

Nottinghamshire County Council Employer Equalities (Support for Black Workers) Action Plan 2020-2021

Purpose: to promote the support and development of the Council's existing Black and Minority Ethnic workforce and to encourage and increase their representation at more senior levels, removing any existing barriers to career progression. As with the Council's Equalities Action Plan, this document provides a flexible framework to enable the County Council's Elected Members, Corporate Leadership Team and all managers including senior management teams to understand and undertake their responsibilities to behave and interact with all prospective and existing employees in a way that demonstrates the Council's commitment to fairness, equality of opportunity and respect in order to enable the Council to maximise the flexible recruitment and deployment of the talent available to it to support the delivery of its priorities and objectives in the Covid-19 recovery phase and beyond.

By its nature, this document is internally facing but we need to learn from the experiences of others to ensure our commitment is known to our current and future workforce, partners, stakeholders and all residents of Nottinghamshire.

Implementation: Equality, equity, fairness and inclusion are everyone's responsibility. All of us including dedicated lead roles, self-managed staff groups and department leads have a collective responsibility to successfully implement this action plan and ensure equity and fairness is embedded in service delivery, employment and throughout the work of the Council.

Overall Responsibility: Marjorie Toward, Service Director - Customers, Governance and Employees

Lead Manager: Gill Elder, Head of Human Resources

Delivery Lead Officer: Lyndsey Woolmore, Senior Business Partner Organisational Development and Equalities Officer

Delivered by: Corporate HR, Workforce and Organisational Development team; Departmental Equality Leads; All Managers; Member Equality Sponsor/Champion, Black Workers Self-Managed Group, Corporate Equalities Group. Ultimately it is a shared responsibility to embed equality, value diversity and ensure the Council is an inclusive place to work for all employees through their behaviour and how they deliver services.

Key stakeholders: Elected Members, Corporate Leadership Team and departmental Senior Leadership Teams, all Black and Minority Ethnic employees, Black Workers Self-Managed Group; Trade Union colleagues; Corporate Equalities Group

Culture – to ensure Nottinghamshire County Council develops and maintains a working environment free from racial harassment, bias and discrimination, enabling all our workforce to flourish and maximise their contributions to the achievement of the Council’s objectives and overall organisational success

Topic	Actions	Timescale	Progress/ Status
Employer of Choice promoting Accessibility and Inclusion for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete accreditation for Race at Work Charter as an external measure of the Council’s performance on racial equality as the Stonewall Index is for LGBT+ activity and Disability Confident for all matters relating to disability. • Publish an Anti-Racism statement which makes clear that racial harassment and/or abuse of our Black and Minority Ethnic employees will not be tolerated by anyone, colleague or member of the public. • Appoint an Elected Member and Officer Equality Champion/Sponsor to promote the overarching Equalities agenda and to hold to account the organisation’s performance as stipulated in the Race at Work Charter. • Develop a scheme for Anti-Racism Allies to align with the Proud Ally system. • Review the equalities resource capacity to maximise impact and increase the profile of the work required. Recruit to the refreshed Equalities Officer role and engage the departmental Equalities leads to ensure a consistent and proactive approach is adopted to actions required in this and other Equality Action Plans. • Building on previous Employee Surveys, undertake a cross Council information gathering exercise to engage with employees about their experiences of fairness and respect at work in order to provide a current baseline and to identify further priorities for improvement. • Undertake a review of the Council’s employment policies and procedures regarding raising issues of harassment and discrimination to ensure they promote a zero-tolerance approach. • Develop a series of Webinars and Q&A sessions for senior leaders, external role models and employees to contribute and engage in as a means of promoting open and honest conversations to raise awareness and to develop wider understanding to challenge the silence which can be construed as acceptance of the status quo. A number of topics have been identified to be discussed at each session. However, there will be an 	<p>September 2020</p> <p>October 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Immediate and ongoing</p> <p>Autumn 2020</p>	<p>Complete</p>

	<p>opportunity to add on new topics or change the sequence of these topics. The proposed topics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational Culture - Health and Wellbeing - Career Development - Learning & Development - How to measure our success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review competency framework in terms of leadership requirements to identify the skills, knowledge and experience required to deliver the Council’s priorities and performance indicators around all equalities but for the purpose of this plan in relation to race. • Consider the range of activities to assist with career development and progression (see below in recruitment section) and engage with Black and Minority Ethnic employees to understand what they considered barriers to progression are with a view to adding further actions to address. 	September 2020	
Learning and Development			
Topic	Actions	Timescale	Progress / Status
Management skills and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing unconscious bias training to broaden its application. • Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) to undertake training August/September with a focus on strategic leadership. A version of the input will then be rolled out as mandatory training for all employees who manage resources or deliver services. • Mandatory Equality/unconscious bias training for elected members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek clarification from agency managed service provider as to how they satisfy these criteria to remove unconscious bias from their recruitment and selection processes as the temporary to permanent transfer route is another avenue into employment with the Council. 	<p>Immediate Aug/Sept. 2020</p> <p>Sept/Oct 2020</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on existing mandatory learning requirements including Understanding Equality All NCC managers to undertake full suite of People Management learning activity as a mandatory requirement. 	Consider in relation to Covid learning priorities	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate existing learning resources on having constructive dialogue and conversations and Manager as Coach into a new “Managing with Confidence” learning suite to enable all managers to have enabling conversations with their employees. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Coaching through NCC in- house Coaching network to enable all employees to reach their full potential and encourage employees with protected characteristics to access coaching and introduce provision to express a preference for an available Coach who shares that characteristic. 	Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide targeted modules for Black and Minority Ethnic employees in the cohort as part of the wider Leadership Development Programme to enable them to develop the confidence and skills to progress their careers including applying for alternative / promotional roles. Develop and implement a Reverse Mentoring Scheme to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion across the Council. Evaluate the engagement and impact of the participants in the specialist programme run by Health locally. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Anti-Racism Hub on the Learning Pool platform. The hub will be a repository for learning materials, discussion pieces, articles, podcasts etc. with a view to prompting discussion and enabling people to self-educate to inform and stimulate debate. Level of use will be monitored to identify how many people are accessing the portal. Content will be developed and updated on ongoing basis. 	September 2020	

Recruitment and Retention

Attract and retain a diverse and representative range of applicants by reviewing the Council’s recruitment and on-boarding approach to promote the Council as an employer which is inclusive and welcomes and nurtures diversity. Remove any barriers to accessing available job opportunities.

Topic	Actions	Timescale	Progress / Status
Job Descriptions and role requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign and relaunch an accessible recruitment portal “landing page” which removes perceived barriers to joining the Council by promoting NCC as an employer which welcomes and supports diversity and offers career progression for all. 		

Recruitment practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refresh guidance to ensure that managers present job requirements using accessible language and in a meaningful and succinct way which does not create barriers by inflating experiential or qualification requirements in a way which restricts the diversity of potential applicants. Consider extending the offer of Guaranteed interviews similar to the requirement to invite all suitably qualified disabled candidates to interview where the minimum job requirements are met to Black and Minority Ethnic applicants. 	Reinforce during 2020	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide managers with guidance on effective and legally compliant recruitment practice including ensuring that job advertisements are written in a succinct way which accurately describes the job in accessible language, and which does not over-specify the qualifications necessary to fulfil the role successfully. Ensure that recruiting managers provide feedback on recruitment decisions in a transparent, honest and constructive manner to ensure all applicants enjoy a positive experience through the recruitment process, whether or not they are successful in securing the role. This will be reinforced through occasional surveys of candidates and through “spot checks” audits. Provide targeted one to one interview training and guidance and support for applicants from under-represented groups. Use the most appropriate selection tools for the advertised role. Check there is no bias built into the selection process and regularly validate the tools used to check their currency and relevance. 		

Health and Wellbeing including any Covid specific related actions

Consider any specific health and wellbeing actions required to support Black and Minority Ethnic employees

Topic	Actions	Timescale	Progress / Status
General Health and Mental Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and guidance to better support Black and Minority Ethnic employees with mental health or poor wellbeing to remain and thrive at work. Encourage and support employees to respect and value others, treating all colleagues and service users with fairness and respect and ensuring that everyone feels valued as a human being. 	Ongoing	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support employees to challenge bad behaviour and take a “zero tolerance “approach to all forms of inappropriate behaviour and harassment including that targeted at people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups. • Introduce trauma counselling resource using existing contract with Care First to support Black and Minority Ethnic colleagues to explore the feelings generated from their lived experiences and to consider any issues arising from recent events and as a result of Black Lives Matter campaign. • Train additional 6 mental health first aiders nominated by Black Workers Group and undertake review of current demand and uptake. With a view to increasing the number trained if demand for additional capacity is evident 		Complete
Covid-19 specific actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure managers are aware of the need to engage and jointly complete the risk assessment for people with additional vulnerabilities and to consider actions required to protect Black and Minority Ethnic employees during the Covid pandemic. • Provide additional guidance to managers and employees regarding the relevant risk assessment to complete depending on work circumstances and reinforce the mandatory nature of these risk assessments highlighting the importance of the supportive discussion. 	Ongoing	
Data collection and evidence-based analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete annual workforce profile report as required to meet the Council’s Public Sector Equality Duty and publish this information on the public website. This will be the platform to capture ethnicity data and publicise progress (This commitment was outlined in the last Personnel Committee report). • Working with Black Workers Group and recognised trade unions, encourage improved disclosure of Black and Minority Ethnic employee information. • Explore ways to effectively benchmark performance indicators and determine what success will look and feel like. • Use the calls to action in the Race at Work Charter to provide initial indicators for success/improvement 	September 2020	
V4 November 2020	Author: Gill Elder, Head of HR		