

Work and Equality, NEtWorking for Change

Steering Group Meeting

RCN Offices, Avalon House, Sunderland

27th March 2008

Minutes

Present: John Dobie, Stuart Linden, Paul Johnstone, Karen Evans, Janis Jones, Peter Smith, Carol Blythe, Wajid Hussain, Nadeem Ahmad, Liz Reay, Tricia Collins, Joanna Lee

Apologies: Glenn Turp, Amy O'Donnell, Mark Wright, Val Milnes, Tim Bird, Brenda Joyce, Carolyn Clayton, Sheelin Kilroy, Margaret McFee

1. Previous minutes and Matters Arising

There is an amendment to the previous Minutes, as follows:

Apologies were received from Nadeem and Wajid for the meeting on 7th December

Matters arising:

Liz thanked the RCN for the use of the room and lunch

Sponsorship of NfC events - we received £500 from NE Employers Network towards the Removing Barriers, Challenging Perceptions events. Need to carry on looking for sponsorship for future NfC events

ENE have a joint bid in with Middlesbrough Council of Faiths to Capacity Builders, NfC bid to Capacity Builders to develop the NEtWorks in the Third Sector. Both were due for a decision on 31st March however there is a two month delay. Have a bid in to the Equality & Human Rights Commission, we should hear on 31st March if we are successful.

Interfaith Project - have received draft report, will circulate to members. SL to forward the report to NfC for distribution and inclusion on the website.

LSC Muslim learners event has been postponed

Christine Shanks (ENE) contacted Mick Towers.

**SL /
JL**

2. Activity Update

Currently have 492 members – which is an increase of 120 since October 2007.

Have four more events left in our current programme – Shameless (LSC), Faith v Sexuality, Equality When and disABLE to work. Places available. All have been well received.

Nearly at the end of our LSC project – have one more event, Shameless on Monday 31st March. Have signed up 62 new learning providers so far. New Learning Provider section is live on the website.

We have two bids in to develop the networks one is through Capacity Builders and the other the Equality & Human Rights Commission

Have developed a monitoring form to gather data about our members

3. Working Party

Disability Group - Liz gave an overview of the progress of the Disability Working Group and Joanna presented the findings of the Disability Equality Duty research to the Steering Group. A copy of the report and summary were passed to members and is available on the NfC website section. Carol added the RDA in London have a representative group of disabled people with expertise / knowledge of transport for example whom the RDA can consult with. It is a model we could replicate / develop in the NE. The Disability Strand Steering group members would be representing user led organisations with a regional remit and would include the public sector.

LGB & T Working group - Tricia gave an overview of the development of the LGB & T Working Group. Feedback from workshops and events relating to issues faced in the workplace includes monitoring - what to do with the information / should anything be done with the information, for example. The group met on 18th March and included representatives from RCN, Newcastle City Council, HMRC and ENE. The group have agreed to hold an awareness raising event / conference on 10th October to coincide with 'Coming Out Day' on 11th October. The group were explicit that sexuality should also include heterosexual people. Tricia has asked all Steering Group members to pass the information to their networks once it is available.

ALL

<p>Liz asked if anyone was interested in joining either group to contact her.</p> <p>This working party model could be rolled out to other strands in the future.</p> <p>Both the Disability and LGB &T Working groups have identified need for funding for activities.</p> <p>4. NfC Action Plan</p> <p>The NfC draft action plan was tabled, it had previously been sent to all members for comment. The group were invited to agree the action plan following discussion. The action plan was agreed and comments were noted for inclusion in the delivery plan. Following discussion it was agreed members activity should be taken into account when developing the delivery plan.</p> <p>5. NEEDP Action Plan</p> <p>NfC is the 7th Task Group and Liz has a seat on the NEEDP Board.</p> <p>The NEEDP section of the website has been ready since the end of January and should be live within the next two weeks.</p> <p>Nadeem raised an issue that he hadn't secured a place on any task group. Tricia confirmed the information had been sent, through the Secretariat to the appropriate convenors.</p> <p>Ranjana Bell, NEEDP Chair, facilitated an away day for the NEEDP Board on 14th March. Mainstreaming (convenor Patrick Chapman, GONE), Evidence (convenor Jon Carling, NERIP) and Voice (convenors Julia Lyford / Ivan Wintringham, The Coalition) task groups are up and running, Employment (convenor Kevin Rowan, TUC) group is developing. Leadership and Awareness are not yet established.</p> <p>It was agreed members would receive NEEDP Board papers prior to the meeting for their questions, comments etc. Joanna / Sam to send NEEDP Board agenda to Steering Group members for comment before each meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed the NfC Steering Group minutes and papers would be added to the NEEDP website. Joanna / Sam to update NEEDP website with NfC minutes and papers.</p>	<p>JL / SM</p>
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<p>6. Equality Standard</p> <p>The standard has been drafted with help from S.G. volunteers. It has taken the form of a self assessment with a toolkit for support. Have 15 companies already lined up to pilot the standard. Need a marketing strategy to publicise the standard in the region. Once the pilot is completed a report will be drafted and any development work on the standard carried out. There may be potential for funding from NEEDP / The Commission for companies towards the cost. Liz thanked Tricia and the volunteers from the Steering Group.</p> <p>7. Member's Activity Update</p> <p>SL –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHM, a consultancy group, were tasked by LSC National Office to work in the regions looking at issues facing Muslim learners, their aspirations and any barriers faced. There is an event being held at Univeristy of Teesside on 1st April (1.30), any S.G. member who would like to attend should contact rose@shm-ltd.co.uk . • Undertaking a review of their EDIM priorities. Disability and Gender success rate gaps are narrowing. • NfC Learning Provider project and If We Can You Can project both going well. <p>CB - working on a project with deaf people looking at their journey into employment, specifically self employment. One of the recommendations was test trading before going into self employment. Will be feeding back to Business Link.</p> <p>JJ - chages to employment support allowance will come into effect in October together with changes to Lone Parent Benefit. Janis has a snapshot document of the changes will pass on for circulation.</p> <p>KE –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national audit of Age Concern's employment projects underway, report is due at the end of April. Shows NE is leading the way. • Working on issues around health - the Health & Wellbeing Strategy did not include anything about older people. There is now a section relating to older people and employment section includes older workers. 	<p>JL / SM</p> <p>JJ</p>
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<p>JD –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> involved with North East International Networking Club for exporters. Working to link migrant community with companies exporting to their country of origin to give that company advice / information relating to customs / culture etc. Have funding from ONE NE for a website for migrants to register, should be live within 4 weeks. Would like to publicise through networks etc. Has another website, www.uk-accessories.com sells electronic gadgets including intelligent mobile phone holders, accessories for guide dogs. Has been in contact with some 3rd sector organisations through NfC. <p>PJ - has been working on Equality Standard with Tricia. Has space in Employment Law supplement next month which could include an article about the Standard / NfC.</p> <p>PS - had funding support from CARA, Council for Assisting Refugee Academics. Have applied for further funding, needs other Universities in the region to sign up.</p> <p>WH – CWACNEE, an organisation supporting Community Development Workers is undertaking a consultation exercise as part of it's restructuring. As part of the consultation process they have been looking at Community Workers working with BME groups in the NE. The information gathered will feed into the overall consultation report</p> <p>NA –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established links with University of Sunderland. IPPR commissioned to produce a report, due on 22nd May relating to migrants, including students across the region. Organising celebration event on 15th May - success of VCS support for new and emerging communities. 16th - 22nd June is Refugee Week, an event is planned for 20th June. Nadeem will send events information for inclusion on the website and circulation to NfC members. <p>LR –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still involved nationally in developing inter regional and national networking. The NfC project is seen as good practice in the national arena. March 31st is the official launch of the NE Equality Awards, have a new category. The Commission, LSC, ONE NE and Employers Coalition are all sponsors, looking for applicants 	<p>NA</p>
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and more sponsors. The Awards dinner will be held on 19th September at the Gosforth Marriott Hotel.

- Liz told Steering Group members the Commission has directed that it should be referred to as 'The Commission' or it's full title of 'The Equality & Human Rights Commission'.

7. AOB & Date of next meeting

S.G. members are invited to give a brief update on information pertinent to the group. If there is a lot of information to be shared please pass to ENE before the meeting so we can pass it around in hard copy. Alternatively members may request an agenda item.

Date and time of next meetings –

26th June, 10 – 12, Equality NE Offices, Swalwell

2nd October, 10 – 12, Equality NE Offices, Swalwell