Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Annual Report

April 2021-March 2022

Introduction

In May 2021, the newly formed Buckinghamshire Council published its Diversity & Inclusion Framework which set out our commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion for our workforce. Building on a series of discussions and forums led by our EDI staff networks, the framework set out 5 priorities that we wanted to tackle together:

- A better understanding of the diversity profile of the workforce via data collection improvements.
- Increased participation in the staff networks
- An increase in the diversity of the workforce
- Staff with disabilities and staff who are carers feeling supported at work
- Employees across the organisation feeling a strong sense of belonging

Action Plan

Our EDI action plan for 2021/2022 focused on four areas:

Developing organisational knowledge and awareness of equalities, diversity and inclusion.

Reviewing recruitment and development practices.

Reviewing working practices

Understanding our workforce diversity profile

This report summaries the progress we have delivered against these actions during 2021/22, with particular thanks to staff in our networks who have volunteered their time and energy to move us forward as an organisation.

Outcomes

During April 2021 to March 2022 we have completed the following deliverables as we have moved forward through the year, establishing and embedding our culture change position and making progress on our achievement aims:
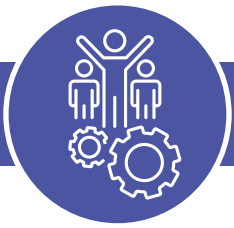
- Our four Staff networks (Race Equality, LGBT+, Carers and Disability and Wellness) continue to meet every 12-16 weeks, with over 150 members of staff signed up. The networks are the pinnacle of our approach, providing a safe and confidential environment for both personal and strategic development.
- Welcomed four new co-chairs after 1st year of delivery.
- Introduced a new category celebrating equality and diversity within our Staff awards.
- Delivered a number of high profile internal comms campaigns, including LGBT history Month, PRIDE, Inclusion Week, Black History Month and Carers Rights Day, and the
- Produced an equalities newsletter.
- Regular inclusion of an equalities update in all staff briefings.
- Published external social media communications around our work, including twitter, Facebook and linked-in.

- Development of staff EDI blogs – these had a huge number of hits especially over LGBT+ history month. Podcasts were trialled during our internal comms campaigns during PRIDE 2021.
- Delivered a variety of internal staff sessions, including an EDI tea break talk, a carers tea break talk and service based training on EqIA completion.
- Applied to attend London Pride 2021 as an organisation – were successful but London Pride later cancelled due to covid. Applied to attend London Pride 2022.
- Introduced voluntary pronouns and phonetic spelling for staff signatures as an option in our internal branding guidance.
- Awarded a Bronze Tidemark Award in August 2021, demonstrating our high level of work and ongoing commitment to improvement.

- Published an EDI statement for recruitment for our website
- Supported the development of a template for job adverts to help managers write inclusive adverts.
- Measured take up of our current mentoring and coaching offer to enable us to develop new opportunities in 2022-23.
- Completed a small sample external blind recruitment trial with plans to deliver more in 2022-23.
- Commissioned Inclusion UK to deliver in person Managers Training around EDI – so far over 90 managers have attended, with 40 more planned.
- Published a variety of bitesize training videos for staff around equalities (Skills Boosters).

- Published a new EqIA template and cumulative internal register, whilst supporting staff to complete these to a good standard.
- Delivered a new, quick and simple online process to enable software requests for staff as required as a reasonable adjustment.
- Commissioned a Reverse Mentoring Programme due to be delivered in spring 2022.
- Developed and piloted a Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit for staff.
- Developed several assistive documents for staff, including a comparative carers leave document to help staff navigate legacy terms and conditions, and glossary of EDI terminology.
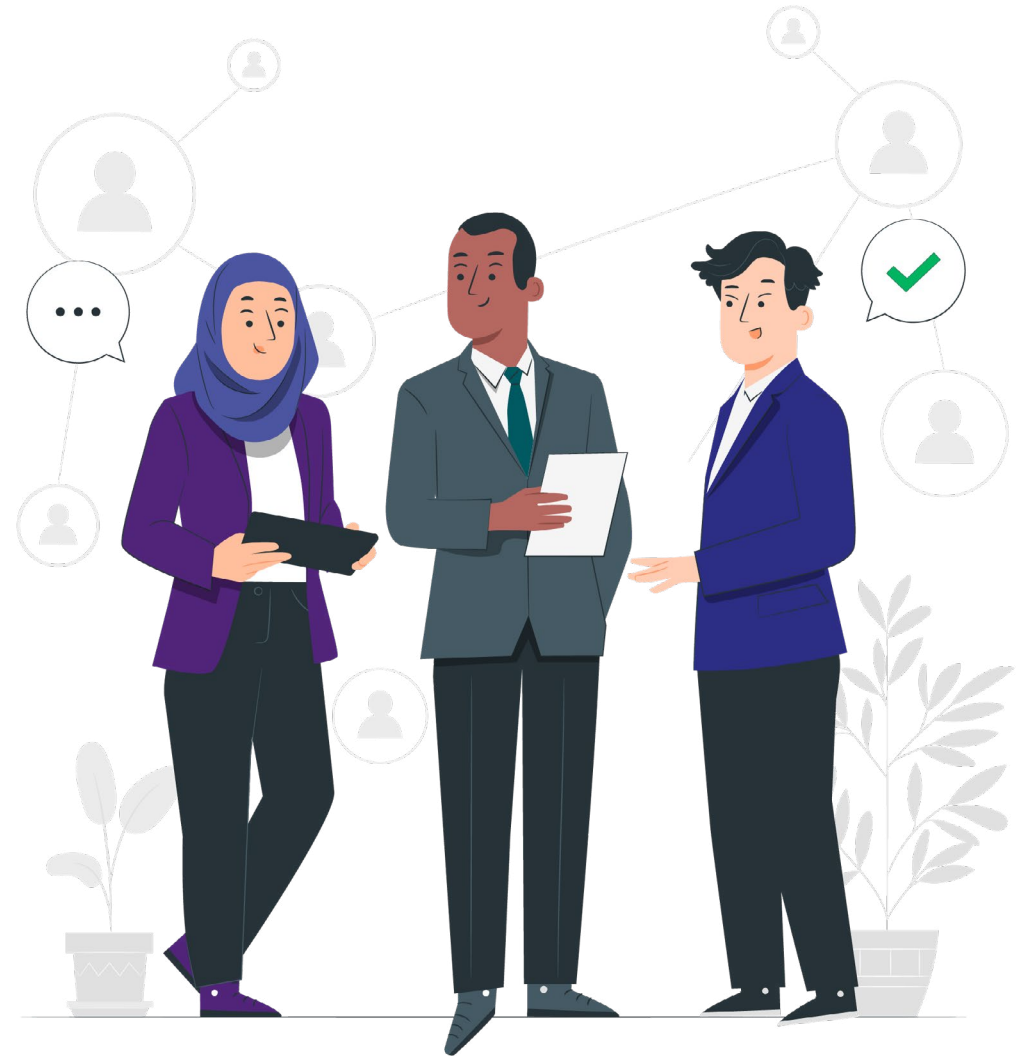
- Improved staff data submission and quality, including amendments to categories on SAP to allow staff to identify more appropriately. We have seen an increase in declarations over the last year, with data on ethnicity and religion seeing the highest increases.
- Identified categories of staff data we would seek to include when technology permits, including information around carers responsibilities and armed forces links.
- Identified ways of breaking EDI staff data down to directorate and service level.
- Produced a second Workforce Profile data report for publication in May 2022, comparing data over the past 2 years.

- Delivered an all staff survey about equalities and self-identification, which was completed by over 1500 staff members.
- Developed a regular EDI reporting & monitoring score card.
- Developed data reports for each directorate and service looking at the makeup of the workforce.

Conclusions

We have made great progress in 2021/22, and established some new approaches that should become core to the way that the Council works moving forward. As we move into 2022-23, we are looking to build upon these achievements.

Our new action plan & framework will drive the next stage of developments in partnership with the staff networks and the EDI steering group, seeking to further establish our organisation as a place where staff from all backgrounds and cultures want to work and grow. Our focus is on maintaining pace, recognising the importance of culture and continuing to drive and embed the values we have been shaping.