



Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on 18 March 2024 at 10:00
Zoom Meeting

- Present:** Prof Sir Anton Muscatelli (Convener), Mrs Christine Barr, Dr Katie Farrell, Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Ms Kirsteen Fraser, Ms Hailie Pentleton-Owens, Mr Tom Rice (vice Mrs Emma Gilmartin)
- Apologies:** Mr Tony Anderson, Prof Muffy Calder, Prof Sara Carter, Dr David Duncan, Mrs Emma Gilmartin, Ms Uzma Khan, Prof Iain McInnes, Miss Rachel Sandison
- Attending:** Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk), Dr Nighet Riaz

Welcome and Apologies

The Convener welcomed members and noted this was K Farrell's first EDSC meeting as the Interim Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). He also noted Tom Rice, Director of Marketing & Communications, joined the Committee in place of E Gilmartin, who is now on maternity leave. The Convener acknowledged the apologies received, noting the meeting was quorate.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting – EDSC/20231206/Minutes 1.0

The minutes were approved.

2. Matters arising – Paper 1

K Farrell provided relevant information and updates on the following items:

Action 1 – SFC's 'Persistent Inequalities' and National Equality Outcomes (NEOs)

K Farrell will liaise with Gregor Caldwell, Executive Director of Finance, and the Financial Accounting Team on whether it is appropriate for them to attend the SFC and EHRC's first sectoral event in May, where SFC will communicate on the NEOs measurement framework, provide reporting guidance and to understand the sector's support requirements in order to deliver the desired outcomes of the NEOs.

ACTION: EDU

Action 2 - Student Wellbeing Framework Review – West Report

Neil Bowering will attend the next EDSC meeting to provide an update from the Student Support & Wellbeing Framework Implementation Group.

Action 4 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Governance

K Farrell confirmed this item will be discussed later in this meeting.

Action 5 – Discussion on the IHRA 'Definition' of Antisemitism

K Farrell reported both sub-actions had been actioned and M Fischbacher-Smith will provide an update on under Any Other Business later in the meeting.

Action 6 - Domestic Violence & Abuse (DV&A) Discussion

K Farrell confirmed the Policy Review Group will lead on developing policy/guidance on DV&A. Once complete, this will be reviewed by the Gender Equality Group and then EDSC.

ACTION: EDU

K Farrell confirmed she would update H Pentleton-Owens on progress made in reviewing and streamlining the respective staff and student reporting systems and would further update EDSC at the next meeting.

ACTION: EDU

3. Together Against GBV Campaign Update

T Rice advised the [campaign webpages](#) have been updated to include a video summary of the activities held during November's 16 Days of Activism. Members noted the campaign implementation group will continue to meet and drive the campaign forward, to ensure the impact is felt in staff and student's lived experiences. T Rice noted work continues to rationalise the GBV support information web content. He advised future student-focused campaign outputs will concentrate on consent and reinforcing positive behaviours, while for staff, this will look at addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. Members also welcomed the intention to capture the new student audience and to spread activities, events and communications across the new academic year.

K Farrell highlighted that, although not all GBV related, the recent increased reporting of incidents & concerns shows both the Together Against Racism and GBV campaigns have raised awareness of the reporting routes and empowered people to seek support. H Pentleton-Owens reported a similar increase in student reports, along with more engagement with the GBV counsellor and other SRC support services.

K Fraser observed, with the increased visibility of reporting routes, the University must ensure reports are dealt with effectively, to meet the expectations which have been raised by the campaigns.

The Convener asked that GEG and EDSC receive information on reporting and case management timescales to ensure the University is meeting its commitments in the campaign and that sufficient resources are in place to deal with the increased workload.

ACTION: EDU

4. Student Related Items

H Pentleton-Owens confirmed all student related items had already been raised through the Equality Groups.

5. Equality Champions Updates**5.1 Age**

K Farrell confirmed there was nothing to report in this area.

5.2 Sanctuary

K Farrell relayed the update R Sandison provided prior to the meeting.

- The Ukrainian student society led a vigil on the second anniversary of the war in Ukraine. Consul Generals from Ukraine, Germany and Poland were in attendance and the main building was lit up in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. R Sandison, as Sanctuary Champion, attended and spoke at the vigil alongside the University Chaplain and others. The University contributed case studies in support of the #TwinforHope UK-Ukraine twinning initiative.
- The new Sanctuary Coordinator, who has experience of allocating our Sanctuary scholarships, working

across the community and with NGOs to support forcibly displaced migrants, will take up their role in April.

- Plans for this year's Refugee Week (17-23 June) will include a number of events and initiatives, including a vigil to commemorate the lives lost during the ongoing Middle East conflict and hopefully a tree-planting event, being arranged by Professor Alison Phipps, the UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Art (RILA).
- R Sandison met with colleagues from UCU to discuss the University's ongoing response to the Middle East conflict, including our expanded commitments to the Council for At Risk Academics (CARA).
- Initial discussions were held with the University of Edinburgh to explore possible collaborative activities in the sphere of Sanctuary; this may include a new Fellowship scheme.
- The University will host the launch of the Scottish Government's new Refugee Strategy, likely to be in early July. As part of the event, a dinner with refugee leaders and representatives from UNESCO and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will be held.
- Named Sanctuary Scholarships are being explored and work is ongoing to formalise the case to expand these scholarships through post-campaign fundraising priority setting.

Members welcomed the breadth of activity in this area. The Convener confirmed the University has renewed the twinning with the two Ukrainian universities. He also highlighted the ongoing work in trying to support those staff and students affected by the crisis in Gaza.

K Fraser called for clear guidance/signposting for staff trying to assist students whose access to financial support has been affected by such conflicts.

ACTION: EDU/External Relations

5.3 Race

K Farrell advised, as part of the University-wide LGBT History Month celebrations, the Global Majority Network co-hosted an event with the LGBTQ+ Staff Network. The event was the first event to look at intersecting identities, covering areas of faith and sexuality as well as masculinity.

K Farrell highlighted the recent message from U Khan, as Race Equality Champion, encouraging line managers to facilitate attendance at the Global Majority Network meetings/events and thanked members for cascading this down through their local management structures.

She also advised PI&A, Recruitment and P&OD Systems colleagues have produced more detailed analysis of colleague recruitment data by ethnicity. She confirmed high level results have been shared with P&OD Executive and will be discussed at P&OD Committee, following which College and University Services level data will be shared, to facilitate local action planning and ownership.

K Farrell reported KMPG have recently completed their audit of the implementation of the Understanding Racism, Transforming University Culture (URTUC) Action Plan. This will be discussed with the Race Equality Group in April, along with the recently updated URTUC Action Plan, to consider recommendations for future actions.

5.4 Religion and Belief

K Farrell noted I McInnes, as Religion & Belief Champion, took part in the panel discussion at the earlier mentioned LGBT History Month event in February. He also worked with the University Chaplaincy to

facilitate discussions on scripture and gender equality for a webinar to celebrate International Women's Day.

5.5 Gender (Sex)

K Farrell advised, in light of T Rice's earlier GBV update, there was no further items to update on from the Gender Equality Group but noted the many events held across the University to mark International Women's Day (IWD). The Convener reported he had participated in a well-attended event, organised by the Adam Smith Business School's Prof Kat Riach, on mental health and the menopause, looking at how to share best practice. He noted the panel included representatives from the NHS, Scottish Government, BT. The Convener congratulated all those involved in organising IWD events across the University.

5.6 Disability

C Barr reported Dr Lydia Bach joined the recent Disability Equality Group (DEG) meeting to update on the extensive activities, as part of the College of Science and Engineering's HESTIA (Honouring Everyone's Strengths Through initiatives and Actions) initiative during December's UK Disability History Month.

C Barr updated members on the positive progress made in addressing many of the legacy Estates-related issues and in supporting both students and colleagues. To continue this progress, an Estates sub-group, chaired by Peter Haggarty, Executive Director of Estates, will be established; the group will report to DEG.

The Convener welcomed the establishment of new Estates-focussed sub-group and hoped this would ensure any issues are addressed quickly and future accessibility improvements are made proactively.

Members noted Admissions and Disability Services have worked to improve data feeds to allow all applicants to declare a disability and have a study support conversation in advance of registration. C Barr noted this forms part of the work to meet the SFC Guidance which requires all universities to make their application process more accessible.

Members also noted Student Support and Wellbeing are reviewing the role Disability Coordinator Roles within Schools and the processes around disseminating students' study support needs. C Barr noted the College of Arts and Humanities were trialling a new Disability Service Business Partner role.

C Barr highlighted DEG also considered the Disability related results from the Employee Engagement Survey results. She confirmed focus groups will be held to try to establish how to improve the experiences of disabled and neurodivergent colleagues.

K Fraser welcomed the University's move to engage line managers in mandatory reasonable adjustments/disability awareness training which will hopefully improve understanding, resulting in better support for their disabled and neurodivergent colleagues.

5.7 LGBT+

M Fischbacher-Smith reminded members that the University had renewed its annual Diversity Champions membership with Stonewall in January 2024. The LGBT+ Equality Group members agreed this should be renewed again in January 2025, to allow for a fuller consultation to take place on any future renewals. She confirmed the University would only not renew if a positive alternative had already been agreed.

M Fischbacher-Smith then highlighted the extensive programme of events hosted by Schools, the SRC, and both staff and student societies throughout February's LGBT History Month.

Members heard the LGBT Equality Group also reviewed results from the Employee Engagement Survey and noted that colleagues appear to be more comfortable declaring in a survey than in the University's People XD system, as survey declarations rates are higher. M Fischbacher-Smith also highlighted those who declared as bi-sexual and 'other sexual orientation' responded less favourably than the overall University population; this may need to be investigated to understand what concerns these groups have.

5.8 Mental Health

K Farrell advised she had no update to provide in this area.

6. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Governance**

K Farrell reminded members of the previous stakeholder engagement and EDSC's discussions and suggestions on the review process. She highlighted the previous Head of EDI, M Taylor had led and completed this project prior to leaving the University in February.

Members noted stakeholder feedback included calls for more visibility of EDI management information to better inform local initiatives, student representation on College-level committees, College representatives on Equality Groups and better links between College EDI leads and EDSC.

K Farrell shared the proposed new EDI Architecture and talked through the changes. These include:

- Biannual meetings between EDU and the SRC Sabbatical Officers and Welfare Officers
- Biannual meetings between EDU and College EDI Committee Chairs.
- College representatives on Equality Groups
- College EDI Leads to be linked with EDSC

K Farrell shared further detail of the specific actions required for each of the Equality Groups, the College EDI Committees, EDSC and EDU. In response to the Convener's question, K Farrell confirmed she would liaise with D Duncan and U Khan to consider who would be most appropriate to be involved from the two specific groups involved in EDI work within University Services.

ACTION: EDU

The Convener and other members fully endorsed the inclusion of College EDI leads as full members on EDSC, stating this would hopefully address the current lack of visibility and build awareness of the extent of work being discussed at EDSC, ensuring clear messaging was cascaded. K Fraser stated she hoped these changes would help spread the collective responsibility to embed EDI work across the whole University community.

Members discussed how best to support both College EDI representatives and EDU to disseminate such information. K Farrell confirmed this will form part of the initial discussions with the EDI Committee Chairs. T Rice stated Communications would support EDU to initially disseminate the outcome of the review but also in raising awareness of the EDI work in PO&D, Equality Groups and the Champions.

ACTION: EDU

C Barr noted the Court Effectiveness Review may result in the reinstatement of a Court representative on EDSC.

The Convener suggested, with the addition of new members, it may be more appropriate for the first EDSC meeting each academic year to be held in-person.

ACTION: EDU

7. Any Other Business

7.1 IHRA Working Group update

M Fischbacher-Smith reported the Remit and Membership of the working group will be finalised soon. She noting UCUG had made specific requests, while the other Trade Unions only asked that the process be open and transparent. M Fischbacher-Smith confirmed she wished to discuss these requests further with the Convener and C Barr, before being able to hold the first meeting of the Working Group. She also stated it was important to have representation from the Jewish Students' Society (JSoc) and the Glasgow University Muslim Students' Association (GUMSA) and the SRC as part of the Working Group membership.

The Convener reminded members that EDSC had made the original decision to adopt the IHRA definition and stressed the need for the Working Group's recommendations to be brought back to EDSC for further discussion and a final decision made. The Convener emphasised that, as with all equality issues, the views of any minority affected would be paramount in any final decision. In this case, the views of JSoc and Jewish staff in the University would play a major role in any discussion of the issues covered in the IHRA definition. The Convener would discuss this issue further with M Fischbacher-Smith and other members of Senior Management Group (SMG) once they had an opportunity to seek the views of JSoc and Jewish staff in the University.

ACTION: Convener; M Fischbacher-Smith

No other items of business were raised.

Date of Next Meeting: 5 June 2024 at 10:00 – 12:00