

House of Commons Executive Committee

Diversity and Inclusion update

Paper from: Head of Diversity and Inclusion

Paper prepared by: Anne Foster

For the meeting on: 15 October 2015

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on progress against the priority areas of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2015–18.

Action for the Committee

2. The Committee is asked to note progress and continue to champion delivery of the strategy's aims.

Progress this quarter

3. Progress has been made against the priority areas. Some key elements are highlighted below:

Leadership and management

- (I) Objectives: heads of department have been drafting their D&I-related objectives and have proposed to publish them. The D&I team will work with departments to support the cascade of this to other managers and staff.
- (II) Parliamentary Role Models campaign: over 60 nominations were received from pass holders, and judged by a panel with representatives from the Management Boards of each House, the WENs and an external judge. 24 role models will be showcased in a booklet which will be used to promote a positive working environment internally, and as part of our outreach and engagement activities externally. A launch event will be held on 11 November.
- (III) Award nomination: ParliOUT has been shortlisted for another award, Inclusive Network's "Network Team of the Year". The awards are announced in November, with committee members in attendance. It has provided another communication channel to showcase Parliament as an inclusive workplace.

Achieving representation targets at senior level

- (IV) SCS minority ethnic target: the 2015 target for SCS has been achieved, following the appointment of Marianne Cwynarski as Secretary to the Executive Committee. Formerly Head of Internal Communications, and Chair of ParliREACH, the workplace equality network for

race, ethnicity and cultural heritage, Marianne is the first black female SCS in the House of Commons Service. She shared her personal story at the House of Lords senior management away day and will do so again at the recruitment open day (see paragraph (V) below) as part of her Parliamentary Role Model commitments.

- (V) Internships for minority ethnic graduates: we have partnered with the Windsor Fellowship to offer three one-year internships. WF's mission "involves promoting excellence in education, employment and citizenship to ensure diverse talent emerges, succeeds and is deployed in leadership positions."¹ The internships tie in with our D&I objectives to increase the diversity of our staff in the senior bands and complement activities developed in the Committee Office (including open days and targeted secondment opportunities) to encourage minority ethnic candidates to consider the House of Commons as an inclusive employer offering career prospects². Applicants have been shortlisted and we are in the middle of interviewing. The three successful interns are expected to start in November.
- (VI) Open day: one of the barriers to addressing the ethnic diversity of the workforce is that many job hunters do not consider parliament as an employer or perceive that they are not represented in the staff demographic and are therefore less likely to progress their careers. Following the interest generated by the Windsor Fellowship internships, we are holding an open day on 28 October in the Attlee Suite. This will include information on careers in the House and Digital Service, how to look for and apply for jobs with us (including the fast stream), career prospects, and learning and development opportunities.

Talent management

- (VII) A new post of Talent Manager has been developed, and last month an internal recruitment competition was run. Jenny Radcliffe (Business Change Manager for the Security Restructuring Programme, and Co-chair of ParliOUT) was the successful applicant, and takes up her appointment on 23 November. Jenny will be responsible for the design, development and running of the House's talent-based programmes and processes. The work will join up talent management activities across DHRC, aligning it to the wider People Strategy as well as the D&I Strategy. For the first 18 months, the post will sit in the D&I team, to reflect the importance of integrating diversity and inclusion into talent management approaches and processes. The 'Unlocking Potential' proposals originally presented to the Management Board in 2013 will be reviewed and a pilot developed.
- (VIII) Stonewall leadership and allies programmes: ParliOUT has been sponsoring places on Stonewall's leadership and allies programmes, to support LGBT staff to develop their leadership skills and allies to strengthen their understanding of inclusive management. These will be evaluated and consideration given to running similar development internally.

Consistency across the House Service

- (IX) Workplace adjustment process: ParliAble, the workplace equality network in support of disability issues, is leading on research to determine how effective our adjustments processes work. This will result in a guide, complementing the Good Manager Guide, and consideration of an end-to-end process to decrease waiting times for adjustments. A survey will be released next month.

¹ <http://www.windsor-fellowship.org/#!/about2/c4nz>

² <http://www.windsor-fellowship.org/#!/house-of-commons-internship-programme/c1pgn>

- (X) Business planning: as part of the financial challenge process, a workshop was held for members of the Business Management Group, to discuss how the aims of the D&I Strategy will be considered in departmental business plans. The D&I team will now work with business management directors to ensure key measures are captured in the strategy's action plan.

Monitoring and quality assurance

- (XI) Stonewall Workplace Equality Index: working closely with ParliOUT, we have made our submission against the 2016 index. Currently ranked 126th, we are aiming to reach the top 100. A key area we will focus on this year is line management engagement.
- (XII) Gender-sensitive parliament: Sarah Childs, Professor of Gender and Politics at Bristol University, is seconded to the House for six months to address issues of women's inequality and develop a series of reforms that address existing gender insensitivities. This work will concentrate on three dimensions: equality and participation within the House, gender-sensitive infrastructure, and gender-sensitive culture. An advisory board has been set up, chaired by Mr Speaker, with staff representatives including from Parliagender. A Members' panel will convene shortly.
- (XIII) Louder Than Words Charter Mark: the House submitted evidence to Action On Hearing Loss and in September was reaccredited with the charter mark. While there is more work to do on induction loops in meeting rooms and signage (e.g. in lifts), the submission was praised for its thorough approach to making improvements for deaf and hard of hearing people.

Business as usual

4. As well as work to deliver the actions in the strategy, business-as-usual activities include:
 - (I) Speaker's Parliamentary Placement Scheme: changes have been made to the governance arrangements, following the standing down of Hazel Blears at the General Election and the withdrawal of the Social Mobility Foundation as the third party provider. Dan Jarvis MP is now leading the scheme and The Creative Society have replaced the SMF. Trustees have been voted in and the SPPS has applied for Charitable Incorporated Organisation status. 10 interns are due to start at the end of October.
 - (II) Apprentice Scheme: nine new apprentices have been recruited this year, seven of whom are studying for a NVQ in business administration, one studying finance, and one studying engineering. One apprentice from last year's cohort will continue for a second year, studying professional cookery.
 - (III) Diversity monitoring: the latest report has been drafted and will be released next month.

Financial and procurement implications

5. The WENs are working within their budgets and are using the business case process effectively. Contracts (including with the Windsor Fellowship and The Creative Society) have been tendered for with advice and support from the PPCS team.

House of Lords implications

6. The D&I team has continued to work with the House of Lords and find ways of collaborating, most notably with the Parliamentary Role Models campaign. The Lords Management Board has been supportive of D&I aims and representatives from D&I and the WENs were asked to participate in an hour-long session as part of the Lords' senior management away day last month.

Communications

7. Now that resources are in place within the Organisational Development and Change team, a project management approach has been adopted for the strategy's action plan, allowing more effective prioritising and monitoring of activities. The project plan will be provided ahead of the next update. A communications plan will be developed in line with this.

Anne Foster
Head of Diversity and Inclusion
7 October