

REPORT FOR: Employees' Consultative Forum

Date of Meeting: 30 June 2010

Subject: INFORMATION REPORT -
GMB Questions on the Annual
Equalities Report for 2007-09

Responsible Officer: Jon Turner, Divisional Director Human
Resources and development

Exempt: No

Enclosures: No

Section 1 – Summary

GMB requested, and the Chair agreed, at the last meeting of ECF that a copy of both sets of questions the union had provided be presented to this meeting of ECF.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

At the last meeting of ECF, the Forum received the Annual Equalities in Employment report for 2007-09. At that meeting, a copy of the e-mail that GMB had provided with their questions was provided to Members. However,

there was some concern that Members had not seen all the questions that GMB had provided.

It was agreed that the GMB comments on the report would be discussed at the Corporate Equality Sub Group and reported back to the Forum to note. ECF will note that Members of the Forum were sent the full set of questions by Democratic Services following the meeting.

In her presentation to ECF, the HRD Strategy Manager addressed the questions raised noting that the suggestions would be considered by the Sub-Group of the Corporate Equalities Group.

The full set of questions submitted by GMB were as follows:

'2.12.1 states the 'report presents information on the council's workforce profile, recruitment and selection monitoring'. This is not an accurate reflection of the report as schools staff are not monitored in the recruitment and selection statistics.

GMB believe the report would be strengthened if the Council were to include Agency staff and Contractors employees. Although there may be inconsistencies in the recording of equalities data, the Council need to start approaching this to enable monitoring of this data. With regard to agency staff; setting up a monitoring system within the council to review agency and consultants contracts. GMB believe a 'Better Deal for Residents initiative should review the recruitment of consultants as a whole corporately, and most importantly the cost to the authority. This should be reviewed at agreed intervals.

Below is the conditions of contract for all suppliers who work with or provide a service for the council:

'As a manager, employer and provider for services and/or supplies, the Contractor shall do all it reasonably can to seek the elimination of all forms of discrimination in its employment practices, management and provision of its services in relation to sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age, in accordance with an established equal opportunities policy.' This may not have been affective in 07/08.

The council may need to consider the following in collecting this data:

Define 'contractor' to ensure the correct data is being collected;

Ensure consistency of recording of contractors' equalities data;

Ensure adherence to the conditions of contract.

Collect data for 2009-10 and report next year

The Council should be committed to reporting this information.

The monitoring of Retention and Turnover should be considered for future

Equalities Report, which would consider the stability in the council's workforce.

The reporting of Employment Tribunals should also be considered for future reports.

The outcomes from the recent staff survey should also be incorporated within the next Equalities Report (Please could you indicate when the next Equalities report is 'due')

IPAD section could also be considered to establish the effectiveness, again the findings from the Staff Survey could be incorporated into the report. (Please could you provide a copy of the IPAD EIA).

Reporting of Sexual orientation and religion/belief should also be reported on if Harrow wish to progress to 'Excellent' in the Equality Framework for Local Government.

2.2.2 Please could you clarify who the internal stakeholder groups are. From this statement we would expect all information provided in this report to be meaningful. Is this what we can expect from this report?

2.2.3 How does the authority reach the decision that all staff whose ethnicity is unknown or not yet assigned should automatically be deemed as a BAME, it will be the case that White staff are unwilling to offer this information. We see this as an attempt to manipulate the overall percentage of the BAME workforce. We therefore cannot rely on any of the information/statistics contained in this report.

2.2.5 We believe that any other ethnic group could include White Irish. Does the authority recognise this group as White and Irish or another ethnic group. Again the statistics can be deemed to be slightly skewed.

2.4.2 The Council notes that it has not met its target consistently over at least the past three years, although it is purported that this is increasing, we cannot rely on the statistics. Please refer to 2.2.3 for understanding. What are the Council proposing to do regarding the constant inability to reach the 52.03% target for appointments (internal and external).

2.4.3 Why does the information presented not include school based staff. How would you suggest the GMB and the Council monitor our members in schools with regard to recruitment. We believe a separate section on Teachers and support staff monitoring should be included in the report. Where would GMB be able to access this information?

2.4.4 How do the authority intend to approach this disproportionality between white groups and BAME staff members?

2.4.5 Obviously from your findings that there is an issue with the applicant stage. We would like to see a workshop set up, as with the Asian Applicant Review Group some 3-4 years ago. How long has the authority consistently failed to reach their target of 0.7. The

success rate is half that of white staff. Again what and when do the Council intend to address this issue as we feel it has been ignored repeatedly as though the Council are quite happy to consistently fail their target.

2.4.6 Please provide breakdown of pay scales of these appointments.

2.4.8 What are the Council proposing to do as a result of this information, we cannot all sit around and do nothing.

2.5.1 Why are schools not included on recruitment and selection audits. Are the recruitment practices different in schools?

22% was audited, please may we have a breakdown of this percentage into directorates.

2.6.1 How do we move on from this position? The authority may want to include the unions in the auditing process then we may ultimately increase the percentage audited for a more meaningful yield.

2.6.2 Why have the authority not conclude in this paragraph that it is disproportionate compared to white staff. BAME members of staff are more likely to be dismissed than White staff.

2.8.1 Please indicate for clarity all ETG's currently being held, as at this time I am only aware of one such group which meets regularly. Please could you also indicate what rewards the Council has received for promoting initiatives and or commitment to meeting the needs of BAME staff members.

2.8.3 The Asian Applicant review Group did not include all BAME groups. This paragraph could be misleading.

2.8.4 Does this include the recruitment of Consultants? Do the Council follow the same principles when employing consultants?

2.8.5 As a member of the CEG I have never experienced any discussion relating to the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme. Why are the religious belief and the sexuality strands not been included in this monitoring report?

2.8.11 The Council appears to be extremely apt at celebrating their successes in relation to disability which is good news for all our disabled staff. Progress has been made with regard to disability issues. Therefore given the findings in this report, why has the authority not decided to employ a Race Officer dealing specifically with these issues on a one day a week basis.

2.8.15 Please indicate where in Appendix 7, we may find details of the ETG's.

2.8.16 Again misleading information I as the equalities Officer for GMB has only been invited to one such group.

2.8.18 Please could you clarify the facilities that the lesbian, gay and bisexual group have at present. I would be keen to have sight of the agreement between the Council and this group of staff. Please could we request a copy.'

Section 3 – Further Information

None

Section 4 – Financial Implications

None

Section 5 – Corporate Priorities

N/A

Name: Steve Tingle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 21 June 2010		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background

Contact: Lesley Clarke, Organisational Development Manager, 0208
420 9309

Background Papers: Annual Equalities in Employment Report for
2007/09