

EQUALITY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting on 26th November 2015

Conference Room, level 7, Edinburgh Procurator Fiscal Office, 29 Chambers St.

Present

Dawn Lewington (Facilitator)

Anne Graham, Crown Office Trainee (Minutes)

Members

Bill Gray

Jacq Kelly

Sue Anderson

Zosia Frazer

Michelle Macleod, HM Inspectorate

Delegates

Ruth McQuaid

Karen Kennedy

Sandy Mackie (by VC)

Apologies:

Anne O'Reilly

Diego Quiroz

Emma Ritch

Heather McVey

Michele Burman

Maureen Sier

Monica Lee-MacPherson

Attending:

John Dunn

Paul Lowe

Robert Martin (by VC)

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 DL welcomed everyone to the meeting, including two new members – JK and ZF. All attendees provided a brief introduction of themselves.
- 1.2 There were seven apologies for today's meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd Sept 2015 in Edinburgh Sheriff Court, were approved with no amendments.
- 2.2 Outstanding Action Points

A.P. 1: RMcQ queried whether this was still outstanding. KK explained that there was no action required of RMcQ, but that DQ had offered to help COPFS to incorporate human rights into our equality impact assessment process. Consequently action point 1 can be closed off for RMcQ.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Shaping the Future Project – Paul Lowe

- 3.1 PL provided an overview of the project to the group including its scope and research methodology. Additional projects to address culture, values and behaviours have been added since inception. The aim of the Program is to

ensure that the structures which make up COPFS are supportive of staff and are fit for purpose.

- 3.2 A large staff consultation was undertaken and the results have been analysed. Some of the main themes of the feedback from staff were:
- The current structures within COPFS can be confusing for external justice partners.
 - Staff development and promotion opportunities/processes could be improved.
 - There are concerns about culture/values/behaviours
- 3.3 Criminal Justice Partners, particularly the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service, have been engaged through workshops and consultations. The information collected from these has yet to be analysed.
- 3.4 PL is the Project Manager and he would like to consult with EAG over the next year while the Program is running. This could be done through him attending meetings, however, it may be easier and more effective if he meets with a smaller number of members.
- 3.5 SA volunteered to work with the project as she has had similar experience with the NHS restructuring.
- 3.6 JK asked how the project will check that feedback is effectively responded to. PL explained that monthly reports are sent to management. The project is trying to get better at publicising their 'narrative' to staff. They want staff to understand the reasons for change, and what value will be added to the service. MMcL agreed that the focus should be on winning hearts and minds.
- 3.7 RMcQ added that a customer survey was done for the first time recently, but that the collection of customer feedback and the methods of measuring satisfaction need to be improved. A baseline should be established from which improvements can be assessed now would be the time to consider how best to establish a baseline in order to effectively evaluate the success of the project later.

ACTION POINT 1: KK will email all members with PL's contact details so that contact can be made directly and ask for another volunteer to work with the project.

4. HR Update – Sandy Mackie and Robert Martin (both by VC)

- 4.1 SM discussed the Management Development Program which was introduced last year.

The programme focuses on manager accountability and how this is met. The MDP is looking at 3 behavioural aspects:

- 1) How managers regard themselves.
- 2) Relationships with/Perception of others
- 3) Managing Performance

SM introduced RM, explaining that he is one of the course designers and delivers the programme. RM described the half day HR module within the programme.

Managers have identified 5 main issues they would like assistance with:

- 1) Attendance
- 2) Conduct
- 3) Poor Performance
- 4) Grievance
- 5) Fair Treatment

If managers wish more detailed information on a particular subject, this can be facilitated.

RMcQ mentioned the Police Scotland Women's Development programme and asked if there was something similar in the MDP. She also asked if there was anything to support promotion of staff from protected characteristics, particularly staff with disabilities and assist in removing any barriers that exist for these groups

SM replied that there are no gender based modules within the programme and RM added that coaching and mentoring is covered. So, whilst MDP is not specifically tailored to any protected groups it should help managers deal comfortably with relevant issues for those with protected characteristics and therefore targeted support can be facilitated during conversations between line managers and job holders

JK agreed with RMcQ that there is scope for more targeted support for women to progress and for people with disabilities. JD said that it would also be beneficial for COPFS to better advertise the range of job opportunities available. Not everyone is a prosecutor in court.

RMcQ asked for the group's views on positive action which she thought might help build confidence of those in protected groups.

RM discussed the new policy of 'blind' recruitment which will be used by the Scottish Government. He felt that the Recruitment Selection training provided by COPFS should also help those managers who have been on the course to proactively help team members who are looking for promotion.

RMcQ wondered if some of the questions used by promotion boards could unwittingly be discriminatory as she had experience of having to point out to other board members unsuitable questions.

DL asked if there was scope for developing a bank of suitable questions to be used for interview boards and suggested that the EAG could help with the creation of appropriate questions.

KK (summing up discussion) said that it seemed that EAG could not contribute at the moment to the MDP, but that there would be opportunity in the future.

5. COPFS Forward Work Planner – Karen Kennedy

- 5.1 KK invited the members to review the policy work forward planner and asked if there was anything they would like further information about.

RMcQ explained that the Solicitor General is currently carrying out a review of services for victims across the criminal justice system, and suggested that members may wish to be involved. She asked if they would mind receiving a questionnaire.

ZF explained that trafficking and special measures are big issues within the polish communities as is the provision of interpretation which she had direct experience in. She asked what special measures were available. KK would arrange for details to be sent to ZF.

DL advised ZF that the WGIT group (Working Group on Interpreting and Translation) would be grateful of any input she could give in relation to the provision of interpreters. DL asked specifically for feedback on any issues the polish community had experienced.

SA explained that she was interested in the Hate Crime Conference which is coming up in March 2016, and the Sexual Offences Bill.

ACTION POINT 2: KK to ask Paul Beaton, Policy Division, to send ZF information on COPFS special measures.

ACTION POINT 3: KK to send Susan Cameron (working on Solicitor General's Review) contact details of members who will be asked to complete a questionnaire.

ACTION POINT 4: KK & DL will contact ZF to discuss the WGIT group and she will be sent the Code of Practice for information.

ACTION POINT 5: KK to invite all the EAG members to the Hate Crime conference.

6. AOCB

- 6.1 Asked members to advise if they felt that any protected groups were not represented and whether more representation was required.
- 6.2 SA mentioned the Buddy System, which worked well and explained that if a member was unable to attend a meeting, their buddy would attend in their place.
- 6.3 KK explained that there will be a half day induction session arranged for all new members. She will contact the members to arrange a suitable date and time.

Action Point 6: KK to arrange a half day induction session for new members.

7. Date and venue of next meeting

The next proposed date is February / March 2016. The exact date is to be confirmed.

MS, who was unable to attend today's meeting, had recently been at an event at Polmont Young Offenders Institution. They had asked if the group would like to hold a future meeting there. All present agreed that the next meeting could be at Polmont. KK to liaise with MS to organise this.