

EDC17D012

Title: Stonewall Workplace Equality Index – Results
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Issue

To inform the Committee of progress in the University's second attempt at the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note content for information as a more detailed report of the results will follow at the next Equality and Diversity Committee

Resource Implications

None for the Committee to agree at this stage.

Risk Implications

Achievement within this framework forms part of the range of evidence about progress against equality issues which funding bodies such as RCUK may consider when agreeing future funding streams.

Equality and Diversity

The focus of this initiative is the pursuit of equality and best practice for staff in respect of sexual orientation.

Timing of decisions

n/a

Further Information

The first paper to the Committee about Stonewall's WEI was in November 2013 addressing the question of completing the framework (EDC13D004)

Background

The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index is a national framework, very widely adopted across a number of sectors including the Higher Education Sector as a means of progressing equality in the workplace for the LGBT+ community. Achievement within this framework has recently been linked to funding streams, principally with the RCUK making clear statements about the need to evidence progress in equality as part of funding applications/awards.

Stonewall publish their 'Top 100' Employers list, based on results from the Index, places in which are hotly contested by many blue chip organisations.

The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2018

1. Background

Stonewall is the primary pressure group for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and now trans, rights. It was established in 1989, initially by a small group of people, who wanted to create a professional lobbying group. At the time the main focus of its efforts was the repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988. Since then, the group has become well established at national level through its campaigning and lobbying and worked closely with the government on drafts of the Equality Act 2010. Some major successes include helping achieve the equalisation of the age of consent, lifting the ban on LGB people serving in the military, securing legislation which allowed same-sex couples to adopt and the repeal of Section 28. More recently Stonewall has helped secure civil partnerships and then same-sex marriage, and ensured that the recent Equality Act protected lesbian, gay and bi people in terms of goods and services.

The Workplace Equality Index was established in 2004 and has become a nationally respected, cross-sector, annual benchmarking exercise. Taking a business-like stance Stonewall focus on what work is being done within organisations to ensure gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and since 2014, trans staff feel safe to be themselves at work. Research on stigma theory (Goffman 1963, Ragins, Singh and Cornwell 2007) supports the view that energy is diverted within the self when people are so stigmatized by society that they have to hide part of their personality. From an equality perspective a positive culture which ensures individuals feel accepted and safe at work regardless of sexual orientation is a fundamental human right and is also underpinned by UK legislation. From a business perspective, such diversion of energy means that an organisations productivity and creativity suffer if a proportion of their staff feel they cannot be fully authentic in the workplace and creates varied issues around employments issues such as absence, potential grievances and retention of good staff.

434 Organisations took part in the Stonewall Index 2018 (submitted in September 2017). Collectively, these organisations employ 3.8 million people (*source: Stonewall Top 100 Employers*). The results of the Index were announced in January 2018. The Index is multi-sector, the top five organisations are (with 2017 Index position shown in brackets):

1. National Assembly for Wales (5)
2. Pinsent Masons (2)
3. Gentoo (not in Top 100 but were identified as 'Star Performers')
4. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (=8)
5. Lloyds Banking Group (1)

The five Universities with the highest scores were:

14. Cardiff University (23)
- =16. Manchester Metropolitan University (=41)
- =16. University of Manchester (=41)
- =24. University of Sheffield (88)
- =24. University of York St John (89)

Fourteen Universities appeared in the 2018 Top 100 compared to twelve in the previous year including the University of Essex making their first appearance. Locally based Aviva also appear in the list at number ninety eight.

2. Content

The questions are changed on a three yearly basis with the questions for the 2018 Index forming the first year of a new three-year cycle.

The document comprises nine sections, with fifty mandatory questions. The key Sections are:

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|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Employee Policies and Benefits | 6. Monitoring |
| 2. Employee Lifecycle | 7. Procurement |
| 3. Employee Network Group | 8. Community Engagement |
| 4. Allies and Role Models | 9. Clients and Customer Services |
| 5. Senior Leadership | |

Stonewall provide a form which can be uploaded to a dedicated website. Each organisation is asked to reply briefly, sometimes with tick boxes and sometimes with free text boxes (maximum wording in this instance was 300 words) to the questions and upload separately key evidence. The drafting is saved on line and can be carried out over a period of time.

As part of the assessment process, Stonewall also run an Employee Survey via a link which is circulated between July and November by participating organisations to their respective employees. The questions in this survey were checked with and approved by the UEA Ethics Committee prior to circulation. The answers go back to Stonewall direct but UEA, as participants, will receive an analysis of the results. Nationally, 93,582 people took part in the last survey.

3. Evaluation Process and 2018 Result

The submission and accompanying evidence is evaluated by a Stonewall Area Representative (not our own). Submissions are marked twice and any disagreement between first and second round markers are examined in a one to one meeting with close reference to the guidance criteria.

UEA made a significant stride of **+89** places in this year's Index putting us at **#204 out of 434 entrants**. This is excellent news and puts us in a good position at the start of a three year cycle to build on our current result. A gap analysis of activity has already been carried out by the Equality and Diversity Office and this is being used as an Action Guide for the year.

A meeting will take place on Tuesday 13 March with our Stonewall Representative, Emma Palmer and including staff from the Equality and Diversity Office, our Staff Pride Co-Chairs Michele Pavey and Steve Oldfield and our HR Manager with Equality remit, Santha Forder, at which our results will be explained in detail so we can further identify our strengths and which areas need more immediate attention.

A detailed report of the results as reported in the meeting will be brought to the next Equality and Diversity Committee meeting.

4. Further Activity

Since the Index was last submitted the University has:

- adopted a Flag Policy which safeguards the flying of the rainbow flag at specific points in the year including a tweet from the VC stating his commitment to inclusivity and pride in flying the rainbow flag;
- run further events for LGBT+ History Month, including a 'Coming In' Workshop and a screening of 'Gods Own Country';
- embedded issues of sexual orientation in the University's Changing the Culture project including the statistics shown in the graffiti campaign and the Leeway Training on Domestic and Relationship Abuse;
- (will have) run its first Diversity Day as part of Do Something Different Week which included stands for Staff Pride and included information about their Dignity and Respect Champion mini-Network;

- Approved its new Dignity and Respect Policy with specific reference to sexual orientation and trans and non-binary employees;
- Launched its Straight Allies Initiative (via Diversity Day and with a follow up piece in the Staff and Student Bulletins);
- Run four more Trans and Gender Identity Awareness Training Sessions (3.5 hours each) with another planned for May 2018;
- Approved Guidance for Students Transitioning

Thanks go to all colleagues who have initiated activity or supported, and continue to support, the efforts of the Equality Office in the above.

Helen Murdoch
Head of Equality and Diversity
February 2018