

LGA Workforce Equality work plan following COVID-19, Autumn 2020

Following the government report on understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities (published 16 June) the LGA Workforce team undertook a review of our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work to ensure we have the advice, support and materials to best support the local government workforce at this time.

LGA Workforce 5-point plan:

- 1) Review existing materials and advice
- 2) Refreshed, new materials in an updated guide
- 3) Webinars on Inclusive Leadership, and Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting.
- 4) Review the McGregor-Smith recommendations
- 5) Reviewing Equality Impact Assessments and producing guidance on how they can work effectively for your organisation

1) Existing materials and advice:

- Existing materials on the [LGA Website](#) give advice on how to be inclusive and top tips on diversity. There is also a link to the [LGA Equality Framework](#) which we think provides an excellent and thorough review and includes workforce within that model. Our team has worked with the Improvement Team to review that this element is still relevant and fit for purpose.
- We also always cover equality issues within our Employment law updates and via the monthly Advisory Bulletin: [employment law FAQs and LGA Workforce guidance](#)
- We also promote the [Race at Work Charter](#) developed by Business in the Community which sets out 5 key actions that employers should take. This emerged out of a previous event the team ran with Sandra Kerr from Business in the Community and her slides (still relevant) are on our [web pages here](#). This provides a practical set of actions and reflects the vision local government has for tackling inequalities.

- We will continue to work with Cllr Sharon Taylor who is the lead for equalities on the Resources Board, it is our intention to work with Cllr Taylor to produce additional comms such as blogs and articles in support of this work as it progresses.
- We will continue our work as part of “The Inclusive Fire Service Group” (IFSG) which is an NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services led group. Its membership however is wider and includes the National Employers, NFCC, FBU, FOA and the FRSA. It is unique in that it comprises national employer and employee representation, senior management and trade unions. It considers matters such as equality, diversity, inclusion and cultural issues including bullying and harassment in the fire service with the aim of securing improvement.

2) Refreshed new materials in a new guide:

Undertaking this internal review in the current context, we recognised that a lot of our advice was in different places, and there is a need for easily accessible information. To that end, we are working at pace to bring together practical advice and guidance specifically to deal specifically with racial equality in the local government workforce. This guide will cover issues such as:

- Vision and Inclusive Leadership
- The importance of data collection, and the questions you need to be asking about the data
- How to engage with employees
- Pros and cons of anonymous recruiting processes, and the recruitment process more widely
- Exploring the effectiveness of unconscious bias training and other training options
- The link to procurement
- The importance of language in the workplace
- Succession planning and career pathways
- Ethnicity pay gap reporting

3) Webinars planned for autumn 2020:

- **Inclusive Leadership:** originally planned for the LGA conference 2020, we are turning that session into an online webinar so that we can share ideas and best practice from around local government on what we mean by inclusive leadership and what that looks like.
- **Ethnicity pay gap reporting:** in the way that gender pay gap reporting proved to be a good starting point for conversations about equal pay in the workplace, ethnicity pay gap reporting could enable a similar conversation around race. This tool is by no means perfect but can provide a useful snap shot of for an organisation. Following consultation in 2019, the government decided not to make ethnicity pay gap reporting mandatory, but this issue may well return to the agenda. In any case, there are plenty of arguments to encourage local authorities to voluntarily start reporting their ethnicity gap (which some already do, for example the London Borough of Croydon). This article in [Personnel Today](#) encourages

employers not to wait for the legislation, and to start having a conversation with employees about why this data collection is important.

4) Reviewing the McGregor-Smith recommendations:

The [2017 independent](#) report written by Baroness McGregor-Smith considering the issues affecting black and minority ethnic groups in the workplace contained 30 recommendations which we intend to re-review and ensure we have captured all the learning from that report.

5. Reviewing Equality Impact Assessments:

There is a view that in some areas equality impact assessments have become a tick-box exercise and something to get through, rather than being something that can add value or provide effective support to workforce planning. It is our intention to develop a piece of work to make that public duty more meaningful, better understood – and a more positive tool for employers to access.