THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**Equality & Inclusion Delivery Group**

Via Teams: Friday 18 September, 10:00am - 12:00 noon

**Attendees:** Stephen Scott (SKS), Robert Adams (RA), Charlotte Axon (CA), Helena Brown (HB), Elizabeth Cutts (EC), Vania Dimitrova (VD), Laila Fletcher (LF), Antonia Frezza (AF), Kate Hardy (KH), Lisa Hill (LH), Ian Holdsworth (IH), Amy Jennings (AJ), Anja Komatar (AK), Sara McDonnell (SM), Ghazala Mir (GM), Linda Mortimer Pine (LMP), Theresa Munyombwe (TM), Kate Nash (KN), Claire Owen (CO), Shereen Robinson (SR), Iyiola Solanke (IS), Paul Taylor (PT), Lucinda Walker (LW), Sarah Ward (SW), Chris Warrington (CW), Luke Windsor (LW), Kerri Woods (KW), Laura York (LY)

**Apologies received**

Caroline Ackroyd, Yoselin Benitez Alfonso, Dima Barakat Chami, Louise Bryant, John Cheseldine, Helen Coop, Fiona Gill, Rachel Muers, Gillian Neild, Sharif Patel, Daniel Rosenzweig, Kirsten Thompson, Emily Towler, Kerri Woods

**Observing**

Angela Blackburn, Ben Plumpton, Jo Westerman

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**Introductory business**

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**Welcome**

SKS welcomed all to the meeting.

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**Terms of reference, membership and guiding principles & current membership**

The Group received the terms of reference (ToR) and membership. There have been no changes to the ToR since the last DG meeting in July 2020.

Research & Innovation is now represented on the Group by Lisa Hill, and the Dean of the Doctoral College (Luke Windsor) is also now a member. The agreed ways of working were reiterated.

The recruitment process for the Head of E&I will be resumed in October. Claire Owen is acting E&I Manager in the meantime.

The Chair welcomed new members and reminded the Group that the normal expectation is that only one representative per staff network, faculty or service attend each meeting unless special circumstances apply. Members are free to nominate substitutes if they are not able to attend a particular meeting.

New members at this meeting were:

* Theresa Munyombwe, Leeds11 Staff Network
* Ghazala Mir, Muslim Staff Network
* Kate Nash, Deputy Dean of Faculty of AHC
* Helena Brown, Faculty of Environment
* Laila Fletcher, the new LUU E&D officer
* Shereen Robinson, the new E&I Project Officer in LUBS.

SKS added that the chair of the Trans, Non Binary & Intersex Staff Network was invited but was unable to attend.

LH introduced herself as the Head of Research Development in RIS and gave a brief account of current E&I activity in Research and Innovation with the aim of embedding E&I and providing practical advice to academics as to how this can be done.

A member asked how agenda items can be put forward. SKS replied that recommendations can be made during meetings (see final agenda items) or he can be emailed directly. The Chair also offered to meet with a member outside of the meeting to discuss an issue raised about the terms of reference.

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**Notes of previous meeting and actions**

The notes and action points from the last meeting were agreed and confirmed.

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**Chair’s introduction to E&IDG business for 2020/21**

The Chair explained that the focus for E&IDG this year will include finalising and delivering the Race Equality priority actions and developing frameworks and action plans for Disability and LGBT+. A revised ‘consultation version’ of the Race Action plan has been circulated to the Leeds11 and Muslim staff networks and to LUU for detailed discussion before coming back to E&IDG.

In terms of the Disability and LGBT+ frameworks and action plans, the aim is through discussions at this meeting and then through subsequent consultation and engagement to bring firm drafts to the E&IDG meeting in December ahead of these being submitted to the E&I Board for approval at its February 2021 meeting.

The institutional Athena Swan application will be submitted in November 2020.

IS asked if the Race at Work Charter questionnaire could be included as an area for the DG to consider this year, as it is due to be submitted in March 2021. This has already been shared with the Leeds11 network and initial discussions will take place there. It was agreed that this will be added to the list of DG business.

**ACTION: Race at Work Charter questionnaire to be included in DG priorities for 2020-21.**

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**Council paper on activity tackling racism and advancing race equality**

CO introduced a paper summarising the recent activity on tackling racism and advancing race equality that has been provided to the July meeting of the University Council at its request. The document drew on material recently posted on the EPU webpages summarising the work at E&IDG and E&IB. CO indicated that feedback from Council was that they were very supportive of the proposed Race Equality Framework but had suggested that seeking to progress 10 priority areas at the same time may be too many and it recommended further prioritisation at this stage.

GM commented that the intersectionality aspect needs to be thought about and emphasised. Gender and disability are discussed but no mention made of religious discrimination, which should be included. She asked that Leeds11 and Muslim Staff Network be consulted as Islamophobia impacts both staff groups. The Chair explained that the Framework document had been sent to Leeds11 and the Muslim Staff Network and that he expected to consult with, and involve, both networks in the coming months.

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**Strategy and delivery**

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**Overview of Disability and LGBT+ frameworks**

CO introduced the frameworks, stating their alignment with the E&I Framework, and emphasising that these are initial drafts for discussion and development. The group will work on them over next few months through a structured consultation process. The aim is for final versions to be submitted to the February E&I Board.

LY introduced the Disability framework, again emphasising that, as an early draft, this was a starting point for discussion. CA then talked through the LGBT+ framework document.

LY asked the group to advise her or EPU if any stakeholders were missing, or if they would like to meet to discuss either of the frameworks in more detail.

**ACTION: Group members to contact Laura York if they wish to discuss Frameworks in more detail.**

A question was raised about budgets for E&I work. SKS confirmed that the Delivery Group and EPU have no specific budget, and that queries or requests relating to this would need to be escalated to UEG. It was suggested that budget be added to the next DG agenda.

**ACTION: Budget issues to be added to the next DG agenda as a discussion item.**

CO explained that, following advice from Council, the DG should be looking to identify three or four priority areas for each Framework. These will be actioned during the next three years, with impact being achieved and measured during the next five years. CO invited the DG members to join one of the two discussion groups with the aim of establishing priorities. Members were provided with a list of potential actions as a starting point for the discussion, and were invited to change groups during the discussion, if desired.

Notes from the discussion groups can be found at Appendix 1.

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**Reporting Project**

One high priority action from the Race Equality Framework has been identified – to review our current systems and procedures for reporting discrimination and harassment, and this will also be relevant to other characteristic areas. It has been agreed to take this forward under the new University Change Management process with a formal project methodology. Members of E&IDG representing different stakeholders will be involved in the specification and governance of this project as it progresses.

It was noted that a similar review of student systems, particularly around reporting sexual assault and harassment, has already been initiated under the auspices of the Head of Student Support and advantages of taking these two reviews forward together or in close alignment are being explored. The aim is to complete the review element by the end of this calendar year and report on findings to the E&I Board in February 2021.

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**Communications**

CO said that feedback suggested that the E&I communications across the University could be strengthened. Gillian Neild (GN) will put together a communications plan to bring to a future Delivery Group meeting. CO, SKS and GN had discussed the possibility of a Delivery Group subgroup focusing on communications. If anyone has any ideas or comments, please send them to GN.

CO said it was important that the plan included communications that were relevant and of interest to the student community and attention was paid to the language used for that audience. AF agreed that students can find it difficult to access E&I information and offered to help with the students comms plan.

LMP asked if it would be timely to encourage staff and students to go onto the EPU webpage and asked if we could share this through the Head of Schools / Services.

SKS suggested that we could send the EPU newsletter to the Deans and ask them to send it out. EPU can also use their blog to share key messages.

AF mentioned that it is not always effective to ask people to look at a website, so we should also look at how we can feed information into existing communications.

**ACTIONS: SKS to share details of the EPU website with Deans and Heads of School/Service.**

**EPU to send EPU Update to Deans and make them aware of updates to the EPU blog.**

**All to send ideas and comments that may help improve communications to Gillian Neild.**

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**Further development of the E&I structures – relationship of E&IDG and Faculty/Service E&I Committees**

CO explained that the new governance arrangements for the E&IB and E&IDG had been implemented, and further development of the E&I structure would follow. During the current session, this would include defining the relationship between E&IDG and the Faculty/Service E&I committees and the roles of Faculty/Service representatives.

VD said that ‘concept maps’ had been successfully used in EPS to help improve understanding of communication challenges, and suggested that they would be a useful tool for EPU to use in local conversations with individual faculties.

**ACTION: EPU to meet with VD to discuss how concept maps have been used in EPS, and might be used more widely.**

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**Items raised by members and other items**

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**Differential impacts of COVID-19**

This item has been requested for inclusion on the agenda by the Women@Leeds Network at our last meeting, although unfortunately the W@LN Chairs were not present at this meeting. The Network has provided further evidence from internal and external sources relating to the differential impact of COVID-19 on researchers with significant caring responsibilities (disproportionately female) and is keen to ensure the University is considering possible mitigations. The E&IDG Chair has facilitated a meeting of the WaLN Chairs with the acting-DVC(R&I). LMP confirmed that E&I impacts of COVID-19 now feature explicitly on the Institutional Risk Register to ensure continued focus on this.

A member also mentioned that returning to campus is likely to particularly affect BAME staff, and they may feel less able to raise concerns.

Another member stated that the data we have around the impact of Covid-19 relates mainly to academic staff. We should also focus on how it impacts professional services staff, too.

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**National Inclusion Week**

EC provided an update on National Inclusion Week (NIW) and mentioned the link to the event timetable on the Delivery Group Teams group is in the ‘posts’ channel.

GM commented that, despite featuring in the institutional-level communications, the faculty-level communications for NIW had no reference to equality and diversity. EPU should aim to work with faculties to highlight the diversity aspect, in addition to the ‘each one reach one’ theme.

A BAME leadership event for NIW is currently being organised by the Leeds11 network and an event on ‘language in E&I’ is being organised through the LUU Liberation Coordinators: details will be published soon.

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**Changes in EPU and farewells**

CO said that Charlotte Axon, Helen Coop and Lizzie Cutts are leaving the EPU team. The Chair thanked them all for their contributions to the team and to the Delivery Group. Daisy Forster will be returning to EPU in early October, following her career break.

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**AOB**

IS asked if a subgroup could be created to work through the Race at Work Charter questionnaire. This could also form part of discussions around the Race Equality Action Plan.

**Action: IS to nominate members from Leeds11 to join a working group for the Race Equality Action Plan and the R@WC questionnaire.**

PT mentioned that there had been discussions with LUU around the terms BAME / BME with respect to Student Success, and that the University and the DG may want to consider using alternative language.

**Action: Language to be an agenda item at a future meeting.**

AF suggested that more specific data are needed about particular groups of students and staff. CO stated that we do collect staff and student data at a granular level, and that wider groups are useful for benchmarking. There is plenty of scope to do more work in this area, and she was happy to meet AF to discuss further.

**Action: CO and AF to meet to discuss data/language.**

PT shared a [STEM E&I event](https://teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk/events/) in the chat.

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**Closing comments and agenda for next meeting**

The Chair thanked the group for attending and for their contributions and invited further suggestions for future meetings. Group members can forward agenda items for consideration to the Chair via equality@leeds.ac.uk

The next meeting is on Friday 30 October, 10.00 am – 12.00 noon.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Notes from discussion of the LGBT Framework and Action Plan**

The Framework should give an overview of the whole scope of our commitments but it will be important to indicate initial priorities for action – noting that others will be pursued in due course.

Focusing on building an inclusive culture and encouraging people to report their data would be good broad priorities and help us to establish more focused actions.

Different actions sit with different people; some actions sit with everyone and some with services such as HR. As well as focusing on actions that will make the most difference, we need to think about who will be delivering the actions.

We need to collect the right data – and encourage disclosure. We need to articulate the purpose for collecting such data better. As part of gaining trust it will be important to be clear on definitions. We are slightly restricted by HESA, but have extended the LGBT+ categories for internal reporting. Further suggestions can be considered as part of this process.

Data are important, but the bigger cultural piece is where we need to focus. As well as improving communications, we need to think about behaviours. Is there a SMART action relating to culture that could be agreed and would involve everyone? Behaviours are important for everyone at UoL. We need to be clear about what behaviours we expect and what behaviour is unacceptable.

Could we identify a pilot initiative, something that is quite radical that can be trialled in one area? Would allyship be right for us and something we could trial? It would be helpful to find an example or evidence of how this has worked elsewhere. Allyship takes the weight off the LGBT+ staff and places it with the wider community, it really benefits LGBT+ staff. Allyship could be formalised, asking people to make a pledge, for example. This could be something we could consider piloting in a local area. Local LGBT+ organisations could be involved in the allyship idea.

It would be helpful to have really clear responsibilities and actions for managers, and outlines of what UoL managers can and cannot do. The University has signed the concordat for postgraduate researchers and it would be helpful to have some wording to embed this in our practices.

Could we be doing more to promote the current LGBT+ allies and role models programme? Could the VC or some other senior institutional champion be involved with promoting the programme? We could have a role models Comms piece, and include what it means to be a role model and celebrate their achievements, rather than solely their identity.

It will be important to engage LUU officers and LibCos with the Frameworks.

**Notes from discussion of the Disability Framework and Action Plan**

The DF presents an opportunity to build on the great work that has already been done by the Disability Services team during the last few years to help students and prospective students. The ethos of this has been to provide easily accessible and available support for students/prospective students, thus enabling them to concentrate on their learning and enjoying the student experience. It would be good to get input from LUU and relevant student societies, too, as they have some great ideas and are passionate about making improvements.

The DF will take existing good practice and apply it to staff, putting the onus on line managers to organize the necessary support, rather than colleagues. It was suggested that support is more likely to happen if there is responsibility and accountability, including making processes such as assessing and arranging reasonable adjustment easier to navigate.  The DF and/or Action Plan needs to make clear who is going to be responsible for taking forward priorities and actions. Responsibilities will be spread across different teams, but particular individuals will maintain oversight of progress and give updates to the Delivery Group.

Research & Innovation will be asked to engage with the Framework and representatives are happy to discuss other stakeholders who could be consulted.

It’s vital to have representation/input from disabled colleagues/students.

A focus on mental health needs to be included as one of the priorities, including raising awareness of different disabilities and how these can affect the experiences of individual colleagues and students.

Another priority is to provide effective reporting and feedback mechanisms for instances of discrimination, harassment, abusive or offensive behaviour and language.

Whilst gathering data is important, lack of it should not prevent us from getting on with things and taking necessary action.

Fostering a sense of belonging to a supportive, inclusive culture is a key priority. Work has already started on this, and it is something that begins from the moment a prospective student or colleague has contact with the University. We need to find ways of building on positive experiences, and have inclusive, accessible processes and systems. It’s important to recognise that hidden disabilities, as well as those that are more visible, can impact negatively on people by making them feel they don’t belong and are not worthy of support.

There are still issues with physical access to University buildings and services, and these should remain a priority.