

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

13. Employment Monitoring Data 2015-16

Purpose of report

1. This report summarises progress against the Public Sector Equality Duty, prior to the publication of the Employment Monitoring Data 2015-16 on the Service website.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following areas are noted:

- i) Progress has been made in increasing the diversity profile of Retained Duty System (RDS) staff with an increase in representation from female and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) RDS groups;***
- ii) Targeted recruitment campaigns to increase the representation of local communities within the workforce are ongoing;***
- iii) There has been progress in reducing formal disciplinary, harassment and bullying case work, and it should be noted that this has coincided with the Training Centre reporting an increased number of staff who have completed Equality and Diversity training.***

Background

Public Sector Equality Duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty. It requires public bodies with 150 or more employees to publish information at least annually about their employees, to further the aims of the Equality Duty and to consider how activities affect people possessing one or more of the nine Protected Characteristics, which are as follows:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage/civil partnership status
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Region or belief
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation

3. Effective monitoring is an important tool for measuring performance and progress towards equality and diversity objectives and for ensuring a more inclusive working environment. It enables the Service to examine how employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where these appear to be impacting disproportionately on certain groups of staff. This should lead to more informed and inclusive decision making in activities affecting the workforce, for example, recruitment, selection and promotion.
4. Effective monitoring also helps in minimising possible legal, financial and reputational harm. Understanding the composition of the workforce also enables the Service to highlight differences between groups to help identify, tackle and prevent issues that could otherwise undermine employee engagement and working relationships.

Employment Monitoring Data Trends

5. The Employment Monitoring Data covers five main areas: staff in post, applications for employment, applications for promotion, leavers and casework. The full set of data is set out in Appendix 1.
6. While there has been little change in employment information relating to the Protected Characteristics since the previous Employment Monitoring Data Report in 2014-15, there has been progress in a number of important areas, as noted below.

Staff in Post

7. Since 2012-13, the overall number of employees has reduced from 844 to 766. The number of wholetime operational staff has reduced from 313 to 265 and the number of support staff has reduced from 135 to 93. This is primarily due to resignations, retirements and voluntary redundancies, though there was also a small number of compulsory redundancies for support staff in 2013.

Ethnicity

8. The overall number of BME staff has decreased from 14 in 2012-13 to 12 in 2015-16, mainly as a result of a reduction in the number of support staff. There have been more BME applicants for support staff and RDS vacancies in 2015-16, resulting in the number of BME RDS staff increasing from 7 to 9. The number of White Irish Staff is unchanged. In recent months the Service has used targeted advertising on social media to help alert local communities to vacancies. This should help to ensure the workforce is representative of the communities within Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and its progress is being monitored by the Human Resources and Development Department.

Gender

9. The total number of female staff has decreased from 129 in 2012-13 to 105 in 2015-16. This is primarily due to a reduction in the number of support staff through leaving, retirement and voluntary redundancies plus a small number of compulsory redundancies in 2013. However, within this timeframe the number of female RDS

employees increased to 26 in total. This can be linked to a number of positive action initiatives targeting female candidates applying for RDS operational roles, including targeted advertising and offering a female firefighter mentor to support candidates through the recruitment process. Supporting female firefighters in maintaining their fitness is referenced in as part of a fitness report which has been submitted to SMB, with a particular focus on the affects of the menopause and post menopausal fitness.

Sexual Orientation

10. There has been an increase in the number of gay/lesbian applications for employment in 2015-16. 14 applications were received compared to 8 in the previous year. The number of staff declaring themselves as gay/lesbian in 2015-16 has also increased from 4 to 5 compared to the previous year. The Service continues to explore ways of engaging with the LGBT communities.

Disability

11. Overall there has been a decrease in the number of staff, who have declared themselves as being disabled. This is due to a reduction in the numbers of wholetime and support staff. However, there has been an increase from 4 to 5 in the number of RDS staff who have declared themselves as being disabled.

Religion

12. There has been an increase in the number of staff who have declared themselves as religious. The increase is by 1 in each of the Buddhist and Muslim classifications. There has also been an increase in the number of applications received from the Buddhist, Muslim and Sikh communities.

Age

12. Applications for employment have increased across all age classifications. There has also been an increase in applications for promotion amongst the 25-35, 36-45 and 46-55 age categories.

Leavers

13. There has been an incremental increase in the number of retirees over the previous four years. There has also been an increase in the number of resignations, particularly from within support staff leaving the Service. Findings from exit interviews with support staff indicate that remuneration packages at new employers are better than provision within the Service. Work is currently underway to explore the use of market supplements for hard-to-recruit-to vacancies.

Case Work

14. There is downward trend in the overall number of staff who have been subject to formal disciplinary action. There has been an overall increase in the number of grievance cases, 4 of which have been raised by wholetime staff and 2 by support staff. There have been no cases of harassment and bullying reported, and it should be noted that this has coincided with the Training Centre reporting an increased number of staff who have completed Equality and Diversity training.

Conclusion

14. The Service continues to make good progress in embedding Equality and Diversity and will continue to provide updates to this Committee. All employment monitoring data will be published on the Service website in accordance with the Public Service Equality Duty.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	None
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Supports and enables the people objective in the Corporate Strategy
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Not applicable however this report demonstrates commitment to embed the Equality Duty

Background and Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Employment Monitoring Data 2015-16

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