

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Thursday, 2nd November 2023 10:15 am

Wessex House 3.36 | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Attendees

Attended

Rajani Naidoo, Chair
Richard Brooks
Teslim Bukoye
Hanna Hajzer
Marion Harney
Lizzi Milligan
Liz Simmons
Joel Staley
Jane White
Mandy Wilson-Garner

Did Not Attend

Jimena Alamo
Gareth Eyles
Tim Ibell
Alice Ludgate
Cassilda Reis

In Attendance

Abi Phillips
Peter Eley, Deputy Director of HR (for items 1059.0 and 1060.0)
Lizzie Tilley, Policy and Projects Manager (for item 1058.0)

Secretariat

Katie Anderton

1052.0 Welcome and Quorum

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Chair welcomed the Committee to the meeting and noted a quorum was present. A particular welcome was extended to Professor Teslim Bukoye and Hannah Hajzer to their first meeting. Apologies were noted from Jimena Alamo.

1053.0 Declarations of Interest

Minute by Katie Anderton

There were no declarations of interest.

1054.0 Terms of Reference and Membership 2023/24 - EDIC23/24 - 01

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Committee noted the membership for 2023/24 and agreed to recommend to Senate and Council the amendments to the Terms of Reference.

1055.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - Paper EDIC23/24 - 02

Minute by Katie Anderton

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

1056.0 Actions and Matters Arising - EDIC23/24 - 03

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Committee noted that there were no outstanding actions.

1057.0 Chair's Business

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Chair expressed their thanks to the Secretary for their work towards this meeting.

The main update from the Chair regarded the ongoing University response to the conflict in Israel and Palestine. They were pleased to note that the University had not experienced the same level of conflict as other institutions and credited the hard work of many teams including the Students Union and the Chaplaincy. The University had been engaging with the Jewish, Islamic and Arab Societies, with students writing to the Chair to thank them for their work and sensitivity during the conflict. The Chair paid tribute to the students who had maintained a respectful and community focused view despite the losses they had felt personally. They noted that the University is the only institution which had led a reflective event which had students from both the Jewish and Islamic Societies present.

The University had been resisting calls to take a stronger stance on the conflict, instead focusing on supporting all students and staff within the community who had been affected. Work had been started on a religious framework and interfaith space however this work was being carried out slowly to ensure that the work was done respectfully and with consultation with student groups.

New information had come from the Government regarding the duty of care regulations, some of which was contradictory. The Chair is working on the implementation of this.

The Deputy Director (Culture & Inclusion) had drafted the Annual Objectives and Equality Statement. They would be shared with the Committee in due course.

The Chair shared with the Committee that they would soon be leaving the University. Congratulations were shared by the Committee.

1058.0 Be The Change - #Never Ok Campaign

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Committee were presented with an update on the Be the Change #NeverOk campaign from a representative from the Student Policy and Safeguarding team. The update covered the work which had been completed over the 2022/23 Academic Year and the work planned for the upcoming 2023/24 Academic Year.

In 2022/23 the campaign had been delivered under the umbrella of Be the Change but it had been decided to return to #NeverOk as this resonated further with students, gave a clearer message and was recognised nationally. The work done under the new umbrella of #NeverOk is similar to that of Be the Change but has been extended and built upon. The campaign priorities for 2022/23 were to increase the numbers of reports made through the Support & Report tool and improve night time safety.

Underreporting has been a reported issue throughout the Higher Education sector and the Student Policy and Safeguarding Team were only hearing a fraction of student's experiences. Developments under the #NeverOk campaign to improve reporting have included creating provision for anonymous and third party reporting as well as the introduction of a non-formal framework, which would allow for appropriate pathways to be put in place to find resolutions for individual situations. The hope of the team was that the non-formal route will help students to report issues at an earlier stage which will reduce the level of high level, complex complaints and disciplinary action.

The Student Policy and Safeguarding Team had also put a lot of work into providing effective and appropriate training for students as this was identified as the biggest avenue for behaviour change. It was noted that there were varied training offered for students including two mandatory modules as part of their University induction, this was the second year that these were made mandatory. The team had also run a pilot for a more in-depth training module and developed a number of training modules which could be completed during the academic year. It was noted that while the percentage of completed induction had been maintained the actual numbers had decreased slightly. The team was currently in the process of increasing the accessibility to the training materials and looking at different formats and how training sessions can be made more bespoke and delivered to Student Societies and Clubs.

Moving forward there would be a focus on reestablishing #NeverOk with a focus on night time safety. Surveys have shown that most behaviour which falls under the Dignity and Respect policy takes place off campus and there were high levels within the night time economy. Work had been started on this pre-pandemic and there was now a desire to resume the work. It was noted that the team were looking into expanding partnerships throughout venues in the city with a view to understanding the student experience in the city.

Discussion covered the following points:

- Queries were raised as to the collaboration of venues within the city with the #NeverOk campaign. It was confirmed that there were a couple of venues within the town who were actively involved in the campaign and collaborating with the University to share best practices. The team were looking into expanding the campaign into other venues in town but more complex issues have been raised, including the involvement of the city Council as certain venues were reluctant to adopt the campaign without a regulatory requirement from the Council licensing authorities. There were also discussions taking place with local Police to endorse the University branding as well as their own campaigns.
- It was questioned as to whether the campaign would be spread to other parts of the night time economy and other areas where students may face harassment including gyms. It was confirmed that research into these areas had been looked into and would be looked at moving forward. #NeverOk was beginning to be implemented in Bath Sports spaces and the team were looking into how this could be mirrored off campus. The work on the campaign had started with clubs in town as this was where surveys showed the highest levels of harassment and there was pre-existing momentum for the scheme from before the pandemic.
- It was reiterated that the work would not stop at venues in town and the team were looking at how to tackle harassment in all areas identified.

The Chair thanked the Policy and Projects Manager for their presentation. The Committee noted the update.

1059.0 Support and Report Annual Reports - EDIC23/23 - 04

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Deputy Director of Human Resources presented the findings of the Staff Support and Report Annual Report and provided an update on the Resolution Framework Implementation.

The Deputy Director, alongside the Dignity and Respect Officer, triaged each case and had developed a process to ensure everyone was supported. The University's Resolution Framework was the first to integrate both staff and student processes. Over 2022/23 fourteen cases had been triaged with advanced resolution techniques through the Framework.

It was noted that there was work ongoing with the Doctoral College to ensure that issues were flagged early.

Data was currently showing a significant increase in reports via the Support and Report tool, but it was noted that there were still a number of cases where there were breaches of the Dignity and Respect Policy which were not being reported. While there was an increase in reports, a significant proportion of these (56%) had been resolved informally, as the Resolution Framework had provided staff with a much broader range of tools for resolution. It was noted that there was a decrease in the cases going through a formal resolution process, however a higher level of these resulted in a panel and action being taken.

Within the Support and Report tool the ability to report microaggressions had been added, along with anonymous and third party reporting pathways. While this was increasing the number of reports received, anonymous reports restricted the level of action which could be taken. With the increase in cases being reported, an employee resolution specialist has been recruited.

With the success of the Resolution Framework it was now being looked into how a similar process could be implemented into the Student Complaints and Discipline processes.

Discussion covered the following points:

- Clarification was sought over the actual number of cases which had been received and how this compared to previous years. The total number of cases involving staff was 45. Currently there was not enough data from before the pandemic to create a fair comparison or extrapolate any data.
- Clarification was given surrounding the third party reporting method. They third party's name would be put on the report so outcomes can be communicated back. It was noted that the third party did not need to be an independent advisor and could be any member of the University community.
- The current strain on the team was questioned. As of the 2 November 2023 the majority of work was being covered by the Deputy Director (for staff reports) and the Dignity and Respect Liaison Officer (for student reports). There was concern as to the workload this put on the individuals and whether there was the chance of a single point of failure. It was confirmed that there were colleagues both in Human Resources and the Student Support and Safeguarding teams who either were trained or it was being looked into training them in various aspects of the role to relieve the workload. It was noted that this work was extremely important and was vital to the overall University culture so a close eye needed to kept on the resourcing in this area.
- Postgraduate Research and Teaching students were overall a minority group within the University community but were represented in a high proportion of reports. The University has been aware of some of these issues but it was good to see it focus, although there was still a lot of work needed to improve practice.
- It was noted that further advertising of the third party reporting pathway may be beneficial.
- It was noted that the team were looking to gain more information into microaggressions at the University and deliver focused training where necessary, acknowledging that they were not always a conscious action.
- Clarification was sought as to the phrase 'non-formal interventions'. It was confirmed that all reports through the tool were still formal reports but the resolution process is not necessarily the University's formal grievance process. This wording had been chosen to be more accessible to all using it.
- It was noted that students were increasingly raising social class as an issue they encounter harassment on. It was confirmed that work was being carried out surrounding students speaking with staff and other students, however this area became more complicated when looking at staff. Currently Human Resources do not hold any data around social mobility and while there are organisations who were beginning to show their staff's social mobility index there was a high level of sensitivity in the area, as well as the added complexity at the University of a high number of international staff. The Committee expressed an interest in having a report surrounding the social class of University staff being brought to a future meeting.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Director for their presentation. The Committee noted both the Staff and Student Annual Reports.

1060.0 Resolution Framework Implementation

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Deputy Director of Human Resources updated the Committee on the Resolution Framework Implementation during their presentation under item 1059, Support and Report Annual Reports.

1061.0 Returning from Parental Leave Fund - EDIC23/24 - 05

Minute by Katie Anderton

The paper was presented by the Deputy Director (Culture & Inclusion). They thanked the Equality Charters Manager for their work on the bid prior to their maternity leave. Discussion covered the following points.

- The fund is currently not available to Lecturers on teaching only contracts and excludes those involved in scholarship but not active research. It was agreed it would be useful to look into how the fund could be made applicable for these colleagues and what could be included.
- The question had arisen at the Staff Experience Advisory Board how the fund could be expanded to professional services staff and the Human Resources team are looking into this. This would be fed-back to the professional services Women's Network and Parents Network in the first instance, taking into account the policies that are already in place regarding Keeping In Touch (KIT) days and the central fund allowing for a two week overlap of a returning staff member and their parental leave cover.
- It was questioned if a similar fund had been considered for those on long term sick leave, particularly as it relates to colleagues who have had time off linked with stress and burnout.
- It was noted that the fund was live and staff who were eligible had been reached out to.
- The Deputy Director (Culture & Inclusion) would report to the next meeting of the Committee an update on a fund for the staff groups mentioned during the Committee's discussion ahead of the planning round in March.

The Committee noted the report.

1062.0 Digital Accessibility - EDIC23/24 - 07

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Deputy Director (Community & Inclusion) presented the report. Discussion covered the following points.

- Questions were raised as to the timeframe of the implementation for the plan. The University had been working with a consultant who has identified a few areas which could be implemented quickly but other areas will require a wider cultural shift which would take time.
- There were currently no quality checks for academic teaching resources with the responsibility falling to individual academics to ensure that the accessibility is taken into account. Introducing a quality check mechanism was likely to be unpopular and would be a major culture change. It was noted that the Library is doing work in this area with a focus on alleviating pressure for colleagues as opposed to adding work.

- The Committee noted there had been reports of some lecture notes being uploaded to websites behind a paywall. The Chair confirmed that this issue had been raised to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Global).

- Some lecturers were still refusing to record lectures for students. The Students' Union noted that this was within the 2023/24 SU Top Ten to ensure that all students but particularly disabled and international students had access to recordings, as expectations for this had changed following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee noted that there was a lecture capture policy in place but it may be worth reviewing, drawing on those colleagues and students who have had positive experiences with lecture capture to encourage use throughout the institution. The Chair agreed to raise the issue with the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Student Experience and Education & Global).

- The Committee raised concerns surrounding the role of research and digital accessibility. There were issues surrounding certain information being uploaded in an accessible format to the University webpage and it would be useful for this to be addressed.

The Committee noted the report.

1063.0 Athena Swan Institutional Update - EDIC23/24 - 08

Minute by Katie Anderton

The minutes from the meeting on 18 October were noted.

1064.0 Equality & Diversity Network - EDIC23/24 - 09

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Co-Chairs of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network presented to the Committee some issues which had arisen in the meeting on 19 October 2023. The Network had heard received presentations relating the Support and Report annual reports and would be taking forward the Equality Objectives as a group.

Questions had been raised surrounding the pilot for free period products on campus and whether there was an update on the permanent implementation of this. The Deputy Director (Culture & Inclusion) provided an update. The bid for additional funding had not been achieved so they reached out to campus services and in collaboration with the Students' Union there were ten toilets across the campus where free period products were available however there were some issues with restocking which had been flagged with staff. They were looking into expanding the project but as additional funding had not been approved this funding would need to come from individual departments budgets. The question was raised as to whether these toilets could be added to a new University app which would map disability action. It was confirmed they were already mapped on the Access Able map but it would be useful to hear from the developers of the new app at a future meeting of the Committee.

The Network requested consideration to become a Menopause friendly accredited University. The total cost would be around £12,000 including training and policy and guidance. It was noted that it may not be possible in the current academic year but would be looked into going forward. There was a question as to what the University would get from the fee and to what extent

aspects could be implemented without the paid accreditation.

The Committee noted the minutes.

1065.0 University of Bath Interfaith Report - EDIC23/24 - 10

Minute by Katie Anderton

The report was noted. It was raised that there was no classification for Pentecostal Christians within the report.

1066.0 University Chaplaincy Report - EDIC23/24 - 11

Minute by Katie Anderton

The report was noted.

1067.0 Diversifying Recruitment Guide - EDIC23/24 - 06

Minute by Katie Anderton

The Deputy Director (Community & Inclusion) presented the guide which had been created in collaboration with the Head of Talent Acquisition. They had looked at the best practice in place across academic departments and what measures had already been put in place by academic leads to create a guide for the University's expectations in regards to diversifying recruitment. The guide had been presented to the University's Athena Swan leads and the Staff Experience Advisory Board. Discussion covered the following points.

- The Committee thanked colleagues for their work on the guide, noting it was an important piece of work in an area which can be overlooked during recruitment.
- Concerns were raised as to whether particular members of staff could be routinely drawn upon to sit on panels where diversity on a panel is needed.
- Changes were being made within the University but no change will be made overnight and a focus on diversifying recruitment is necessary, particularly in relation to the push for a global image for the University.
- Current practice in regards to the sharing of interview questions for disabled candidates was discussed. The current advice within the guide, as advised by experts is to share the questions 20 minutes before the interview but some departments report sharing questions 24 hours ahead with positive results.
- As recruitment becomes more complex it may be necessary to look at the line management and recruitment structure as it may be difficult for junior line managers.
- Conversations were being had with the Deans of Faculties and School regarding retaining PhD students and other Postgraduate students after their studies into academic or professional services roles.

The Committee noted the guide.

1068.0 Programme of Meetings for 2023/24

Minute by Katie Anderton

The programme of meetings for 2023/24 was noted.

1069.0 Any Other Business

Minute by Katie Anderton

The question was raised as to whether it was within the remit of the Committee to look at decreasing attendance by students as had been raised during the meeting.

There currently existed a central fund for Research & Teaching members of Academic Staff but the same fund did not exist for either Teaching only staff. As teaching constitutes a significant proportion of the University's income should this be looked into to create equity? It was noted that this had been raised at the Staff Experience Advisory Board and would be looked into. It was raised that this fund also does not exist for Professional Services staff.

The Committee thanked the Chair for their work in the Committee during their term and wished them the best in their new role.