

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITIES BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY, 8TH FEBRUARY, 2022

**MEMBERS:** Councillors Clare De Silva, Ergin Erbil (Chair & Associate Cabinet Member (Non-geographical based)), Achilleas Georgiou, Ayfer Orhan and Jim Steven

**Community Representatives:**

Tim Fellows – Enfield LGBT Network

**Officers:** Tinu Olowe, Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, Julie Mimmagh, Head of Human Resources Operations, Harriet Potemkin, Head of Policy & Strategy, Lucy Nasby, Strategy & Policy Manager, Matilda Leng, Strategy & Policy Officer, Annie Radcliffe, National Management Graduate Trainee, Sarah Gilroy, National Management Graduate Trainee, Stacey Gilmour, Governance Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Nishan Dzvingozyan, Social Integration Consultant, Edmonton Community Partnership

### 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Margaret Greer, Bevin Betton (Enfield Racial Equality Council) and Ben Ingber (Chief Executive Officer, Age UK Enfield). Councillor Hass Yusuf was substituting for Councillor Greer.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED that Councillor Ergin Erbil declared a pecuniary interest as he is the Council appointed Director of Energetic.

### 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the last meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

### 4. BULGARIAN/ROMA COMMUNITY PROJECT

RECEIVED a presentation from Nishan Dzvingozyan, Social Integration Consultant which provided an overview of the Bulgarian/Roma integration project ran by the Edmonton Community Partnership, highlighting the following:

1. The Edmonton Community Partnership is an alliance of 18 schools and members of the local community. The partnership manages a range of

## EQUALITIES BOARD - 8.2.2022

local projects and events that help improve the lives of children, young people, their families and the wider community in Edmonton.

2. The Bulgarian/Roma integration project has been operating since 2019. It is estimated that 20,000 Bulgarians live in Enfield and the wider EU communities up to 70,000. The estimate is based on the number of applications from Enfield made to the EU Settlement Scheme.
3. As a result of language barriers, digital exclusion and social isolation there are many families who have been unable to access the support services they are entitled to. The project has received funding from the Home Office, National Lottery Community Fund, Enfield Council and North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group.
4. There are many challenges faced by the Bulgarian (GRT) and the wider Eastern European communities in Enfield particularly in relation to the European Union Settlement Scheme. (EUSS). AS EU citizens, Bulgarian/Roma residents are among the groups most acutely affected by the EUSS.
5. With regards to the EUSS the emerging issues and challenges include:
  - Relatively high numbers of residents from EU/Bulgarian/GRT background who have not applied for EUSS;
  - Many parents who have secured the new immigration status are unaware of the fact that their children should be linked to their application;
  - Lack of understanding on how to digitally access the new immigration status;
  - Lack of understanding about the different types of immigration status (Pre-Settled Status and Settled Status), and the rights and responsibilities connected to being a holder of either;
  - Lack of language and IT skills;
  - Using the services of unauthorised organisations, accountants and individuals who are not registered immigration advisers.
6. Other challenges faced by the Bulgarian/Roma community include:
  - Access to services provided by the NHS and GP registration;
  - Suspensions of Benefits from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
  - Lack of trust related to any information about vaccination against Covid-19. According to Public Health only around 700 residents from a Bulgarian background are vaccinated and the Bulgarian and GRT communities have one of the lowest uptakes of the Covid-19 vaccination;
  - Support for residents at risk of homelessness or with no income;
  - Tenancy rights/access to housing;
  - Unmet mental health needs;
  - Modern Day Slavery
  - Mounting Debt;
  - Lack of representation on a political level.
7. Social inclusion is at the centre of the Project's approach. Edmonton Community Partnership (ECP) delivers the programme with organisations who have workers and volunteers with a range of languages and focus most of its advertising in Bulgarian.

## EQUALITIES BOARD - 8.2.2022

8. The ECP's goals include:

- Support in the process of obtaining the new Settled Status;
- Raising awareness of the Covid-19 vaccination;
- Encouraging GP registration;
- Facilitating easier access to services provided by Enfield Council, the NHS and other public bodies in the UK;
- Help the Bulgarian GRT community to navigate the benefits system;
- Reducing antisocial behaviour and providing support to sex workers in Enfield;
- Providing training on numerous subjects including Employment Rights and Tenancy Rights;
- Building trust and empowering these communities.

Following Nishan's update discussions took place highlighting the following:

- (i) Further information was provided on how Edmonton Community Partnership and its partners interact and engage with the communities they support in an authentic and intentional manner.
- (ii) The ECP have been delivering drop-in sessions on different subjects with the support of the schools in Edmonton, coffee mornings, webinars, conversational English classes, setting up Facebook pages in Bulgarian and engaging with new partners including Doctors of the World, the Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) and London Councils.
- (iii) Active engagement with Public Health Enfield and commissioned by them to increase Covid-19 vaccination uptake (which is at alarmingly low levels among these communities).
- (iv) In order to continue engaging successfully with the target group the ECP intend to deliver its activities mainly in Edmonton where these communities are.
- (v) Plans are ongoing to identify local residents and parents from schools within the communities and offer them training and work with them towards a better engagement with the target group. This will ensure that the team coordinating the engagement initiative has visible representation of the community's diversity.
- (vi) It was agreed that all Stakeholders needed to identify funding for Community Engagement Officers as well as funding for Officers delivering EUSS training and information on access to NHS services.
- (vii) Concerns were raised regarding the suspension of benefits from DWP which had created a very difficult situation for the most vulnerable members of this community.
- (viii) The Chair advised that this issue had been raised and picked up by Enfield Council's Cabinet Member for Social Housing as well as local Councillors and immediate representation had been made to the DWP.
- (ix) ECP outreach work has been ongoing to assist with this issue, but further recommendations were suggested including:

## **EQUALITIES BOARD - 8.2.2022**

- Identifying emergency funding to support the most vulnerable members of this community;
  - Setting up a referral system to signpost them to Enfield Council and other stakeholders;
  - All stakeholders- identifying funding for Bulgarian speaking (housing and benefit) community engagement officers.
- (x) The Board suggested organising another Eastern European Festival in Enfield following the very successful one in 2019.

The Chair thanked Nishan for his ongoing work and for his very informative and interesting update.

### **5. ANNUAL ENFIELD EQUALITY & DIVERSITY REPORT 2021**

Harriet Potemkin, Head of Strategy & Policy and Julie Mimmagh, Head of Human Resource Operations delivered a presentation on the Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2021 which covered the below points:

- An Equality and Diversity report is published each year to review progress, celebrate successes and identify the further work needed to make Enfield a fairer place.
- The presentation and feedback from the Board will be used to develop the Council's Annual Equality and Diversity Report for 2021/22, for publication in May 2022.
- The Fairer Enfield Policy sets out how Enfield Council will tackle inequality, support an inclusive workplace and communities and create new opportunities for everyone in Enfield.
- The policy includes eight equality objectives to reduce inequality, which affect specific groups in Enfield, and these were detailed in the report.
- The presentation set out the objective, why it was selected when formulating the policy during 2020, a summary of the key activities and projects that the Council had focused on over the last year to deliver them, and consideration of the impact, based on analysis so far.
- The presentation included a workforce review which outlined the makeup of Enfield Council's workforce by ethnicity, age, disability and gender. It also detailed how these groups are represented across different pay scales and included the annual gender and ethnicity pay gaps.
- Information was also provided on good practice case studies which provided an overview of how the Council has worked in partnership with its statutory, voluntary and community partners, and engaged with its residents to deliver equality initiatives that support work on improving service outcomes for diverse communities in the borough.

Following the presentation, the following points were highlighted:

- (i) It was acknowledged that Enfield Council did have more of an ageing profile within its workforce. However, in recent years progress had been made in bringing younger people into council

## EQUALITIES BOARD - 8.2.2022

careers with great successes also being seen in the Graduate and Apprenticeship Programmes.

- (ii) The Fairer Enfield Policy Equalities Objectives are reviewed every four years and are used to inform the Work Programme for the Equalities Board.
- (iii) In response to a question regarding Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and how these will be addressed moving forward, it was advised that in the last twelve months better systems have been put in place with Officers now reviewing EIAs for every report that goes to Cabinet/Council and these should be publicly available for anyone to view.
- (iv) With regards to the Workforce Diversity- Ethnicity Profile chart, it was felt that 'Turkish speaking' would be much more inclusive and therefore it was suggested that the wording be changed. Julie confirmed that the design of the Ethnic Groups data was being reviewed and this would be presented slightly differently next time.  
**Action: Julie Mimmagh, Head of Human Resource Operations**
- (v) It was agreed that statistics on victims of Serious Youth Violence (SYV) should be included and not just data on the perpetrators as detailed in the presentation.  
**Action: Harriet Potemkin, Head of Strategy & Policy**
- (vi) In response to a question regarding the numbers of 'Safe Havens' in Enfield clarification would be sought on numbers/locations from the Community Safety Team as Officers did not have this information on hand at the meeting.  
**Action: Harriet Potemkin, Head of Strategy & Policy**
- (vii) In conclusion Harriet advised that the aim was to have the final report drafted and published before the next meeting, but this could be circulated to members of the Equalities Board once approved.  
**Action: Harriet Potemkin, Head of Strategy & Policy/Stacey Gilmour, Governance Officer**

### 6. WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

NOTED the Equalities Board Work Programme for 2021/22.

### 7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

NOTED that the dates of future meetings will be agreed at Annual Council on 25 May 2022.

This page is intentionally left blank