



REPORT TO: Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board
DATE: 25 September 2023
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SUBJECT: Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment

1. What is the report about?

The report provides a summary of engagement which took place between June and August 2023, on the topic of empowering diverse communities into employment – specifically with regards to employment in the North Wales public sector. There’s a range of suggested actions and good practice examples in the report which were shared / highlighted during the work.

2. What are the Recommendations?

There were numerous recommendations put forward in terms of addressing the barriers to employment, which are set out in full in the report in the sections: What can we do to support diverse and inclusive public sector workplaces in North Wales: Actions suggested during engagement, and Examples of Existing Good Practice.

Some of these suggestions included:

- Maintaining an ongoing dialogue about barriers to employment – to encourage any issues to be shared, so that employers are more aware of the barriers which can be a catalyst for change
- Anchor organisations (e.g. LAs, Health and Ambulance, Police, Fire and Rescue, Universities and Colleges) working together to create opportunities to enable people to get on the employment ladder, including volunteering, apprenticeships, placements and shadowing
- A diversity event across North Wales, inviting people and employers. It can be formal/informal but give opportunity for people to socialise and gain information
- Active/pro-active work to attract staff from diverse backgrounds through how we promote vacancies and to which groups as opposed to simply posting an advert online / Consider advertising in different places (e.g. places of worship, physical locations) rather than just online or on an organisations own website
- Staff Networks, Buddy Systems for new recruits
- Sharing of a ‘Welcome to North Wales’ welcome pack for people unfamiliar with the UK and the region

Full list available in the report, available in appendix A.

3. Report details

Through a conversation about empowering diverse communities into employment in the North Wales public sector, four overarching themes were identified by participants in terms of barriers to employment:

- Language Barriers
- Qualifications and Experience
- Cultural Differences
- Access and Processes

Information was drawn from the workshops, questionnaire responses and social media comments to inform a key findings section. In the 'Key Findings' section, a range of steps to tackle the identified barriers were proposed and examples of existing good practice were shared.

It is intended that through sharing the report public sector organisations can use the valuable feedback and insights shared by residents, service users and interested parties from across North Wales to take actions to continue working towards making public sector organisations, as employers, more welcoming and inclusive of all the communities that they serve.

4. Consultation

The work focused on engaging residents, service users and interested parties across North Wales (both individuals facing barriers to employment and professionals working with individuals facing barriers to employment) as part of a conversation to make sure that public sector organisations are welcoming and inclusive of everyone in their recruitment and retention processes. The work was carried out in collaboration between the two North Wales Community Cohesion teams and members of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network.

There were 2 x Workshops held via Zoom on the 12th July 2023, and a survey (hosted on the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership website) which was open between June and August 2023.

5. Resource implications

Funding from the Regional Skills Partnership and the regional PSB support grant were used to facilitate the workshop. Further grant funding will be sought to secure follow up work with these diverse communities.

There are no specific resource implications with regards to the report. Any use of resources, such as staff time, will vary depending on the actions (e.g. changes to recruitment processes) that are taken forward by organisations in response to the findings and recommendations highlighted through the workshop, survey and engagement that took place.

6. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

The risks associated with the report are in not acting on the suggested actions and recommendations. There is a risk of contributing to 'engagement fatigue' if there are no signs

that the valuable feedback shared has been used to continue working towards making public sector organisations inclusive employers. This risk can be reduced by ensuring that the report is widely shared and that appropriate actions are implemented, and that the actions taken as a result of the work are reported back to participants in a timely manner.

7. Power to make the decision

The report links to a range of national and local policies and strategies. This includes Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plans, and local Recruitment Policies.