Equality & Diversity Annual Monitoring Report

May 2016

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Present information about successes, achievements and good practice in equality and diversity around the University, over the period August 2014-April 2016.

2. Present data on protected characteristics (Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation) for Newcastle University staff. Data is for the year to 31 July 2015 and where possible comparisons have been made against local and national comparator data.

3. Present data on age, disability, ethnic origin, sex, and various socio-economic characteristics for Newcastle University students.

4. Update on our approach to publication of equality information and equality objectives in line with public sector equality duties.

1. Successes, Achievements and Good Practice

Leadership in Equality & Diversity

In recognition of the need for additional capacity to lead on Diversity we appointed a Dean of Diversity, Professor Judith Rankin, in 2015. The Dean will provide focussed strategic leadership, and improve the way we can address issues and deliver new initiatives. In addition two Faculty Directors of Diversity have been appointed; Prof. Candy Rowe (FMS) and Prof. Kate Chedgzoy (HaSS) and SAgE are also recruiting to this position.

Diversity Season 20-24 April 2015

In April 2015 the University launched a week long programme of events to celebrate and promote equality and diversity for staff and students. The Keynote event, organised by our NU Women network, had Vice Chancellor Professor Chris Brink and Freelance Diversity Consultant Rachel Tobbet sharing insights into why Equality and Diversity is critical to the University’s success. Many staff and students are affected by disability either directly or indirectly and Diversity Season focused on two highly relevant aspects, with workshops from Dementia Friends; and from Bounce – providing an introduction to wellbeing and how to take steps to improve your own wellbeing. In addition a support network for new parents and parents-to-be was launched; a talk on what it means to be LGBT+; and a celebration of international communities represented at the University took place in a showcase event in the Student Forum.

In addition to these events several other Diversity-related activities took place across April and May including a Summit, jointly organised by Newcastle, Durham and Sunderland Universities - ‘Tackling lad culture on campus’; a Mental Health (Mind the Gap) Conference –
organised by students; Everyday Sexism Public Lecture; and Newcastle University Students’ Union held their first ‘Inspiring Women’ Conference.

**Gender Equality Initiatives**

Newcastle University is committed to the Athena SWAN Charter, and is proud to have recently become one of only 9 institutions to receive a Silver Award which recognises what we have done to encourage the career progression of women employed in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine.

During 2014/2015 we made considerable progress with departmental awards, and now have five Silver and four Bronze awards in the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), and eight Bronze awards in the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAgE). The School of English Literature, Language & Linguistics is the first school in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences submitting an application in April 2016.

Athena SWAN activity within units has generated a wealth of initiatives that have made a positive impact on staff and students. For example the Early Career Researcher Mentoring Network, set up by FMS Institutes to enable PGRs and Research Associates to discuss career issues with experienced staff; a Career Research Fellowship scheme set up by the School of Computing Science which encourages those returning from career breaks; and a Women in Engineering network for students set up by the engineering schools in SAgE.

At University level, examples of our Athena SWAN activity include the introduction of a suite of unconscious bias workshops for all staff and an annual investment of £10,000 to support NU Women, our network for women staff. NU Women runs more than 10 events per year including career development and training events, inspirational talks and networking activities. As a measure of success, membership has doubled to over 500 members in the last year and continues to grow.

**Support for Disabled Staff**

In response to issues highlighted by the last employee opinion survey, the University has been working with disabled staff to identify priorities for improving the employment experiences of this group of staff. An action plan has been developed and work has started to review the guidance and support available to staff and to raise awareness with line managers.

**Mindful Employer Charter**

The University recently renewed our Mindful Employer Charter. This is a charter for employers who are positive about mental health and indicates a willingness to work towards better practice. It is a tangible display of the University’s commitment to improving the working lives of our staff.
Academic Successes

Professor Ruth Plummer from our Northern Institute for Cancer Research (NICR) won the STEM category of the North East Woman Entrepreneur of the Year. The awards recognise, reward and promote the achievement of women in business in the North East. There are twelve different categories and this was the first year for the STEM category, which recognises exceptional women in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics who have pioneered new discoveries and/or been instrumental in bringing the benefits of those discoveries to market for economic and social impact.

Dr Paula Crippa from the School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences, was awarded a prestigious L’Oreal-UNESCO UK & Ireland Women in Science Fellowship. Each year five Fellowships worth £15,000 are awarded to outstanding women scientists in the early stages of their career to facilitate promising scientific research.

In June 2015, the Institute of Cellular & Molecular Biosciences (ICaMB) took part in Soapbox Science, a national science outreach event that raises the visibility of women in science and takes science to the public in a unique way. Twelve of our top female scientists took to Grey’s Monument in the City Centre and engaged passers-by with their latest discoveries. The event had the highest footfall (19,000 passersby) of all Soapbox Science events nationally and received fantastic feedback from audiences. Planning for our next event, Soapbox Science Newcastle 2016 is now well underway.

Estate Support Services

The accessibility team within Estate Support Services (ESS) has been strengthened by the inclusion of a building surveyor dedicated to providing access improvements and developing the access improvement plan. Gender neutral toilets are being included within all new developments, major refurbishments and within existing buildings. Although currently challenging we are working towards providing at least one gender neutral toilet within each University building.
A range of developments have been undertaken to improve facilities on campus and other University facilities:

- A new lift was completed at Merz Court which has dramatically improved access to the building - in particular the teaching rooms on the south east of the building (pictured). The lift is designed as a fire evacuation lift which can be used to evacuate disabled people from the building under fire evacuation conditions.

- A Changing Places facility will form part of the new facilities on the ground floor of the Daysh Building which will provide specific toilet facilities for people with profound physical and multiple learning disabilities.

- Inclusive design advice and guidance has been provided to enable inclusiveness and accessibility to as wide a range of users as possible. A wide range of buildings and their surroundings have been worked on including Newcastle University London, the Marjorie Robinson Library Rooms, the Armstrong Building, the Open Access Centre and active involvement in many landscaping projects through the Coherent Campus Steering Group.

- Upcoming projects such as the USB building and the Conference and Learning Centre have benefited from this guidance in the early stages of design and will continue through the full life of the construction period and subsequent occupation.

- There are new lifts planned within the centre and south wings of King George VI building where no lift has been previously available, as well as new accessible entrance to the Open Access Centre directly from the Old Quad.

- Campus buildings are regularly surveyed to ensure that facilities are operating effectively for disabled staff and students and make adjustments where necessary.

Engagement with other external service providers, in particular Nexus travel, has resulted in improvements to the metro station at Haymarket which will improve access for disabled people.

**Student’s Union**

The Student’s Union (SU) runs a project to assist with widening participation which has 2 key strands;

1. Financial bursaries for students from ‘Widening Participation’ backgrounds to join and participate in clubs and societies to ensure equality of opportunities

2. NUSU into schools where student led clubs and societies visit schools to deliver workshops based on their society but also raise aspirations of HE. The SU also make adjustments as needed, to ensure inclusivity. For example, opening the fresher’s fair up an hour earlier to students with access issues or anxiety relating to large crowds. NUSU have their own inclusivity policy, as well as elected officers for various liberation groups, including Students with Disabilities Officer and Students with Faith or Belief Officer.
NUSU runs a variety of campaigns each year to drive equality and understanding among our students. This year NUSU is running campaigns including but not limited to Black History, LGBT+ awareness, Disability Awareness, Mind The Gap conference, Interfaith Campaign and Period Pride day (started by a Newcastle University student last year and is now taken up by NUS for a national campaign). These events provide opportunities to empower students and promote understanding of students with protected characteristics in order to tackle discrimination and stigma.

In addition, the Student’s Union also held a one-day conference for ‘Inspiring Women’ in March 2015, which was so successful that is has become an annual event. The conference combined speakers, panellist discussions and training workshops aimed at enabling women to fulfil their potential.

Inclusive Newcastle, launched in September 2015 ensures that all students have a genuine and equal opportunity to participate in sport at all levels and in all roles. That is, as a beginner, participant or performer, and as a coach, official, administrator or spectator. Creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where the talents and skills of different groups are valued. The programme is constructed around three main principles, the delivery of sport; split into on campus and off campus para sports, a support system and a volunteer network. In November 2015 we pledged our support to the English Federation of Disability Sport’s (EFDS) Charter for Change, and a successful application has led to the programme gaining Associate Membership status of the EFDS, a status no other Students’ Union in the country currently holds. To date, there is a wide range of students with disabilities involved in the programme, including physical disabilities, mobility impairments, and visual and hearing impairments.
Chaplaincy/Student’s Union

In February 2015 a pioneering event was held, bringing together in dialogue students from our Catholic Society, Christian Union, Islamic Society, and Jewish Society. The event was chaired by a student who was on placement with the university for Diversity Season. In the event, about 100 students (and a few others) gathered for a “Question time” style event, in which some tricky issues such as “Why are there two Christian societies?” were discussed alongside fun issues such as “Which is your favourite festival, and why?”

The event was jointly organised by the Chaplaincy and Students Union; and all was managed with dignity and respect. The event won an award from the Students Union for best collaboration between societies. In this world where religion is so much in the news, it is important that our students gain skills in how to communicate the importance of their own faith, while respecting those of others.

All present requested more, and there are plans to grow the event in the future. Reverend Catherine Lack, University Chaplain has since shared the initiative with colleagues at the National Interfaith Advisors Conference in February 2015.

Student Wellbeing

NU Advancement have continued to secure funding from our Alumni to help students who struggle with the transition and to engage socially with peers at University. This funding is available to support students who are experiencing difficulties irrespective of whether they have a diagnosis of any disability/specific learning difficulty/mental health condition, via the Connect Together Support. It enables students to develop their social communication skills and/or to attend social events with the support of a mentor. This support is then incrementally reduced as the student’s confidence increases, so that they are then able to access social opportunities independently.

The Student Wellbeing Service held the second Transition Event in September 2015, which provided students who have a mental health condition, diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder or a disability, with the opportunity to settle into their accommodation and participate in workshops/social events in the week before the new student intake arrived for Fresher's week. The numbers of participants increased from 8 in the first year to 19 this year and feedback from the students who attended was overwhelmingly positive; planning is already underway for next year's Transition Event.

In addition, funding has continued to make it possible to run social events for students with a diagnosis of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and a social group for students who have a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. This provides students with access to structured activities, including visits to local museums, art galleries and the cinema, as well as informal opportunities to discuss their experiences of diagnosis and university life.
The combination of support that the Specialist Learning team, within the Student Wellbeing Service, have been able to offer to students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder in particular, has recently been recognised at The Times Higher Education Awards, where we received the Outstanding Support for Students award.

In December 2014 Student Wellbeing teamed up with Northumbria University to organise the third of its programme of events for students staying in Newcastle over the Christmas period. There were events on most days throughout the University closure period so students were not left feeling alone and isolated. The events were either free or low cost, subsidised by the university. They included an afternoon of ice skating, a festive walking tour of the city, football at St James Park and a two course Christmas dinner cooked by the Chaplaincy on Christmas Day. These events were attended by 270 Home and International students from our University with many events sold out in the first week of ticket availability.

Looking Ahead

Whilst proud of our significant achievements highlighted in this report, we still have ambitious plans for advancing equality and diversity over the coming year. These will include increasing the number of academic units achieving bronze and silver Athena SWAN awards, reviewing our Equality Strategy Action Plan, delivering actions arising from our 2015 Equal Pay Review, committing to a charter for disabled staff and applicants and working with Stonewall to promote LGBT issues.

2. Staff Equality and Diversity Monitoring

Analysis of staff data for 2014/15 can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

3. Student Equality and Diversity Monitoring

Analysis of student data can be found in Appendix 3.

4. Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
• Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The University’s commitment to these and our three year action plan are described in the Equality Strategy which can be found on the Equality and Diversity website.

Specific Duties require public bodies to:

• Publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the Equality Duty The publication of this report and its appendices are evidence of compliance with the Equality Duty to publish information. In addition statistical data, reports of staff and student surveys, and relevant staff and student policies are also available.

For queries about this report, please contact:

Richard Boggie
Acting Assistant Director (HR Strategy)
richard.boggie@ncl.ac.uk