Employment support and advice—

- what provisions are in place to help people from ethnic minorities to access employment support and advice?

North Lanarkshire Council’s vacancy bulletins are distributed to community groups. The Council subscribes to ‘Language Line’ which provides a translation service to ethnic minorities, who may not have English as a first language, who may wish to apply for posts or seek further information on vacancies. There is also a Supported Employment team within the Council who arrange work placements and support individuals with a mental or physical disability into the workplace.

- what provisions are in place to recognise and address the lower employment rates among some ethnic minority groups compared to others?

In relation to recruitment, equal opportunity statistics are monitored on an annual basis. In 2014/15 we received 13,979 applications for 730 vacant posts. There were 937 (6.70%) applications received from applicants with a disability and 756 (5.40%) from ethnic minority applicants. From 3,944 interviews to fill these vacancies, 350 (8.87%) interviews were with applicants with a disability and 133 (3.37%) were ethnic minority applicants. From 1,198 applicants who were successful, 43 (3.59%) were applicants with a disability and 24 (2.00%) were ethnic applicants.

In the 2011 census, 98% of the population of North Lanarkshire Council were recorded as being white and 2% were all other ethnic groups. The above breakdown of the recruitment figures indicates that the number of people from ethnic minorities who successfully gained employment in the Council is proportionate to the population as a whole.

- are there any innovative approaches being taken to address the challenges some people from ethnic minorities may experience in trying to access employment advice and support?

The Council is taking a proactive, strategic approach to ensuring our employees have the necessary tools to undertake their duties and is about to pilot the use of software called Read and Write Gold. This will provide employees with dyslexia and whose first language is not English with access to technology that makes reading, writing and research easier. It is discreet and provides all employees with access via a toolbar. Once piloted the software will be rolled out to all of the Council IT network.

We will promote the fact we use this software within our vacancy bulletins and recruitment portal to encourage applications from those people who would most benefit from it.

Recruitment, retention and promotion—

- what evidence is there that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Scottish workplaces?
There is no evidence locally to suggest that discrimination exists in these areas. The Council’s policies reflect the Council's commitment to equal opportunities. The Council strives to go beyond the statutory duties that are placed on it to ensure policies and practices are inclusive, eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

- **what are the barriers that lead to unequal outcomes (including lower rates of employment and employment segregation)?**

Local demographics including increasing numbers of working age residents receiving disability or sickness related benefits and an ageing population are barriers. Employment segregation exists in “Traditional” jobs such as childcare, land and waste management for example, with a negligible number of applications for posts from out with the normal gender group – this reflects the trend across Scotland.

North Lanarkshire Council’s Corporate Plan sets out the Council’s commitment to promote equal opportunities and inclusion and is committed to reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged groups and communities and the rest of society.

**Promoting positive action—**

- **what measures are being taken to tackle workplace discrimination and segregation?**

The Council has traditionally had two employee forums: one for disabled employees and one for black and ethnic minority employees. The latter being a joint forum with South Lanarkshire Council. This has recently been streamlined into one Employee Equality Forum. The Forum provides both disabled and ethnic minority employees with a platform to air any concerns they may have in relation to their employment and to be consulted on any changes to employment policy or practice.

The Council also has a Dignity at Work Policy in place which allows employees to raise complaints of bullying, harassment or victimisation. Employees are encouraged to resolve issues informally and they have access to a group of Dignity at Work Support Officers to assist them to do this. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, there is a formal process where the complaint is investigated by an independent team. If the individual is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation they have the right of appeal.

The Council has an innovative Diversity Champions programme whereby employees volunteer to undergo an intensive three day training course. They then become active promoters of equality and diversity within their own workplaces. There are now over 50 Champions across five services including employees working in depots and recycling centres.

- **is there a need for a scheme that recognises positive action taken by employers (a “double tick” scheme for example)?**

Yes, it is important that organisations can display, to the general public, their commitment to equal opportunities by obtaining such awards as the “double tick”. North Lanarkshire Council is committed to the “double tick” scheme, the “age positive” scheme and Investors in People.

- **what are the examples of good practice that have improved outcomes, and if so what has been the key to their success?**

To ensure the formation of the new employee equality forum was successful and meaningful to employees, the Council brought together a group of interested employees from across Council services that formed a steering group. This steering group planned and
developed the work required to launch the forum, including visiting remote workplaces thus ensuring all employees were informed about the new forum and afforded opportunities to be part of it.

Theresa Wade
Senior HR Officer
North Lanarkshire Council
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