

Equality Impact Assessment

CONSULTATION GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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1. Defining the Aims of the Procedure

- To outline a structure for developing and agreeing HR policies and procedures;
- To ensure that relevant parties are included in the process;
- To promote a healthy Employee Relations climate by developing a positive and constructive relationship with the Trade Unions;
- To ensure that consultation procedures are compatible with existing collective bargaining processes;
- To consult with managers via departmental HR managers;
- To comply with the Information and Consultation Regulations 2004;
- To comply the Council's Constitution, which states that the Employment and Appeals Committee has, "The power to appoint staff and determine the terms and conditions on which they hold office (including procedures for their dismissal)" and the practices of delegating functions to Council Officers;
- To support the Corporate Goal of Community Involvement, which states: "*We are seeking to consult, engage and inform all sections of the community, including tackling transience and hard to reach groups, and increase the capacity of the local community to influence policies*";
- To support Blackpool's People Strategy, which has "Improving Communication" as one of 6 Core Themes

This Procedure is defined by the Corporate HR team, which includes the Occupational Health and Safety Team. Schools will have their own arrangements, involving governors, head teachers etc.

The current procedure primarily involves the Trade Unions and members of the HR Management Team (HRMT). Different arrangements exist within the separate departments for communicating with managers. A Staff Consultation and Scrutiny Forum – made up of volunteer staff and Trade Union representatives – was established in 2003 and sub-groups were convened to inform a number of policy areas which have reached or are reaching implementation. However, there has been little contact with this group since early 2004.

The stakeholders are: HR, all (current and potential) employees and managers, the Trade Unions and the elected members.

What might hinder the Procedure?

- Time pressures and deadlines, which a) do not take account of or allow sufficient time for meaningful consultation and b) mean that it can be difficult for some staff to be given the time to participate in e.g. staff working groups.
- Difficulties in reaching certain groups of staff, particularly when they are not based in the main Council locations.

2. Available Data and Research

I have obtained figures relating to all employees and those who can be identified as Trade Union members through the HR / Payroll system, with the purpose of assessing whether our current practice of primarily consulting with the Trade Unions may exclude certain groups of staff. This will not therefore incorporate Trade Union members who, for example, pay by direct debit. The equality strands examined are ethnicity, gender and disability. Percentages have been rounded up to the nearest tenth – i.e. 1.29% becomes 1.3% and 1.21% becomes 1.2%.

In relation to ethnicity, 16.2% of the total staff group are recorded as unknown or have refused to disclose. For the purposes of compiling statistics, this group has been recorded separately, as have White British and White – Other (which includes Irish). Other Black and Minority Ethnic groups are combined to give a fourth group.

A. Trade Union Members by department as a percentage of the overall workforce

Business Services (BS)	41.2%	Housing and Social Services (HSS)	48.2%
Chief Executive's (CE)	22.2%	Leisure, Culture and Community Learning (LCCL)	26.5%
Children and Young People (CYP)	16.4%	Tourism and Regeneration (T & R)	46.6%
TOTAL = 26.2%			

B. GENDER: Trade Union Members by department cf. overall workforce

DEPT	BS		CE		CYP		HSS		LCCL		T & R	
STAFF GROUP	All	TU members	All	TU members	All	TU members	All	TU members	All	TU members	All	TU members
MALE	55.4%	63.5%	33.3%	No info ¹	17.6%	11.5%	25.6%	25.2%	43.8%	45%	59.7%	69%
FEMALE	44.6%	36.5%	66.7%	No info	82.4%	88.5%	74.4%	74.8%	56.2%	55%	40.3%	31%
TOTAL	All	TU Members										
MALE	27.6%	33.1%										
FEMALE	72.4%	66.9%										

¹ As this is a department of only 7 people, this data could potentially identify individuals and has therefore not been included.

C. ETHNICITY: Trade Union Members by department cf. overall workforce

DEPT	BS		CE		CYP		HSS		LCCL		T & R	
STAFF GROUP	All	TU members	All	TU members	All	TU members	All	TU members	All	TU members	All	TU members
White British	– 77.7%	85.9%	88.9%	No info ²	80.1%	88%	92.8%	95.1%	83.5%	90.6%	74.3%	85.2%
White Other	– 1.5%	1.6%	0%	No info	1.2%	1.2%	2.3%	2.4%	1.2%	0%	1%	1.4%
Other BME	0.9%	1%	0%	No info	0.9%	1.1%	1.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0%	1.6%	0%
Unknown	19.8%	11.5%	11.1%	No info	17.8%	9.7%	3.6%	2.1%	14.8%	9.4%	23%	13.4%
TOTAL	<i>All</i>	<i>TU Members</i>										
White British	– 81.4%	89.2%										
White Other	– 1.4%	1.6%										
Other BME	0.9%	1%										
Unknown	16.2%	8.4%										

² As this is a department of only 7 people, this data could potentially identify individuals and has therefore not been included.

D. DISABILITY: Trade Union Members by department cf. overall workforce

DEPT	BS		CE		CYP		HSS		LCCL		T & R	
STAFF GROUP	<i>All</i>	<i>TU members</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>TU members</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>TU members</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>TU members</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>TU members</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>TU members</i>
Declared as Disabled	1.9%	3.3%	0%	0%	1.1%	1.6%	2.3%	2.1%	2.5%	2.9%	2%	3.5%
TOTAL	<i>All</i>	<i>TU Members</i>										
Declared as Disabled	1.5%	2.3%										

3. Assessment of Impacts

- Levels of TU membership appear to vary across the various directorates. This may be affected by particular groups of staff paying by methods other than through our payroll system. The figures used in this assessment include teachers – schools are consulted with separately and in some cases will not adopt the corporate policies and procedures. With teachers included, we know that at least a quarter of staff are Trade Union members and are therefore represented in the existing consultation processes.
- Men seem slightly more likely to be TU members. However, the difference is not particularly great overall, despite variations in some areas. The figures used do not therefore suggest that either men or women are adversely affected because of their gender.
- There are some variations with regards to ethnicity within certain areas, although the overall figures do not appear to suggest any adverse impact on staff who do not declare themselves as White British. Rather, the discrepancy appears to be due to a smaller proportion of TU members being recorded as “unknown” or refusing to disclose this information. The unknown rate goes down significantly, for instance, within Housing and Social Services. This may be the result of something as simple as better recording of ethnicity details for new applicants. As there are plans to repeat the monitoring exercise for all staff, the future statistics may be very different.
- It may also be that certain occupational groups are more likely to disclose equality monitoring information.
- A higher proportion of staff declaring themselves to be disabled exists within the known TU membership than in the whole staff group.

4. Possible Measures to Mitigate Impact / Promote Equality of Opportunity

- Review the structure of the existing consultative committees (JCC's), particularly in relation to Health and Safety matters as this has been requested by the Trade Unions.
- Review and update the consultation procedure.
- Working with the Equalities Unit, relaunch the staff consultation group and from this set up sub-groups according to different equality strands e.g. disabled staff, BME staff, LGB staff.
- Alongside work being done currently on simplifying the organisation of HR policies and procedures on the Council's intranet, make full use of the intranet to communicate and consult with staff.
- Promote opportunities for staff involvement and consultation through Corporate and Departmental publications.
- Feedback to staff – consider a “You said...We did...” format.
- Conduct a staff satisfaction survey, which includes questions around communication.
- Work towards extending Investors in People accreditation across the Authority.
- Review the Council's policy on time off and facilities for Trade union representatives.
- Consider how communication can be improved in respect of staff based away from the main Council offices or who do not have access to the intranet.
- Ensure that information sent to staff when asking for equality monitoring information is clear and accessible, recognising that some occupational groups may require different approaches, such as team briefing rather than a formal letter.

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