Newcastle University
Diversity Consultative Group
21 September 2016

Present: Laura Delgaty - Chair (LDe)
Leslie Platt, HR Adviser (E&D) (LP)
Kathryn Hollingsworth, Chair, NU Women (KH)
Sneha Vincent, Int. Student’s Officer (SV)
Catherine Lack, Chaplain (CLa)
Umbereen Rafiq, Public Lectures & Events Manager (UR)
Laura Draper, Ambitious Futures Trainee – E&D (LDr)
Geoff Abbott, UCU E&D Officer (GA)
Robert Shiel, ESS Adviser (RS)
Courtney Levin, LGBT & PTO (CLe)
Rebecca Walker, Activities Officer (RW)
Rachael Kitching, Welfare & Equality Officer (RK)
Saffron Kershaw-Mee, Marginalised Genders Officer (SK)
Emma Simblett, Disabled Employee Network Chair (ES)

Apologies: Jo Robinson-Lamb
Steve Smith

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Welcome from the Chair &amp; introductions</td>
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<td>LDe welcomed everyone to the meeting. This was followed by a round of introductions.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</td>
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<td>The Terms of Reference for the group were agreed. To be forwarded to all group members with updated structure chart.</td>
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<td><strong>NUSU</strong> officers provided a list of workshops already run and planned for the future. These included:</td>
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<td>- Sexual Health and Guidance Week – which will include a focus on consent – w/c 14th Nov</td>
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<td>- Black History Month – w/c 17th October events</td>
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<td>- Inspiring Women – date tbc</td>
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<td>- A training workshop on suicide prevention – about which I will circulate an email this week</td>
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<td>SK mentioned the society for neurologically atypical people.</td>
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<td>A request for further workshop or training ideas/needs was made by the Chair that could be utilised for the benefit of both staff and students.</td>
<td>All</td>
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CLa asked about tackling ‘lad culture’ awareness and training. RK confirmed that this had been progressed and is part of the ongoing programme for students regarding consent and vulnerability messages.

LDe said that issues around resources/budgets to enable these sorts of programmes to continue and develop would be taken to the next Diversity Committee meeting.

**Diversity Calendar.** Agreed to circulate a list of possible diversity events to commemorate. There was an agreement that a coordinated approach to this is important to ensure consistency in the messages we want to communicate. LDe said she would look into using Outlook regarding subscribing to and sharing diary information.

On the theme for Diversity Season 2017 some ideas were suggested, LDe to discuss with Diversity Committee and also to raise the issue of a budget to help with this. LDe also talked about highlighting innovative research work in E&D being carried out at the University and how we could showcase this.

RS talked about ensuring issues around age are fully discussed and raised, mentioning ageism and ME/chronic fatigue to name but two. This also highlighted issues around disability in the workplace and LDe reassured the group that these issues were as important and valuable in highlighting as any other.

### 3. Feedback from VC E&D ‘Think Tank’

LDe talked about the Vice Chancellor’s Equality and Diversity ‘Think Tank’ event that took place on 15 September. The event involved a number of senior and other key staff coming together to discuss equality and diversity issues and priorities for the months and years ahead. A wide range of views and ideas was collated following some excellent presentations by staff representing disability, LGBT, ethnicity and gender.

The next steps will involve looking at the issues and recommendations discussed and how these will inform the Equality Strategy and other action plans. The group hoped that these will recommendations will be supported by the new VC when he takes up the post in January. RS suggested that this could be a good opportunity to invite him to engage with the group at some point in the future.

### 4. Updates from Networks and Groups

**Disability Employee Network (DEN):**

ES talked about the role of the DEN and that it is somewhat in abeyance right now. She also mentioned the need for to become more active again, as there are a number of issues that the University needs to be aware of such as addressing invisible disability issues. Getting people involved with DEN was a key part of moving things forward and LP said that he would arrange a planning meeting with ES, RS to consider how best to do this. The aim is hopefully to have the first
meeting of the relaunched DEN before the end of the calendar year. It was suggested that information on the network be posted through social media outlets to raise awareness.

ES also mentioned World Mental Health Day on 10 October and her role as an England Athletics Club Mental Health Ambassador with her running club. She suggested that we could raise awareness of this through the lunchtime staff running group in a similar way that it promoted the rainbow laces campaign. LP to look into promoting via the staff webpage.

LP circulated a paper on staff network groups that outlined some of the issues that we might want to think about regarding the setting up and relaunching of staff networks. Anyone with feedback or comments should forward these to LP to enable follow up and further action.

5. **Black History Month**

BHM takes place each October. LP talked about the University’s engagement with this from a recruitment/employer’s perspective and that we will have a presence on the Black History Month website this year. The aim is to improve our visibility with BME people and for the University to be seen as an employer of choice. It will also give a strong message that we are committed to BME inclusion in the wider sense and that it will act as advance notice to Freedom City 2017.

RK asked about the ECU Race Equality Charter. LDe replied that this was something that was raised at the Think Tank and that a decision could be made on whether the University will subscribe to this at Diversity Committee next month.

UR mentioned a public lecture that is taking place over BHM on Black slavery/white freedom on 13th October as part of the Insight lectures programme.

6. **Supporting Transgender Staff Seminar Feedback**

LP and LDr attended a Stonewall run half-day seminar on 31 August. The event was very useful, well-run and informative. It provided a comprehensive guide to how best to support transgender staff, trans inclusion, how to create an effective trans policy, employer commitment and communication issues. LP commented that the University’s existing transgender guidance document is currently under review by Stonewall and that their recommendations will be incorporated in to a new, more practical policy.

CLE mentioned that in the third week of November it is Transgender Remembrance Day (20th) and that there will be a joint north east universities student experience transitioning/gender identity event.

7. **Communications – Action Plan**
LP discussed a communications action plan that has been produced following dialogues with the corporate communications team. The aim is to produce a regular stream of equality and diversity themed communications to ensure that there are regular positive messages and information that reinforces our commitment to this agenda. In response to a query about the issues and themes that would be communicated, he said that as many diversity strands and key events as possible would be promoted, however any suggestions in this regard would be welcome.

### 8. Any Other Business

SK asked if there are any policies around youth and homelessness issues, in particular initiatives about employing homeless people? LP said that he would look into this and let SK know.

It was pointed out that an inappropriate question on the online recruitment form around pregnancy is still there. LP said that this should have been removed a couple of months ago and said he would make sure this happens as soon as possible.

UR mentioned that for LGBT history month next February a public lecture is being planned by the University. Ideas for this were requested and can be on any topic, not necessarily related to student life or staff. Any suggestions to be forwarded to UR.

CLa mentioned that she does not have a suitable a meeting space for meetings and events right now and that other faith and religious groups are looking for venues to hold their events. If anyone knew of anywhere that could be used then please let her know.

### 9. Dates of Next Meetings

- Tuesday 10 January 2017  10.00-11.30 King’s Gate 4.13
- Wednesday  8 March 2017  10.00-11.30 King’s Gate 5.15
- Wednesday 24 May 2017  10.00-11.30 King’s Gate 4.13