the LSC, might commission a piece of work about identifying and sharing good practice (including motivational factors) as well as identifying related barriers and how these have been/might be overcome.

9.4 Subsequent discussions have suggested that the following approach might be appropriate:
   - **Phase one : Stocktake**
   - Identification of a number of local LSCs that have secured a representative balance of Council members.
   - Ditto re those where achieving a representative balance appears to be a problem.
   - Review of procedures, networks, etc used to raise awareness of, advertise and secure applications for Council membership;
   - Review of selection and appointment procedures,
   - **Phase two : Dissemination of findings and development of networks**
   - Through for example, a series of regional “workshop/dinner” events, facilitated by a local/national “luminary” and/or “expert”;
   - Such events would be designed to further raise awareness of the LSC, its role and that of Council members and thus encourage/expand the range of potential applicants.

9.5 DfES/LSC officials will consider the resource implications of these proposals and will identify/secure the services of suitable individuals/organisations to undertake the review and/or facilitate dissemination.

Remit for working Group on Age

9.6 The member from the Third Age Employment Network circulated the following remit of the Working Group on Age for members' information.
   a. Increase understanding of demographic change and its impact on demand and need for learning and skills both before and after Pension Age.
   b. Increase understanding of current changes in the pattern of education, working life, family life and retirement and their impact on lifelong learning and the labour market/skills supply.
   c. Identify the Management Information necessary to understand and communicate across the LSC what is happening and how the LSC might respond.
d. Clarify and explain the legal commitments of the LSC as legislation on age discrimination is introduced.

e. Influence mainstream development of work-based learning programmes, adult apprenticeships, regional skills partnerships, new Deal for Skills, Adult Information and Advice programmes and their delivery to adults in mid and later life.

f. Identify performance targets, which show the success of the LSC and partners in responding to demographic change and age legislation, and monitor the impact of the funding regime on age diversity alongside, gender, race and disability.

**Item 10. Date of next meeting**

10.1 The next meeting of the Committee will take place on 15 March 2005, at The LSC Offices, 8-10 Grosvenor Gardens, London, from 10:30 am until 3:30 pm. Refreshments will be available from 10 am.