



DIVERSITY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

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Diversity Task & Finish Group Update

As a Task and Finish group we were initially overwhelmed with the enormity of embarking on addressing “Diversity” in its entirety. So under the umbrella of diversity, we have chosen to focus on the proven and increasingly urgent need to address the lack of ethnic diversity of our workforce, specifically in response to CILIP’s 2017 [Workforce Mapping report](#) and SCOUNL ‘s 2019 report on [BAME employee experiences](#).

How we focus on our people and first and foremost ourselves felt like a good place to start. Approaching diversity provisionally as a human resource issue, our intention is to provide guidance materials, recommendations and surfacing resources and examples of case studies and best practice on how we can begin to address disproportionate representation and inequity in our own teams. All of the materials will seek to navigate the contextual nuances across the M25 institutions and how they can be adapted for your workplace. We are hoping to bring a report together by the end of 2020 but for now have created a [Padlet](#) starting to bring together useful online resources and in Autumn plan to circulate a survey in response to SCOUNL’s piece of work in order to understand our specific context as a consortium.

Diversifying and decolonising our services and how we as institutions support closing the BME attainment gap remain just as significant concerns for our sector, but which require separate focus and attention in order to be appropriately and fully addressed – so whilst we may touch on these we are unlikely to cover them sufficiently. We hope that when our “tenure” is up we will be able to hand over our foundation work to another group who will be able to approach another “facet” of diversity or seek to understand and move forward our efforts in other areas.

WE NEED YOU!

Now we have identified our areas of effort, we are looking for more members to help us achieve our aims.

Our first reflection as a group was on our own diversity; in being predominantly white and female we are conscious of misrepresenting the reality of and further marginalising individual experiences.

We are therefore seeking to recruit more BAME members and encourage anyone who may be interested to get in touch with chair: charlotte.r.low@kcl.ac.uk

If you have led successful initiatives or activities in your workplace which align with one of our strands please get in touch, we’d love to promote them!

Our work is currently paused over summer due to our restricted availability – but the change COVID19 has brought to our working practices and amid recent events which have rightly brought the Black Lives Matter movement to the fore- we want to keep up the conversation about diversity. We’ll be seeking a way to continue this remotely so watch this space!

Our strands of work

These are the areas we’re working on to create guidance, recommendations and signpost useful resources for. If you are interested in contributing to any of the below, please get in touch!

Strand 1: Active Allying

How we can all be active allies for our BAME colleagues and fellow professionals? We are trying to find out more about the prevalence of BAME allies networks and advice on allying within M25 institutions and beyond. We also want to consider how social media can be used to amplify BAME voices and to offer suggestions on this for those looking to make their social media more inclusive. Overall, we hope that this work will help people to think about how they can actively advance a culture of inclusion in their workplaces and beyond.

Strand 2: Positive Action

We are looking to bring together recommended HR activities, policy and procedures which ensure we are attracting, developing, promoting and retaining BAME employee’s talent. What does your diversity statement say about your workplace and how do you enact it on a day to day basis? Do you have a diversity action plan? Are you scrutinising your recruitment practices to ensure unconscious bias is not at play? Are you members of the CILIP BAME network? How visible is your stance on discrimination and harassment? Committing to effective HR practices we can recognise and begin to dismantle some of the systemic barriers to BAME employee progression in our sector.

Strand 3: Diversity Training

Diversity training must go beyond a box-ticking exercise only part of a workplace induction and have a meaningful impact on preserving dignity and respect at work. What are the best methods of making people aware of unconscious bias and microaggressions (such as the [privilege walk](#) and [unconscious bias testing activities](#))? And how can we adopt a continuous learning approach to diversity rather than a one-size-fits-all session?

Strand 4: Starting Conversations

We want to provoke members to start conversations in your workplaces and promote ways of doing so respectfully. We want to ensure nuance is adopted in the way we approach any pro-diversity efforts to ensure we are not over-generalising but recognising individual experience. The burden of initiating and bearing the emotional labour intrinsic to these conversations does not lie with BAME colleagues so how can we approach this work by having meaningful and respectful conversations in our teams and workgroups. Beginning with terminology: “Ethnicity” and “BAME” are both widely used and unsatisfactory terms which we recognise do not sufficiently articulate individual experience so how can we begin to talk?

Surveyed staff at consortium libraries, 58 responses

- A quarter of respondents didn't have an EDI group or champion within their Library, a quarter were unsure if there was one
- 44.8% of respondents were unaware of any positive action initiatives being undertaken by their institution/library
- No respondents thought the training at their institution was 'very effective' at changing the work environment
- 8 respondents (13.8%) 'not at all confident' that issues raised will be dealt with appropriately

Case studies and resources



- Case studies from University of East London and University of Surrey
- Survey results and recommendations
- Protected apprenticeships for people from BAME community
- Mentoring scheme

Curator and Exhibitions Network

Mentoring Scheme

Staff Development Awards

M25 SpeedMeet

Wellbeing: Resources for Library Staff

Annual Conference

Access25

Librarian's Guide

User Guide

List of M25 libraries participating in Access25

Application Form

Task & Finish groups

Diversity Case Studies and Resources

The M25 Diversity Task and Finish Group is gathering case studies and examples of best practice from across member libraries. Our focus is on BAME staff experiences and we're particularly exploring four strands of work: active allying, starting conversations, diversity training, and positive action. **If your library has done work in any of these areas, we want to hear from you!**

If you have any examples to share or want to arrange an informal chat, please email Group Chair, Katie Winter at k.winter@surrey.ac.uk.

Case Studies

How to talk about diversity in the academic library – our journey at the University of Surrey Library and Learning Services.

University of East London Libraries: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Best Practice

Do you have a question, are you interested in joining the group or do you want to discuss work taking place at your institution?

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