

Embracing Diversity

EMPLOYER FORUM ON DIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE EMPLOYER FORUM MEETING HELD ON 9 APRIL 2003 AT BUSINESS LODGE, EUROPA HOUSE, BURY

Present

Joanne	Alcock	De Vere Whites Hotel
Asghar	Ali	Placement Officer (Ethnicity) Bury EST
Fred	Bowen	Employer Consultant, Bury EST
Cathy	Butterworth	Bury Metropolitan Police
Gerard	Curren	Business Link North Manchester
Sarah	Draycott	The Village Hotel & Leisure Club
Mel	Emsley	Armed Forces Careers
Helen	Grey	Early Years Development
Julie	Kernaghan	NHS Primary Care Trust
Caroline	Lowthian	First Manchester
Rebecca	Owen	The Village Hotel & Leisure Club
Bhavna	Patel	Commission for Race Equality
Fiona	Pearl	Bury College
Victoria	Proudlock	Manchester United
Lee	Salad	Project Co-ordinator, Bury EST
Katrina	Sartini	Employment Officer, Bury EST
Caroline	Schofield	Personnel Dept, Bury MBC
Karen	Shafto	Cameron House
Chris	Sheelan	Unifi Dyed Yarns Ltd
Lynda	Smethurst	Bury EST (minutes)
Carolyn	Tipper	B&Q Warehouse
Joanne	Wells	NHS Primary Care Trust
Everton	Williams	Armed Forces
Suzan	Wood	Personnel Dept, Bury MBC
Carol	Woodhams	MMU

Apologies

Diane	Atkins	Asda Stores Ltd
Hayley	Barthel	Marks & Spencers
Sally Anne	Chandler	Pfizer Adams
Huw	Davies	Bury EST, Manager
David	Eastham	Funeralcare
Jinny	Evans	McDonald's Restaurant

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Christian	Fildes	McDonald's Restaurant
David	Gosling	HSBC Bank
Kay	Gregson	Bolton & Bury Chamber
Cath	Hignett	NHS Trust
Ingrid	Hitchon	Molygran Ltd
Bernadette	Howley	Beaumont House
Avis	Keen	Marks & Spencers
Alicja	Kinsey	Senior Hargreaves
Julie	Langmead	CIS
Brian	Ledger	The Muffineer
Jill	Littlewood	APCOA Parking UK Ltd
Lutha	Magloire	Armed Forces Careers Office
Michael	Mooney	First Buses
Pauline	Parrett	PACE
Edwin	Partridge	Derby Brewery
Alison	Todd	Bury College
Andy	Walkden	Bury MBC
Steven	Walters	Sercu Metrolink
Peter	Weidenbaum	Trumeter Ltd

1. WELCOME TO MEMBERS

Fred Bowen welcomed all members in attendance and introduced new members to the Forum – Caroline Lowthian from First Manchester and Joanne Wells from NHS Primary Care Trust and welcomed the attendance of Everton Williams standing in for Lutha Magloire who is currently serving in the Gulf and Fiona Peart attending on behalf of Bury College, Caroline Schofield Bury MBC.

Also in attendance

- Asghar Ali – Placement Officer, Bury EST
- Katrina Sartini – Employment Officer, Bury EST

2. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

Minutes of the ED Employer Forum meeting held on 22 January 2003 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

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4. DIVERSITY PRESENTATION

Fred introduced the speaker for the diversity presentation, 'Valuing Ethnicity in Employment' Bhavna Patel. Bhavna is the Private Sector Team Leader for The Commission for Race Equality, North of England Region.

Bhavna gave a presentation on the role and purpose of the CRE. The presentation examined various subjects that included the business case for race equality, the Race Relations Act, employment practices and directives.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer session that gave members the opportunity to clarify any concerns and misconceptions regarding the employment of staff from ethnic groups. A copy of the presentation is included for your information.

5. DIVERSITY SURVEY FINDINGS

Fred thanked all respondents for the return of the questionnaire. Out of 30 distributed forms 23 were returned (77% response). A brief overview of the main outcomes and points of interest was presented and an analysis of the returns is now being completed and the results and findings will be forwarded to all forum members on completion.

Fred will be visiting members on a one-to-one basis to discuss their individual responses to discuss and identify areas where new ways of working could be introduced and existing good practices shared with other forum members.

The main aim would be to assist and encourage companies and organisations to pilot some new methods in selection and interview procedures. Introducing some practical methods such as job trials, working interviews and periods of work experience will assist in tackling some of the barriers identified with some of the existing policies.

6. MANAGING DIVERSITY

Fred invited Karen Shafto, Manager from Cameron House Residential Care Home, to share her recent experiences in the recruitment of a client with learning disabilities with the support of Bury EST officers.

Karen had previously advertised a vacancy at the job centre but had not been successful in attracting the right person for the job. By coincidence one of Bury EST's clients had seen the vacancy and brought it to the attention of his Placement Officer who arranged an informal meeting to discuss the vacancy with the Manager of Cameron House. Karen did not think the client was right for the job but was prepared to consider the vacancy for other clients.

After further consideration from the Placement Officer a suitable client was presented for consideration and was successful at interview stage. The client has now been in full-time employment at Cameron House for four months and has become a valuable and valued member of the team.

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Karen was pleased with the service she received from Bury EST and satisfied with the accuracy of job matching a client to what had previously proved a difficult vacancy to fill.

Karen had not realised just how diverse in culture, age, gender and disability her workforce had become purely by employing the best applicant for the job. An incidental benefit of this for her staff is that there are more opportunities to bring their own culture and festivities into the workplace, which enriches the lives of the residents. A further benefit for the employer has been that getting staff to work at Christmas and Bank Holidays is not a problem. A truly diverse and flexible workforce!

7. GROUP DISCUSSION – BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Members divided into small sub-groups to consider barriers and opportunities in recruitment and selection good practice.

A feedback session followed the group working and gave an opportunity to discuss some thoughts and suggestions from members in each group.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was a request for an up to date contact list of forum members.
This will be provided at the next meeting.

The subject for the **Diversity Presentation** at the next meeting will be '*Gender*' and the subject for **Managing Diversity** will be '*Induction*'

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members please note the change of time for this meeting.

It will be almost twelve months since the initial launch of the Forum and Fred suggested at the July meeting to have a later start followed by lunch. This would provide an ideal opportunity for members to network and get to know each other.

The suggestion met with a majority agreement.

The next meeting will therefore take place on: Wednesday, 16 July 2003^h

This meeting will commence at: 10.00 am (Coffee, tea and biscuits)

Venue: Europa House

A buffet lunch will be available following the close of the meeting and it is hoped that members will stay to chat over lunch.