

# Equalities Network Minutes

## Tuesday 12 November 2024 - Teams meeting (virtual)

### Attendees

Durham CC	Claire Holt
	Mary Gallagher
Hartlepool Council	Catherine Grimwood
South Tyneside Council	Aisling Crane
North Tyneside Council	Anne Foreman
Sunderland AFC	Ashley Watson
Sunderland City Council	Yvonne Cheung
NHS	Hamid Motraghi
Northeast CA	Emma Patterson
	Rachel Armstrong
	Rachel Edwards
Northumberland CC	Julie Stewart

### 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Attendee introductions. Apologies tendered via Teams but not presented to meeting:

Gateshead Council	Stephanie McGuigan
South Tyneside Council	Katherine Pledger
Stockton Council	Louise Deer
Sunderland Council	Jane Hibberd
Together for Children	Ola Tony-Obot

### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Previous minutes agreed.

### 3. Matters Arising from Minutes

Newcastle City Council - Louise to share update on the work of Anti-Racist City Charter and Equality Commission.

NHS - Hamid to share any relevant information on Transgender policies (particularly service user related).

#### **4. Collection of Employee Data – North Tyneside Council**

North Tyneside Council have updated the questions and categories on their HR management system. Following this staff were asked to resubmit their equality monitoring data. 65% of workforce have completed their online data. How representative is this to be classed as reliable. Census recommends 80%. Also made adjustments to the gathering of monitoring data at the recruitment stage, with an opt in option which allows the data to be carried forward to their employee record if successfully appointed. Accurate data will help with the reporting of race and disability pay gap reporting.

Durham CC have a varying picture, with 70% race, 50% disability and 42% sexual orientation information declared. Several messages have been sent out via comms mechanism, as well as collaborating with the staff networks. Recent anonymous health service showed a greater reporting for those declaring disability.

Northumberland CC – 38% across the board declaring their equality monitoring data, with stronger data reporting in relation to race. Need to try and understand the barriers to reporting data, (lack of trust, understanding). Also, working with those who work from depots, or don't have access to computers.

Hartlepool Council - link the monitoring data reporting message in with updating personal information. Trying to get the message out there as even putting 'prefer not to say' would help with returns of data.

South Tyneside Council will be changing payroll and HR system soon, so keen to learn from North Tyneside experience.

Sunderland Council - as part of National Inclusion week, sent out reminder to all staff to complete their data. Also found out when conducting well-being survey, which is anonymous they get a better return.

In terms of North Tyneside's successful return rate, this was due to a 6-month campaign, with reminders sent to managers to inform and encourage their staff to complete their data, team events, as well as promoting the 'prefer not to say' option.

## **5. Transgender Policies**

The question was asked by Darlington Council at the previous meeting for advice and support in relation to guidance on toilets and changing rooms in respect of transgender/single sex facilities.

Northumberland CC have a trans-inclusion policy, but aimed at staff (includes guidance on gender neutral and single sex toilets).

North Tyneside Council – guidance on supporting colleagues who are transitioning, also conducted EIA on main changing facilities.

Also need to consider how we include Trans employees in awareness events such as White ribbon.

This item will be re-scheduled for the next meeting in January.

## **6. Recruitment and Retention Network Update**

Update to be provided at the next meeting.

## **7. Any Other Business / Regional Updates**

### **Sexual Harassment Update**

Durham CC are currently working on updating guidance, policies and training as well as establishing risk assessments for services.

Query in relation to monitoring 3<sup>rd</sup> party sexual harassment and harassment, is this reported to H&S teams or HR?

Hartlepool Council - reporting to H&S through safety incident report form.

North Tyneside Council - it is reported through H&S and E&D Hub but causes risk of duplication when reporting numbers. Links in with dignity and respect at work policy.

Northumberland CC - use PVPR process to report 3<sup>rd</sup> party abuse, as a near miss. It is reported and dealt with via the H&S team.

## **Anti Racist Pledge - UNISON**

South Tyneside Council have signed up to it and will link in with Sunderland Council.

## **Sharing Information**

In the Teams file, remember to share any relevant, helpful information within the shared file area.

**Action** - If people could share objectives, and action plans for equality.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 28 January 2025, 1.30-3pm, (York Access group attending).