

Policy and Finance Committee

2 July 2015

Annual Equalities Update

Report by Executive Head of Organisational Development and Strategic Business

Purpose

To receive the annual summary of progress in the implementation of equalities in service provision and employment.

Recommendations of the Lead Member for Treasury, Finance and HR

To **RESOLVE** that -

1. Progress in the 2014-15 action plan be noted; and
2. The equalities objectives for the next year outlined in the 2015-16 action plan be endorsed.

Key Points

- A. The Council's second Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2013 – 2016 and annual action plan was approved by the former Policy and Resources Committee in June 2013.
- B. The public sector Equality Duty places a general duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions to ensure that the needs of individuals are taken into account when shaping policy, in the delivery of services and in relation to employment and employees.
- C. Members have an important role in scrutinising the equality impact of decisions taken by the Council. This Committee receives annual reports providing a summary of progress on the implementation of equalities in service provision and employment which is set out in our Equality and Community Cohesion action plan. The Committee also receives a midyear RAG rated action plan to map progression reaching objectives. A midyear report went to this Committee in February 2015. Our progress over the last year is detailed in our 2014 – 2015 action plan at **Annex 1** and our equality objectives for next year are outlined in our 2015 – 16 action plan at **Annex 2**.

D. Significant actions to improve equalities and community cohesion over the last year are set out in the following paragraphs.

EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

1. Progress on equalities is monitored through the achievement of targets detailed in our Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy action plan. A summary of some of the main achievements during 2014 – 15 are set out below:
2. Kingston has reinvigorated and further promoted its staff equalities groups, including a new carers group, which has resulted in increased membership.
3. The Kingston Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy was launched in December 2014 with the aim of all those at risk to be 'free from fear' by 2017.
4. The Older People Mental Health Strategy has been developed which has a focus on dementia friendly communities,
5. The equalities implications of the service and budgetary proposals within the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-16 have been reviewed.
6. There has been a reduction in the gap in attainment between boys and girls achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE
7. There has been an improvement in the early identification of child sexual exploitation through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
8. A number of equalities events have taken place through the year:
 - **Black History Month Staff Event** – October 2014 - Organised with Kingston Race Equality Council and the BME Staff Group . The event included a talk by Kurt Barling who has worked as a senior broadcaster at the BBC on the importance of role models and we heard music from a Korean harpist.
 - **Disability History Month** - December 2014, organised with KCIL and Disabled Staff Group. The theme of the event was visual impairment and we had a speaker from the Thomas Pocklington Trust and a presentation from the Parliament for People with Visual Impairment in Kingston.
 - **LGBT History Month:** The LGBT staff support groups from both Richmond and Kingston boroughs joined forces to host two events. A concert delivered by the Richmond Symphonic Concert Band at the Normansfield Theatre in Teddington, was very well attended by staff and other partners.

- **Holocaust Memorial Event** - ' Keeping the Memory Alive' - a civic commemoration service on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps was hosted by Kingston Interfaith Forum on 1 February.

- **International Women's Day** – We celebrated International Women’s Day on 26 March and heard from Elaine Miller, Fundraising Manager for Love Kingston about her inspirational journey, both professionally and personally, to achieving success.

- **National Carers Week** – We will be celebrating National Carers Week with a staff event on 11 June hosted by the Carers Staff Group.

9. Objectives to improve equalities and community cohesion detailed in 2015-16 action plan include:

- i. Further monitoring of the impact of the Welfare Reform Act in relation to all equality strands.
- ii. Kingston data team to maintain and refresh data on website to include all equality strands to enable service commissioners to be able to undertake EQIAs in an informed way.
- iii. Programme and project management toolkit refined to make it easier to do equality assessments at all points in the process.
- iv. Manage the corporate grants programme in line with any changes that emerge from the Grants to Commissioning consultation taking account of equalities issues and community cohesion.
- v. Broaden the choice of foster care placements so that looked after children can be placed in safe and stable placements closer to their home.
- vi. Increase looked after children's participation in their statutory reviews and their active involvement in care planning.
- vii. Provide books in a number of different languages to reflect community need, including books in Korean supported by links developed with the Korean Cultural Service.
- viii. Ensure that Bookstart is delivered via Health Visitors to 95% of babies and toddlers in the Borough.

- ix. Increase participation of groups that traditionally participate less in sport and physical activity such as women and girls, older people, disabled people and young people at risk.
- x. Ensure at least 90% of service users have either an adequate or good knowledge of the funding reform aspects of the Care Act by March 2016.

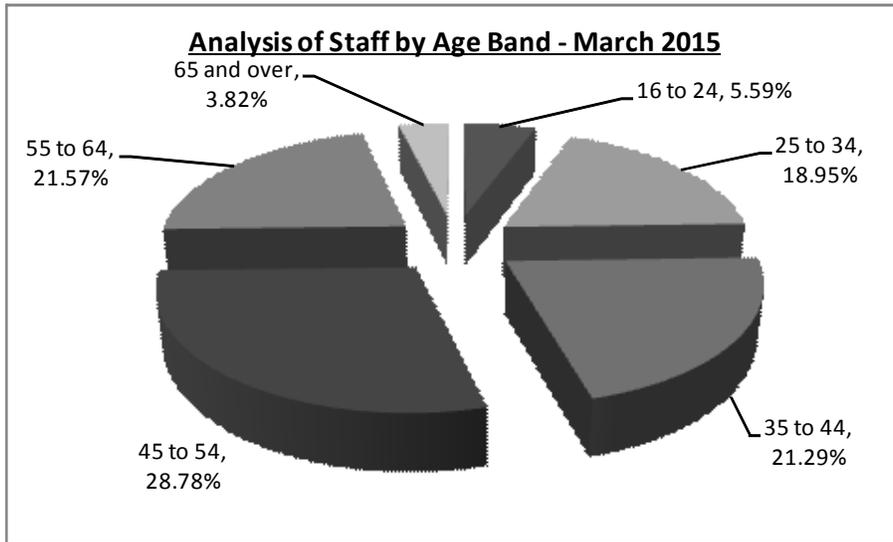
THE EQUALITY ACT 2010 AND THE EQUALITY DUTY

10. The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October 2010. The Act covers discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These categories are now known as “protected characteristics”. The public sector Equality Duty came into effect from 5th April 2011. It places a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions to ensure that the needs of all individuals are taken into account when shaping policy, in the delivery of service and in relation to employment and employees.
11. Councils are required to publish equality objectives annually and we have refreshed our objectives in our updated Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy 2013-2016.

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

12. The Council collects staff monitoring information for the six equality strands of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age covered by the Equality Framework for Local Government.
13. An overview of the current equalities workforce analytics is set out below:

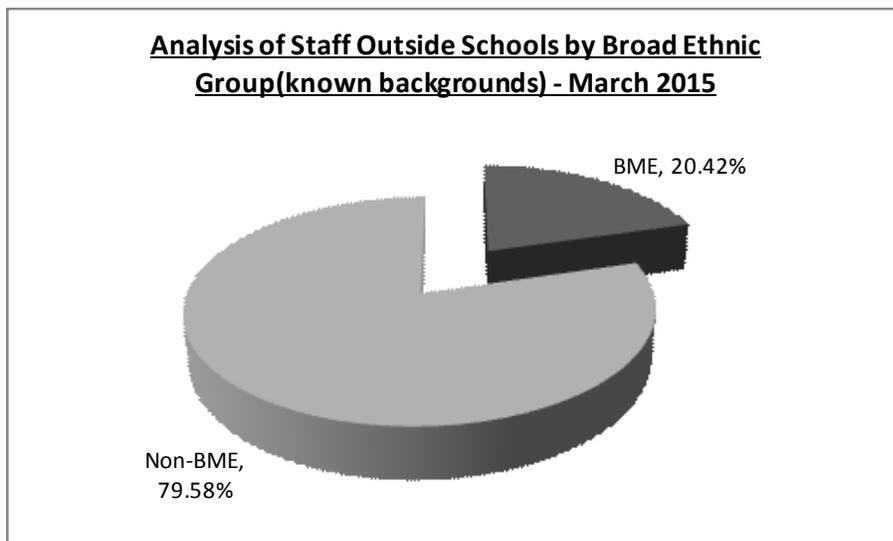
- **Age**



We continue to see a mature workforce with over half the Council's staff outside schools over age 45, although there the gradual trend towards better representation of younger staff is continuing.

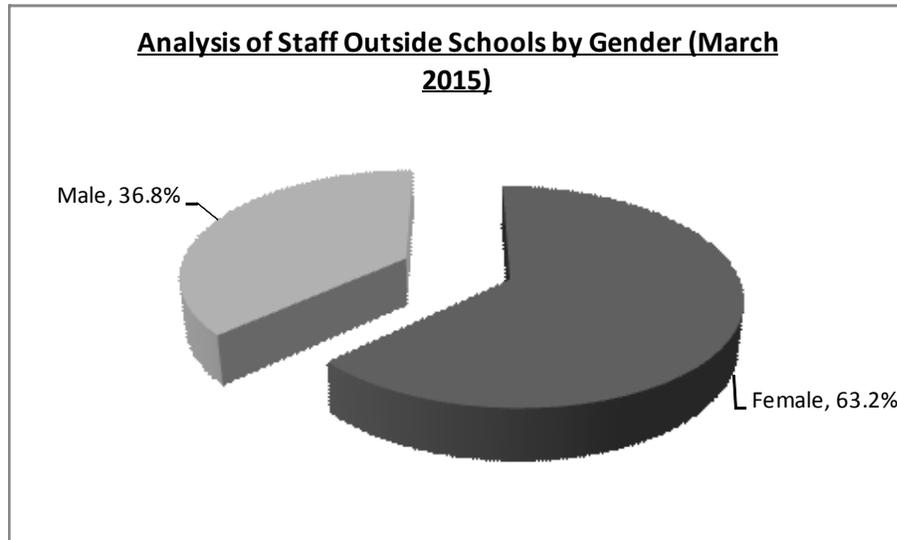
- **Ethnic Background**

Outside schools the percentage of the workforce from ethnic backgrounds has shown a further increase and is now 20.4%, which compares reasonably favourably to the 2011 census figure of 24% for ethnic minority communities in the borough. Outside schools 11.4% of staff earning £50K (fte) or over are from an ethnic minority background.



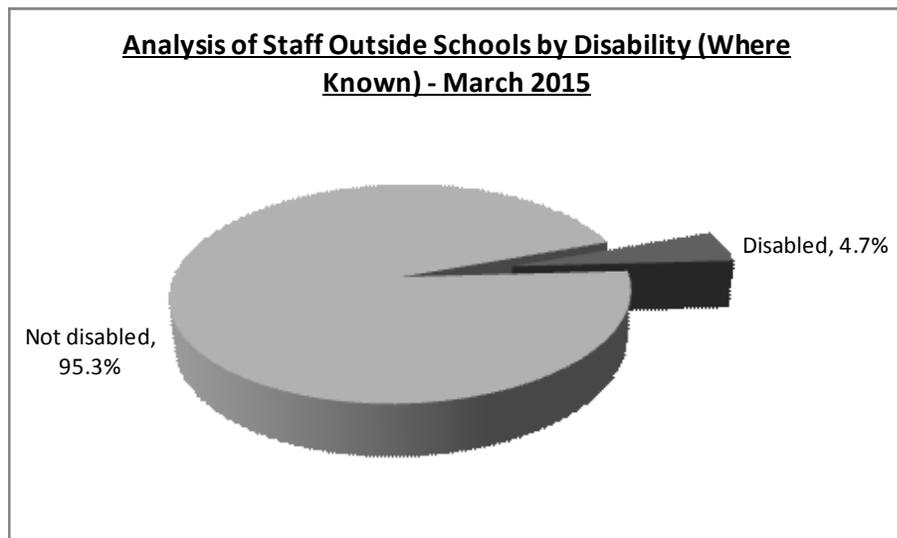
- **Gender**

The Council continues to employ a high proportion of women – about two-thirds outside schools. . Outside schools 49% of staff earning £50K (fte) or over are female.



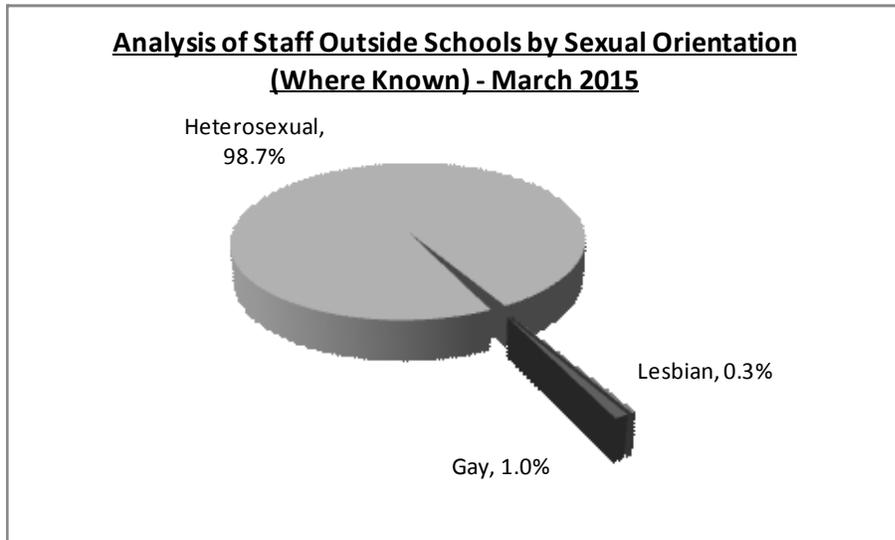
- **Disability**

Almost 5% of the Council's staff outside schools have declared that they have a disability (where information is held), which shows a small increase, and is consistent with information from the staff survey. Outside schools about 4% of staff earning £50K (fte) or over have declared a disability.



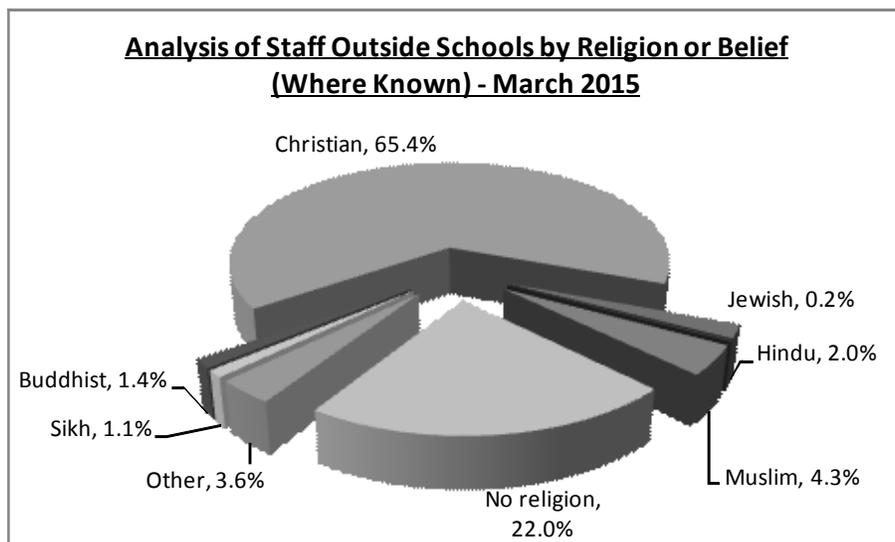
- **Sexual Orientation**

We know that we have under-reporting of our data on sexual orientation of staff, with about 50% still unrecorded. We are working with the LGBT Staff Network to try to improve this figure.



- **Religion or Belief**

There is under-reporting of data on religion or belief of staff, with 54% unrecorded.



- **Percentages of Staff Made Redundant in 2014/15 by Equality Strand**

In terms of equality strands, analysis of staff made redundant in the last financial year shows that women staff (47.5%) and disabled staff (3.6%) were represented in lower proportions than their proportions in the workforce as a whole (63.2% and 4.7% respectively).

BME staff (23.6%) and staff aged 45 and over (80.4%) were represented among redundant staff in higher proportions than their representation in the workforce as a whole (20.4% and 50% respectively).

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The functions of the authority need to be discharged in accordance with equality legislation. The scrutiny of RBK's Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy and action plan helps us to demonstrate compliance.

RISK ASSESSMENT

15. By complying with our equalities duties we are minimising the risk of legal challenge.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

16. An impact assessment has been carried out on the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

17. There are no environmental implications

CONCLUSION

18. We are making good progress on equalities through the achievement of targets detailed in our Equalities and Community Cohesion Strategy action plan. We have held a range of events this year to celebrate equalities. We have ensured that we have undertaken full Equality Impact Assessments on the significant change projects that are taking place and will continue to do so.

Background papers held by Author of the report: Marie Gadsden 020 8547 5152/
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- Equality Framework for Local Government 2009