

# **Borough of Poole**

## **Equalities Leadership Group**

**26 March 2014**

### **HR Equality Monitoring Report**

#### **1. Purpose of this Report**

1.1 This report provides an update on equality and diversity issues concerning the Council's workforce, as agreed by ELG at its most recent meeting held on 24 January this year.

1.2 The report updates the ELG on a number of relevant matters, including:

- Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2014 – outcomes for Borough of Poole
- New Loop pages
- Springboard women's development programme
- "People Matter" staff survey results
- £150k investment by the Council in apprenticeships and related initiatives, "Leading the way"
- Employee statistics and equality monitoring outcomes

#### **2. Stonewall Workplace Equality Index**

2.1 The Council took part in the WEI for the fourth consecutive year. A meeting was held within the past few weeks with Poole's Stonewall account manager, to assess the results we achieved. The meeting led to useful identification of work that can be undertaken to continue the Council's steady progress as an LGBT-friendly employer, and to enable the best possible assessment outcomes next time.

2.2 Poole was ranked in 218<sup>th</sup> place, out of 369 employing organisations which took part in the WEI this year. In 2013, we were ranked higher at 174<sup>th</sup> out of 376 employers. Much of the reason for our slipping down the table by comparison to the year before was due to the extra points we scored in 2013 because of a major LGBT awareness-raising drive earlier that year. As in previous years, the score now required to break into the top 100 employers in the WEI list increased, and is now 167 points (Poole scored 106), so this shows other employers are making faster improvements than we are able to achieve at this time.

2.3 Actions and learning points from meeting with our account manager were as follows:

- We were advised not to be too modest about our progress as an LGBT-friendly employer: we are doing really well and need to promote ourselves better
- Include information on LGBT issues in all our benefits – such as parental leave, counselling etc.; actively promote that the benefits are the same for LGB staff as for others
- Poole's HR monitoring form for protected characteristics needs to be expanded and include added detail; Stonewall to send through example good practice form.
- Senior management needs to be more prominent; suggestion that Jan should take the figurehead role and arrange, if possible, for another to deputise and undertake some of the work on her behalf
- Employee network group needs to take more ownership and be more proactive
- Monitor / attend where possible relevant training courses
- Message to go out to staff re importance of equality monitoring (not just LGBT but other protected characteristics)
- Area for improvement is procurement; answers in WEI questionnaire were weak but were given benefit of doubt. Really not clear that contractors are asked to monitor and promote LGBT (and/or other protected characteristics). Also not sure if we make our contractors compliant in treatment of employees.
- Really liked our web pages – had a few suggestions / amendments which we have done.

### **3. New Pages on the Loop**

- 3.1 The development of the Council's new intranet, the Loop, has been seized upon by the HR Service as the ideal opportunity to improve the quality of support we can give to employees, in a number of areas. Several of these are relevant to the work of the ELG.
- 3.2 HR is setting up a number of 'landing pages' to provide information and sources of advice and assistance for employees, covering the following issues, for example:
- Mental health
  - General well-being
  - Support information for employee groups with protected characteristics under the equality Act: such as LGB, religion / belief, age, race and disability
  - Employees who are carers

Some examples of the pages will be circulated at the ELG meeting.

### **4. Springboard**

- 4.1 Two Springboard courses were run during 2013, benefiting 56 Borough of Poole employees, with another 4 places sold to delegates from North Dorset

DC and Poole Housing Partnership. Each of these cohorts was then invited to attend an evaluation event with the Management Team, one of which was also attended by the Leader of the Council. Feedback was extremely positive.

- 4.2 Based on the positive feedback received about this initial investment in Springboard, two further cohorts are now going to run during 2014. The nomination process is well advanced and the first course will begin this Friday, 28 March, ending in early June. The second cohort will then run between September and November this year.
- 4.3 Springboard began as a result of workforce data in late 2011, showing that, whilst 68 of Poole's workforce in service units were women, only 59% of management posts (the top 25% of earners) were women. Only 48% of the top 5% of earners were women. The figures today show that these proportions have altered in the past two years: the top 25% of earners now includes 66% who are women, so the gap in representation has narrowed. It is not possible to be sure what difference, if any, investing in the Springboard programme will have influenced this recent change, but it is suspected there will have been some positive influence at the margins.

## **5. People Matter Survey 2013**

- 5.1 The 'People Matter' staff survey is undertaken every two years, and the most recent took place in the last few months of 2013. The results overall were very positive, but some aspects of the feedback are relevant to the work of the ELG. For example, women employees were generally more likely than male employees to say they enjoy working for the Council, and in general their responses were more optimistic and buoyant.
- 5.2 The other main area of difference was that concerning disabled employees who completed and returned the survey questionnaire. Examples of the lesser extent of satisfaction expressed by our disabled employees are as follows:
  - Only 82% of disabled respondents said they enjoy working for the Council, compared to 91% of other staff
  - Only 56% of disabled staff agreed the Council cares about its employees, compared to 68% of other staff
  - Only 38% of disabled staff were satisfied with how change is managed by the Council, compared to 52% of others
  - Only 65% of disabled staff agreed their line manager is committed to their development, compared to 76% of others
  - Only 47% of disabled staff had confidence in the leadership of the Chief Executive and Directors, compared to 61% of others
- 5.3 The Council should undertake work to understand the issues behind these negative responses much more closely. To that end, HR has started discussion with the 'Voice' staff group around how they would like share their learning and experiences with ELG about working in BoP with a disability, in response to the PMS feedback.

- 5.4 We have begun to develop a toolkit to help raise awareness and support for managers and employees (not yet published), and have sent a draft of this to Voice for their comments. This can be shared with ELG at a future meeting. Its impact will be heightened if given visible commitment from senior management team and members, ideally with quotes / podcasts to be added to the toolkit, etc.

## 6. Apprentices – Leading the Way

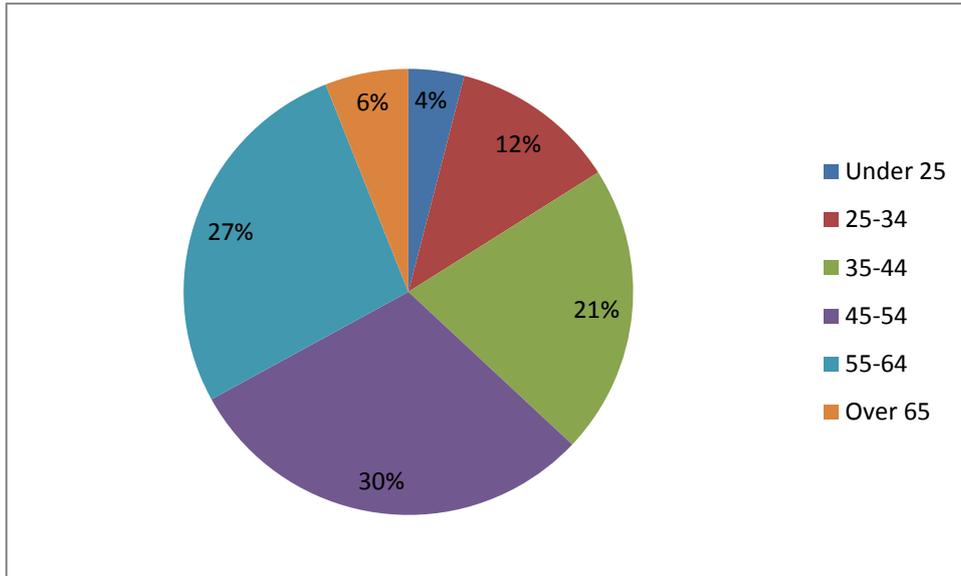
- 6.1 It is too early to say much in detail about this recent initiative, approved by Council last month. Discussion with the Leader of the Council has identified the intended scope of the project in a general sense. This has clarified that the intention of the funding is particularly to enable young people who experience disadvantages to access apprenticeships with the Council. This will include 'Families with Futures' families but also other high need groups such as Care Leavers, Young Carers etc.

## 7. Summary of Main Conclusions from the Latest Employee Data

- 7.1 The workforce is ageing rapidly. This is something that is seen in Local Government nationally, but the pattern in Poole's workforce goes beyond the national average levels of ageing workforce in the sector. Removal of the default retirement age in 2012 is exacerbating this problem.
- 7.2 The Council now has two years of recruitment data which show variable patterns in respect of many groups protected under the Equality Act, but which consistently show disproportionate difficulty for minority ethnic people, male applicants, and to lesser extent other protected groups, trying to obtain a job with Borough of Poole. The need to address the 'unconscious bias' agenda is clearly, therefore, important.
- 7.3 Under-representation of minority ethnic and disabled people is more obvious in some service units than in others. It is feasible that part of the problem is under-recording of such data, but equally likely that some units need to be encouraged to do more to address such imbalances. It is intended that action will be taken on the issue of potential unconscious bias in recruitment, and officers will develop measures to target efforts on the areas where this will be most effective.
- 7.4 The percentages of **male and female employees** have shifted marginally in the past two quarters and the organisation is now composed of 70% women and 30% men. The proportions were 68% and 32% respectively (rounded up or down to the nearest whole number) as recently as the year ending 31 March 2013.
- 7.5 The proportion of employees prepared to advise the organisation that they have a **disability** is 3.0%. The proportion of employees identifying themselves as of **minority ethnicity** is 1.9%.

7.6 Looking at the data on **employees' age**, the picture is as follows:

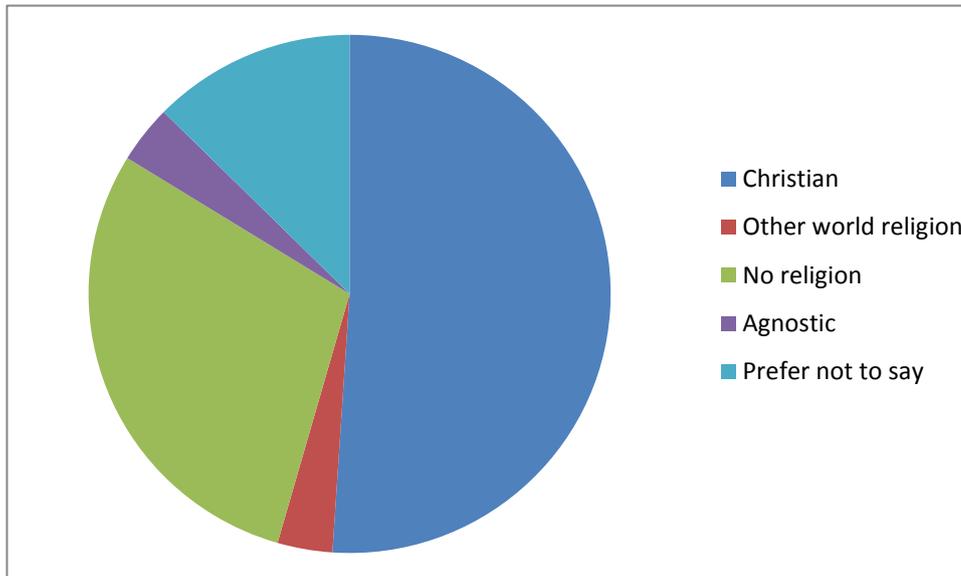
Up to age 25:	4%
25-34:	12%
35-44:	21%
45-54:	30%
55-64:	27%
Over age 65:	6%



7.7 Only 37% of employees in service units are now below age 45. This has fallen from 41% in the past 2 years, and reflects the scale and speed of our ageing workforce issues. The figure was 46% in the year ending September 2009. The proportion aged under 25 has fallen from 7% of the workforce as recently as the year ending September 2009, to 4%. At the other end of the scale, 33% are now aged 55 or older, increased from 30% at the year ending December 2011.

7.8 The above data support the desirability of the Council continuing to prioritise employment opportunities for young people within its workforce. These include apprenticeships, higher apprenticeships and various forms of traineeships and placements. They also reinforce the importance of the Council's Civic Temps scheme, which historically has been the most effective means by which younger employees have been attracted to come and work here. It is clear from these figures that more work needs to be done to focus on succession planning right across the organisation.

7.9 In terms of **religious affiliation**, the data show the following pattern among current employees in service units, based on a response rate of 21.2% of the workforce:



- 50.5% of staff in service units say they are Christian
- 3.5% adhere to different religions
- 3.9% are agnostic
- 29.6% are atheist or have said they have no religion
- 12.4% prefer not to say

7.10 Looking at **sexual orientation**, the breakdown is as follows, based on a response rate of 19.7% of the workforce:

- 85.1% say they are heterosexual
- 2.1% say they are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- 12.8% prefer not to say

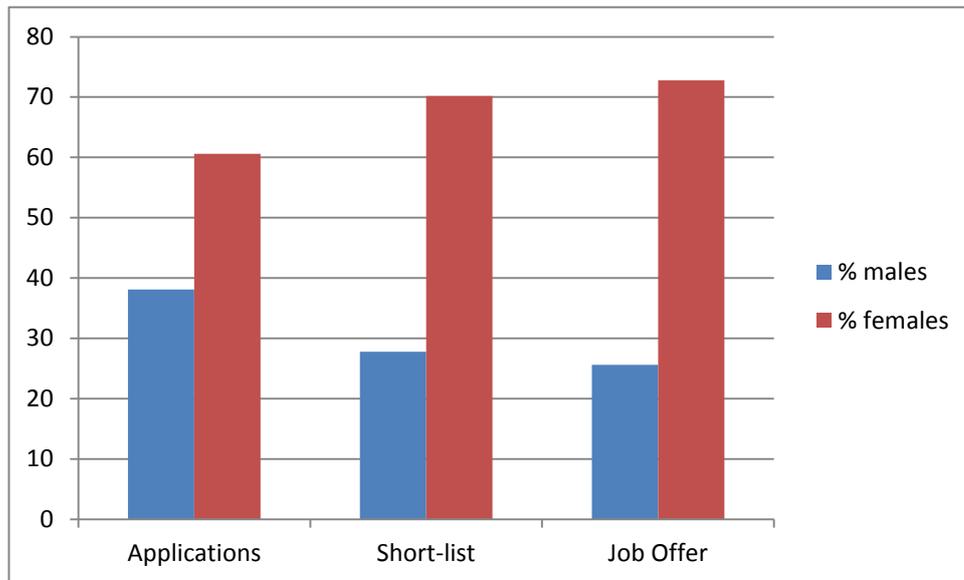
7.11 Concerns remain about attitudes and behaviour in respect of sexual orientation, and the figures are not entirely positive in relation to that issue and other issues of workplace diversity. The proportions of the workforce willing to enter data into the system about their religious and sexual identities is as low as 1 in 5, and even of that small proportion over 12% actively tell us they prefer not to give this information. Members may see this as indicating the need for management intervention to reinforce messages about a genuinely inclusive workplace culture.

7.12 Figures for the last 6 months of 2013 shows that 105 jobs were advertised during this period, 84 interview shortlists were compiled, and 125 appointments were made by the Borough's service units. The total number of applications for these vacancies during the period was 1089, and 382 applicants were shortlisted for interview.

7.14 **Male and female applicants:** 60.6% of the above applicants told us they were female, and 38.1% told us they were male, with 1.3% declining to give

us that information. When the short-listing stage was reached, the proportions altered markedly to 70.2% females and 27.8% males, 2% unknown at that point.

7.15 At the appointment stage, 72.8% were females, and 25.6% males. In terms of data held within the Recruit system, 1.6% were unknown. This means that, once again, the same general picture has emerged of male applicants dropping out at disproportionately high rates: males fell as a proportion throughout the recruitment process by 32.8%, slightly more than the reduction seen in 2012 and the first half of 2013.



7.16

figures this  
nts  
half of

- 5.33% of applicants informed us they were disabled
- 6.28% of people short-listed for interview were disabled
- 2.40% of those given conditional job offers were disabled

7.17 In this latest set of data, disabled applicants were 55% less likely to be appointed by comparison to their proportion at the stage of initial application. Only 125 appointments were made in the latter half of 2013, compared to 169 in the first half, when disabled job applicants were being appointed in higher proportions. Throughout 2013 as a whole, therefore, the proportions of disabled people appointed were roughly equal to the proportions who applied.

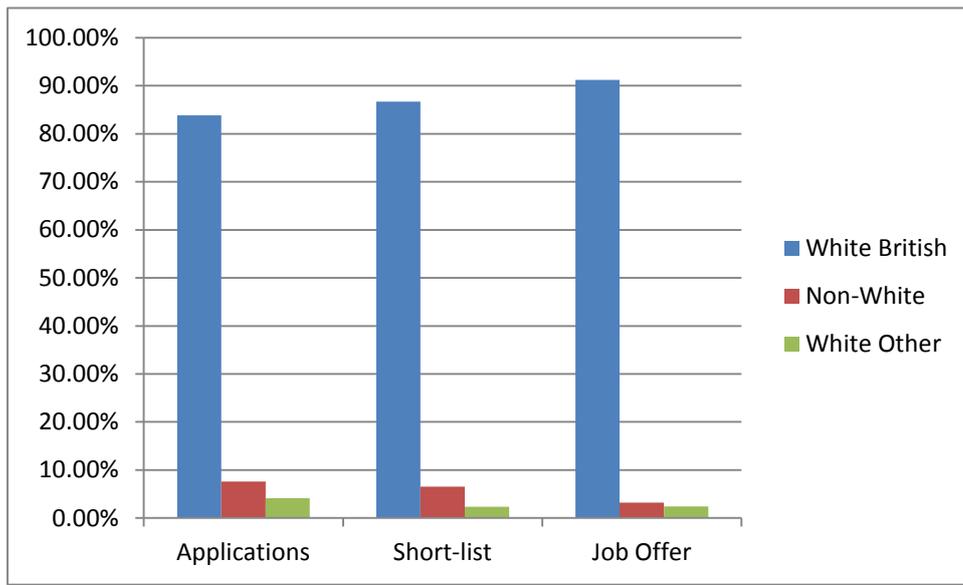
7.18 Looking at **ethnicity**, the following figures emerged and once again show much cause for concern:

- 7.62% of applicants were non-white, and another 4.13% were 'other white' (in other words, not White British)
- 6.54% of those shortlisted were non-white, and another 2.35% were 'other white'
- Only 3.20% of appointments went to non-white applicants, whilst 2.40% of appointments went to 'other white' applicants

7.19 These figures again reinforce the picture that people who applied for jobs in Borough of Poole during the second half of 2013 had much reduced chances

of obtaining the job they applied for if they were from an ethnic minority, especially so where applicants were non-white. Once again, less than half the proportion of those appointed was non-white by comparison to the proportion of those who applied, this group reducing as a proportion by 58%.

7.20 'Other white' applicants fell as a proportion by 42%. Looking at all BME applicants, including white non-British categories of ethnicity, 11.75% of all applicants during the period came from these groups, but only 5.6% (less than half) were offered employment in the Borough.



7.21 270 employees in service units attended corporate training courses during the latter half of 2013:

- 31% were men
- 69% were women
- 3% advised us they were disabled
- 1.1% were of an ethnic background other than 'White British'

7.22 These figures are broadly similar to previous data, and broadly in line with the wider workforce, apart from representation of minority ethnic employees in this latest batch of figures. It appears that, proportionately to their representation within the Borough's workforce, minority ethnic employees have not had as much access to participation in training and development courses.

**Head of HR**  
**25 March 2014**