

Report of the Director of Resources and Housing

Report to Executive Board

Date: 13 December 2017

Subject: Leeds City Council workforce- inclusion and diversity training

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Best Council Plan sets out the vision for Leeds to be the best city in the UK: one that is compassionate with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces the inequalities that still exist.
2. As one of the largest employers in the City, the council is working hard with its own workforce to create a work place culture that is truly inclusive. We have a legal duty to eliminate any forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
3. One of our top priorities is to improve Inclusion and Diversity Training, and this report outlines our approach for tackling this. This has been identified as a need in external benchmarking assessments such as Stonewall.
4. There are real business benefits to be gained from being inclusive, not just in terms of unlocking and maximising our own talent, but also through increased customer trust and confidence and improved service delivery and outcomes

Recommendations

5. Executive Board to approve the refresh of the council's Inclusion and Diversity training as outlined, for a Spring 2018 relaunch.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out a framework for refreshing and improving the Inclusion and Diversity training offer for Leeds City Council staff.
- 1.2 This sits as part of the Council's wider work to build a more inclusive workplace, details of which are included in the report.
- 1.3 Executive Board comments are welcomed.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Our Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 to 2020 (**Appendix 1**) set out what we are going to do to continue to remove and reduce barriers that exist for some citizens and communities in the city, including council colleagues.
- 2.2 Inclusion and Diversity has been a central part of the council's 'Doing our Best' culture change programme, including our values, manager habits, appraisal and engagement approach. We have set out important building blocks and asked all teams to use this framework to check and challenge everyday practice.
- 2.3 The Council's Corporate Leadership Team have agreed a set of priorities around inclusion and the Leeds City Council workforce for 2017/18. Progress updates are tracked and reported as part of the existing Annual Equality Progress Reporting.
- 2.4 We have set out our ambitions to ensure all council buildings are accessible and inclusive. 'Integrating Inclusion and Diversity into the Built Environment' – was agreed by Executive Board in 2016. (Background Document to this report).

3 Main Issues

The work to date

- 3.1 We have made strong commitments around inclusion objectives for senior leaders, and this has now been rolled out to cover all employees. Everybody is being asked to take a lead, and make a contribution. Member leadership is strong. We have valuable challenge and involvement from senior politicians.
- 3.2 The council has a legal duty to eliminate any forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the workplace. Regular HR casework reports to Corporate Leadership Team help us to monitor the equality aspects in areas such as attendance, performance, disciplinary and grievance. Issues are identified and addressed. Training for managers is in place and works well.
- 3.3 Our staff networks continue to shape change across the council. They offer necessary challenge to the organisation as well as providing a place for employees to come together to tackle issues, support each other and put forward ideas. We have 6 staff networks, which are: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network; Early Careers Network; Disabled Staff Network (including Healthy Minds Group); Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Network; Women's Network; Carers Network.

- 3.4 Increasingly, our staff networks are working in collaboration with the Equality Hubs in the city, working on the shared issues that both council and community networks face. Joint priorities are in place in many areas.
- 3.5 Together, we have successfully raised the profile of key events such as Pride, International Women’s Day, Inclusion Week, Mental Health Awareness week and Black History month.
- 3.6 We continue to develop a work programme to poverty proof employment policy and practice, to ensure that all lower paid workers are paid a decent wage for the work they do, and have access to good jobs and opportunities for progression.
- 3.7 There have been major improvements around accessibility and inclusion for Merrion House and other city centre assets through our Changing the Workplace programme. This has been driven on the back of the ‘Integrating Inclusion and Diversity into the Built Environment’ framework, previously agreed by Executive Board in 2016. The quality of the work environment for all employees at these locations will be markedly improved as a result of extensive listening and consultation. The customer access and experience will similarly benefit.

The focus on Training and Awareness raising

- 3.8 Improving our approach to Inclusion and Diversity training has been highlighted in external assessments (such as Stonewall) and as a need by our staff networks. There is a lot of activity and pockets of excellent practice across the organisation, but we need a more coherent strategy and offer in place.
- 3.9 A summary of our approach for refreshing Inclusion and Diversity Training is set out below

	Set clearer expectations for all colleagues, and introduce a report to track inclusion training as part of the Annual Equality reporting timetable
	Build a larger network of ‘experts by experience’ from our Equality Hubs and community and third sector organisations who are willing to work with us to offer challenge and support to our teams.
	Use on the job opportunities wherever possible, and offer a wide range of self help tool and resources that individuals and teams can use
	Offer more coaching and mentoring to aid progression, especially for underrepresented groups
	Build the capacity within staff networks so that they can offer more training, advice and support across the organisation
	Give allies and champions a more visible role – to lead and influence a positive change on a wider stage

- 3.10 In addition, we will work with services to review the quality and value of all existing Inclusion training currently on offer. We will look to scale up the things that work, and lose any elements of limited value and/or uptake.
- 3.11 We will also work with QA, our preferred learning provider, to improve the quality and relevance of what they offer and ensure inclusion is as a key thread running throughout all training – e.g. manager training, customer service training
- 3.12 We will launch the new offer in Spring 2018.

Corporate Considerations

4 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 Our work plan is shaped by the views, experience and expertise from within our own workforce and across our staff networks, Equality Hubs and wider community.
- 4.2 Leeds City Council successfully works alongside other public, private and third sector partners to deliver better inclusion outcomes and we are actively engaging external and third sector organisations to inform our training refresh.

5 Equality and diversity/cohesion and integration

- 5.1 Being a more inclusive council helps us deliver better quality services and create greater trust with our communities.

6 Council policies and best council plan

- 6.1 The Best Council Plan and Equality Improvement Priorities 2016-20 set out our top level ambitions around inclusion for our citizens, communities and council colleagues.

7 Resources and value for money

- 7.1 Resource requirements will need to be reviewed as the new training and awareness offer develops. Quality, value for money and impact will be key aspects of the review.

8 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 8.1 The council has a public sector duty under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. NB the relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

9 Risk management

- 9.1 An inclusive, diverse organisation is better for business. Trust and confidence of our communities is built around this. Making an investment in inclusion training ensures we get the best from colleagues in the Leeds City Council workforce, and deliver better outcomes for citizens.
- 9.4 As a large employer with openly visible values and a city leadership role around inclusion and equality, it is important that the council continues to invest in workforce training.
- 9.5 Implementing a new training approach will help Leeds City Council to improve its standing in external benchmark assessments e.g. Stonewall.

10 Conclusions

- 10.1 Our aim to be a modern, forward thinking and compassionate council is crucially dependent on having an inclusive workplace culture. Our approach to training and awareness raising is one of the key priorities under review, and initial plans around this have been outlined. This sits as part of the Council's wider work to build a more inclusive workplace, details of which are set out in the report.

11 Recommendations

- 11.1 Executive Board to approve the refresh of the council's Inclusion and Diversity training as outlined, for a Spring 2018 relaunch.

Background documents¹

'Integrating Inclusion and Diversity into the Built Environment'

Appendices

Appendix 1 "Equality Improvement Priorities 2016-20"

Appendix 2 'Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form'

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.