

# Embracing Diversity

## EMPLOYER FORUM ON DIVERSITY

### MINUTES OF THE EMPLOYER FORUM MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2003 AT BUSINESS LODGE, EUROPA HOUSE, BURY

#### Present

Fred	Bowen	Employer Consultant, Bury EST
Jacki	Connor	Asda Stores Ltd
Pauline	Cross	EYDCP
Gerard	Curren	Business Link North Manchester
Huw	Davies	Manager, Bury EST
Karen	Davies	Cameron House
Michael	Dean	Placement Officer, Bury EST
Mel	Emsley	Armed Forces Careers Office
Dennie	Ford	Employment Officer, Bury EST
Cath	Hignett	NHS Acute Trust
Sharon	Jackson	B&Q Warehouse
Avis	Keen	Marks and Spencer
Alicja	Kinsey	Senior Hargreaves
Lutha	Magloire	Armed Forces Careers Office
Rebecca	Owen	The Village Hotel & Leisure Club
Pauline	Parrett	PACE
Edwin	Partridge	Holt's Brewery
Victoria	Proudlock	Manchester United
Chris	Reid	Armed Forces Careers Office
Lee	Salad	Project Co-ordinator, Bury EST
Chris	Sheelan	Unifi Dyed Yarns Ltd
Lynda	Smethurst	Bury EST (Minutes)
Carolyn	Tipper	B&Q Warehouse
Alison	Todd	Bury College
Andy	Walkden	Homeworking Initiative
Carol	Woodhams	Manchester Metropolitan University

#### Apologies

Joanne	Alcock	De Vere Whites Hotel
Diane	Atkins	Asda Stores Ltd
Hayley	Barthel	Marks & Spencers
Mick	Collins	First Buses
Sarah	Draycott	Village Hotel
Jinny	Evans	McDonald's Restaurant

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Christian	Fildes	McDonald's Restaurant
Kay	Gregson	Bolton & Bury Chamber
Ingrid	Hitchon	Molygran Ltd
Alison	Ibbotson	NHS Primary Care Trust
Julie	Langmead	CIS
Steven	Mason	Greater Manchester Police
Graham	Parry	Cormar Carpets
Bhavna	Patel	Commission for Racial Equality
Holly	Wallace	Ambers Attic
Steven	Walters	Serco Metrolink
Peter	Weidenbaum	Trumeter
Suzanne	Wood	Bury MBC

## **1. WELCOME TO MEMBERS**

Fred Bowen welcomed all members in attendance and introduced new members to the Forum – Jacki Connor (Asda Stores), Pauline Cross (Early Years Development), Sharon Jackson (B&Q), Avis Keen (Marks & Spencer), Chris Reid (Armed Forces). Fred also welcomed Lutha Magloire who had recently returned from active service in the recent Gulf conflict.

Also in attendance

- Michael Dean – Placement Officer, Bury EST
- Dennie Ford – Employment Officer, Bury EST

## **2. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING**

Minutes of the ED Employer Forum meeting held on 9 April 2003 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## **3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

## **4. PROJECT PROGRESS TO DATE**

Fred thanked members for their valuable support during the first twelve months of the Embracing Diversity Project. During this period there were approximately thirty employers in the area who had become members of the Forum and attendance at meetings had been very positive with an average 60% member participation at meetings.

In this period twelve people are presently in full time employment with Forum members. A number of Forum members were offering work experience opportunities. Marks and Spencer and Greater Manchester Police had just commenced a programme of work trials/working interviews for clients with varying disabilities and disadvantage. These trials were giving the employer the opportunity to

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pilot new methods in their selection and interview processes with the clients' individual needs being considered and making the necessary reasonable adjustments to accommodate those needs.

Fred delivered a presentation that reminded members of the aims of the Embracing Diversity Project and detailed some of the achievements to date. Fred also reminded members that many local employers were working with Bury EST in addition to those members of the Forum and many more jobs had been secured for clients.

Lee Salad, the Embracing Diversity Project Co-ordinator, gave a brief report on European partner working and informed members of recent visits. Staff from Bury EST and Stockport Employment Services had attended exchange seminars in Italy. Lee explained the nature of the visits, evaluation and progress of the different projects in the UK, Italy and Spain. Staff had the opportunity to share best practice and methods with their European colleagues. Further partnership seminars were planned for later in the year.

Lee also briefly reported on his attendance at the EU Local Action for Employment Matters Conference (EU LEAP).

Huw Davies, Manager of Bury EST, gave a brief report on his attendance at the National Conference of AfSE (Association for Supported Employment), and NASE (National Association of Supported Employment).

Huw had been re-elected as the Chairman for AfSE for the next twelve months.

Huw and Fred had also attended the European Association for Supported Employment Conference held in Finland.

These conferences had presented the opportunity to deliver presentations in workshops with delegates receiving information on the Embracing Diversity Project. The presentations were well received and many delegates have been contacting Bury EST with interest in the Project and the Employer Forum.

## **5. DIVERSITY PRESENTATION**

Fred welcomed the next speaker, Neil Wigley. Neil had very kindly stood in at the last minute to replace Chris Wright who was unable to attend due to bereavement. Neil is a Race and Equality Officer with ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service).

ACAS can offer some services free of charge to employers, for instance, Ethnic monitoring, whilst training programmes would be fee payable.

Neil gave a very interesting talk on 'Gender Issues in the Workplace' that explained current and future legislation and pointed out some anomalies in current directives. During the talk members asked questions and took part in discussion on the subject and Neil offered answers and guidance on issues raised by members.

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Neil presented some scenarios for consideration and discussed gender re-assignment. This is a subject that will very soon be covered by legislation and employers should be aware of discrimination in this area of recruitment.

Neil had also prepared a short quiz for members that presented some interesting results. A copy of his presentation is enclosed for your information.

## 6. MANAGING DIVERSITY

Fred introduced Chris Sheelan, QUENSH (Quality, Environment, Safety and Health) Manager at Unifi Dyed Yarns, York Street, Radcliffe.

Chris had been invited to deliver a presentation on the 'Induction Process'.

Chris had recently been working closely with staff at Bury EST offering work assessment positions for clients.

Unifi Dyed Yarns employ a diverse workforce and Chris had experience of making adjustments in the workplace for clients from a variety of backgrounds and cultural differences.

Chris talked about the process of induction at Unifi Dyed Yarns and covered the various stages over a period of three months. He also explained the support groups in the area that he had previously contacted to assist in delivering best practice in the workplace.

Giving consideration to his recent experience, Chris was particularly keen to point out how important it is to explain procedures in 'simple speak' to employees. He also stated that employers should be prepared to make suitable adjustments and consider flexibility in their induction processes to accommodate the individual's abilities to understand and comply with the information offered.

A copy of the presentation is enclosed.

## 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 12.00 noon with a buffet lunch being served.

## 8. PRESS ATTENDANCE

The Bury Times took photographs and a report appeared in the 25<sup>th</sup> July edition.  
A copy is enclosed.

## 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 15 October 2003.  
This meeting will commence at 9.00 am. Breakfast snacks and drinks will be served from 8.30 am.  
Venue: Europa House (Business Lodge), Barcroft Street, Bury.